Men in Dance: Undoing Gender, Challenging Heterosexual Hegemony and the Limits of Transgression

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Abstract

This is a sociological study of gender and sexualities in the context of professional dance in Scotland. Since the 19th century, dance became associated with women, femininity, male effeminacy and male homosexuality. Considering the cultural attachments dance has acquired, this thesis sets to explore the conditions that influence men's involvement in dance; the ways that different spaces, processes and relations within dance institutions in Scotland influence the negotiations of gender and sexuality; and the ways that male dancers negotiate their practice of dance and the gendered attachments this has.

The discussions that unfold in this thesis rely on interview and observation data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 men professionally involved in the performance and/or production of dance in Scotland. Further, observation was conducted in four dance institutions in Scotland: Scottish Ballet, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and two small-scale, project-based contemporary dance companies which are in this thesis named as Kinesis and Chorotheatro.

This study's findings suggest that men's involvement in dance is mainly influenced by their social location, familial background and parents' involvement in, and familiarity with, cultural practices. These conditions affect the time, as well as ways, they will become introduced to dance. Further, this study's findings suggest that precisely because of the attachments dance has acquired through time, dance institutions are experienced as safe spaces where male dancers can problematise gender norms and challenge heterosexual hegemony. Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, there are tensions as we move between ballet and contemporary dance, and as we shift our attention from onstage performances to backstage practices. Lastly, this study's findings suggest that male dancers are likely to 'normalise' their involvement in this practice by emphasising dance's conventionally masculine qualities.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

> I know [gay male] people out, who have been in masculine [professions], maybe plumbers or builders, but they have to kind of hide it [their sexuality] a bit more because they'd get more jeering, more like mocking kind of things. Whereas in dance it's accepted. You are kind of against the rules if you are straight. (Ben, gay, 31-40)

There exists the commonly held belief that in professional dance[1], and particularly ballet, most men are gay (Burt, 2007; Gard, 2001; Risner, 2002a). Indeed, dance is one of those rare social spheres where being non-heterosexual has been accepted as normal. Further, it is a culture[2] which has become mutually constitutive with women, female femininity and male effeminacy. Environments with such qualities, Robinson and Hockey argued, enable men 'to reflect upon, resist, or reinvent more hegemonic masculinities' (2011:117). Professional dance, therefore, provides a fascinating sphere for the study of gender, and particularly male masculinities, sexualities and social identities.

When compared to other feminised professions dance has certain qualities that turn it into a unique professional context; its study can therefore, provide novel insights in relation to gender and sexuality. Dance is a sphere which consists of hugely skilled dancers who are trained to perform to the highest levels of virtuosity and shift between different roles. Therefore, it may be imagined that male dancers, who are *trained* to be aware of the ways they come across before other people, will be reflexively aware of their performances of gender and sexuality both within the context of dance and everyday lives. For these reasons, dance institutions are sociologically interesting settings and male dancers a fascinating population to study as they can reveal significant insights with regards to the formation and management of gender and sexuality.

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[1] Dance in this thesis refers to ballet on the one hand, and contemporary dance on the other. Contemporary dance in this thesis includes modern dance, dance theatre and physical theatre as these genres are widely defined. Unless specified, the concept of dance refers to all these dance genres. This term is used to indicate the range of performance styles this study's participants engaged with.

[2] This study only investigates professional dance and not social or recreational dancing.

Even though this study is partially concerned with dance as a practice, its main focus is placed on the micro-interactions, actions, and processes that occur within selected professional dance institutions in Scotland. As such, this project aims to uncover the ways through which gender and sexuality are constructed, performed and negotiated within a context which, in contrast to conventionally masculine spheres, can be assumed to afford men more opportunities for expressing gender in diverse ways.

This thesis explores the processes which occur within professional dance institutions and whether these settings can be approached as environments which enable conscious reflection, 'creative self-invention' (Cooper, 2013) and active self-management (Goffman, 1959). It investigates whether these contexts, with said qualities, afford male dancers increased opportunities to 'undo gender' (Deutsch, 2007) and challenge 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993) as previous studies in this area have suggested (e.g. Robinson et al., 2011; Pullen and Simpson, 2009).

This is the first study which relies on interviews with male professional dancers and observation in dance institutions to investigate negotiations of gender and sexuality in the sphere of professional dance in Scotland. As such it contributes to the body of knowledge which is concerned with gender and sexuality in dance (for example, Burt, 2007; Hannah, 1998; Thomas, 1995), existing debates on men and masculinities in feminised work cultures (Lupton, 2000, 2006; Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Pullen and Simpson, 2009) and the sociology of gender and sexualities more widely.

Why Dance, Why Male Dancers?

Following arguments which suggest that feminised work contexts enable opportunities for men to play with dominant gender norms (for example, Anderson, 2005, 2009; Robinson et al., 2011; Pullen and Simpson, 2009), this study considers how gender and sexuality are constructed but also dismantled within the sphere of professional dance. As has been previously mentioned,

despite this project being about dance, its main focus lies on the analysis of dancers' interactions, actions and performances of gender and sexuality.

The changing socio-economic conditions of the 19th century in France and Britain transformed ballet from a male-concentrated, masculine and male-dominated sphere into a female-concentrated and feminised one (see chapter 4). Yet, although dance practitioners were, and still are, predominantly females, the leading positions remained in the hands of the few males who continued to be involved in it (Adair, 1992; Banes, 1998; Burt, 2007; Hanna, 1988; Thomas, 1995). According to a recent report by the Arts Council England (2009) despite the fact that only a minority of men in the UK are involved in dance, leading positions in dance companies and official dance bodies are in their majority occupied by men. Dance can thus be approached as a 'female-concentrated', yet 'male-dominated' social sphere (Lupton, 2006). As such, it is mainly practised by females but controlled by the few males who are involved in this sphere. This premise creates interesting dynamics, which can reveal significant insights with regards to gender, and particularly masculinity, its doing and undoing.

Further, dance and the context of performing arts more widely are additionally interesting because they consist of *trained performers*. Male dancers *learn* to perform a variety of roles. These roles might be aligned with their offstage everyday selves, and thus be easy to embody, or they might be distanced from their everyday selves and thus require from male dancers to transform into something completely different. In either case, this process turns them into skilled performers and good actors. The study of male dancers can thus be revealing in relation to issues around 'identities' and the ways these can be reflectively constructed, rehearsed and performed in a context which in itself encourages reflection and invites (male) dancers to be aware of their image and performances of self.

Lastly, dance academies, and professional dance institutions, have been referred to as places which are accepting of non-heterosexual and gender queer people. Dance is a social context which consists of relatively high numbers of gay and bisexual men (Burt, 2007; Risner, 2002a, 2007) and can thus be approached as a 'gay-friendly' sphere (Williams et al., 2009). Gay-friendly workplaces according

to Williams et al., 'do not merely tolerate lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) workers, but accept and welcome them in the workplace' (2009:29). Studies on the performing arts (Rumens and Broomfield, 2014) and theatre (Bernstein, 2006; Dolan, 2010) reinforce this claim; however, these theorists also stress the tensions that characterise this sphere. As they argued, while theatre is widely seen as 'gay heaven', gay performers are often perceived to have more limited capacities in comparison to their heterosexual colleagues. The analysis of such tensions can unveil what happens with regard to sexuality and gender hierarchies and the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999), in a context where heterosexuality is not 'compulsory' (Rich, 1980).

This project was driven by these three core concerns. The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyse whether men in the sphere of dance *can* and *do* renegotiate dominant gender and sexuality norms and practices. As such it analyses whether, when and in what ways male dancers 'do' (Butler, 1999) and 'undo' gender (Deutsch, 2007). In contrast to sport or other social spheres which are constructed as conventionally masculine (Mennesson, 2009; Wheaton, 2000), this is a space which can enable, and as it will be demonstrated in the analysis chapters *does* partially enable, the subversion of prevailing gender norms and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). These conditions therefore turn dance institutions into environments which can provide significant insights in relation to gender and sexuality, their construction, negotiation and dismantlement.

Research Design

Theorists such as Robinson and Hockey (2011), and Pullen and Simpson (2009) argued that feminised work environments enable men opportunities to challenge gender norms. Following their arguments, this study aims to analyse the processes, actions and micro-interactions, which occur within professional dance institutions and the ways male dancers construct, perform and negotiate their gender and sexuality on the one hand, and their professional identity on the other. This research focuses on dance institutions and male dancers who were at the time of the research producing/performing dance in Scotland as there exist

no previous studies on gender and sexuality in the context of professional dance in Scotland. Following from this, three main research questions guide this study:

a. Considering that dance is an unconventional activity for men, what are the conditions that influenced male dancers' involvement in dance?

b. How do different spaces, processes and relations within dance institutions in Scotland influence the negotiations of gender and sexuality?

c. How do male dancers in Scotland negotiate their dance practice with regard to their gender and sexuality?

These research questions guide the study of a specific context, that of professional dance in Scotland. Yet, they raise questions about aspects of social identities, such as gender and sexuality, their construction, negotiation, embodiment and performance. These questions enable a conversation with theorists who have written on agency and structure, and the consideration of the ways that these function in relation to each other. Further, this study's attention on the actions and interactions which occur within dance institutions in Scotland enables the consideration of dance as an institutional context which is governed by written and unwritten rules that influence, and are being influenced by, the micro-processes that occur within these contexts. Therefore, even though the focus of this project is narrow, this study's findings enable engagement with key sociological debates, and contribute to the field of sociology of dance, sociology of gender and sexualities more widely, and the body of work which engages with men in feminised environments more specifically.

The research aim and research questions deemed qualitative methodology to be the most appropriate approach for this work. Data was collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. Considering this study's interest in informants' everyday interactions, actions and performances, observation was the most suitable data collection technique (Arksey & Knight, 1999:16; Jorgensen, 1989; Bernard, 2006:343). Observation, as Mason argues, is useful when the purpose is to 'witness or experience what is going on in a setting' (2002:89). This method is also aligned with the theoretical framework which is

employed in this study. Goffman developed his dramaturgical framework based on the observations and ethnographic studies he conducted. Likewise, other studies which informed this project also relied on similar approaches (Anderson, 2005; McCormack and Anderson, 2010; Robinson et al., 2011; Robinson and Hockey, 2011). Observation was therefore a key data collection technique.

Observation occurred in four dance institutions between November 2013 and September 2014. The observation sites were selected to provide insights into balletic settings on the one hand, and contemporary dance settings on the other. As the history of dance has taught us (see chapter 4), the emergence of contemporary dance was partially initiated as a response to the gendered attachments that characterised, and still characterise, ballet. Further, these genres are informed by different ideologies and cultures, which can be significant for the study of gender and sexuality. Lastly, their different choreographic practices, movement style, settings, and performance plots influence the available opportunities for expressing or questioning gender norms and heterosexual hegemony. Hence, observation data was collected in four different dance institutions to gain insights into these different cultures: Scottish Ballet, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland[3] and two small-scale, project-funded dance companies which I have named Kinesis and Chrorotheatro[4].

In contrast to Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Scottish Ballet, which employ a relatively large number of dancers, the two small-scale companies worked with a very small number of dancers. Hence, the two contemporary dance companies were anonymised to protect informants' identities and the information they provided. Further, given the unique status of Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as the only national institutions of their kind, their anonymising would have been made impossible. However, all individual respondents' identities have been protected through the use of pseudonyms and through the exclusion of characteristic and specific information that might have contributed to their identification (see also chapter 3).

[3] Scotland's national centre of professional vocational training in performing arts.

[4] Kinesis and Chorotheatro are pseudonyms which however, aim to reflect the work produced by these companies.

Observation data was also complemented by 28 interviews which were conducted with men professionally engaged in these and other dance institutions. Interviews were conducted with male dance students, male professional dancers, choreographers and directors (for a detailed discussion see chapter 3). Interviews were employed to gain access into participants' 'knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations and experiences' (Mason, 2002:63). Interviews provided an opportunity to discuss issues that emerged during the observation stage and enabled insights into dancers' life stories which led to a better understanding of their choices and trajectories. The investigation of these dancers' life courses added an additional dimension to this study. Discussions in the data-analysis part of this thesis follow an inductive approach, with the analysis of the collected data informing current theoretical debates.

Conceptual Framework

This project focuses on actions, micro-level processes and everyday interactions that occur within dance institutions, and the ways these are influenced by the written and unwritten rules of these contexts. As a result, the discussions that unfold in subsequent chapters are influenced by different theoretical approaches, including symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959), gender and sexualities theories (Deutsch, 2007; Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002), masculinities studies (Anderson, 2005, 2009; Bridges, 2014; Connell, 2005; Robinson and Hockey, 2011) and queer theory (Berlant and Warner, 1998; Butler, 1993, 1999). Whilst these are discussed in more detail in the following chapter, this section introduces some of the key concepts that guided the data collection and analysis.

According to Goffman's framework, workplace settings can be approached as both 'frontstage' and 'backstage'; they shift from 'frontstage' into 'backstage' when superiors are not present and employees interact in informal ways (1959). Goffman also argued that 'there are many regions which function at one time and in one sense as a front region and at another time and in another sense as a back region' (1959:127). Dance studios can be seen as such regions. During rehearsals, many dancers and company members are present in the same studio.

For some of these dancers, the studio acts as a frontstage region where they perform and act in their capacity as professional dancers, working and rehearsing certain roles for certain shows. For others though, the same studio acts as a backstage region where they can mess about and informally interact with other dancers who are also not working at that time. The studio, therefore, can be seen as both a backstage and a frontstage. Considering the complexities and tensions which characterise actions and interactions in such cases, I suggest that Goffman's two-way division of backstage and frontstage cannot be used to sufficiently discuss these instances. Whilst there are sometimes clear-cut divisions between the backstage and the frontstage, these spaces often overlap as there exists an intermediate space which can be considered as backstage but is in fact frontstage and can have important implications on dancers' casting and trajectories. Hence, a three-part division is suggested: onstage, frontstage and backstage.

References to 'onstage' performances imply the roles dancers embody and perform as part of a dance show that is performed before a paying audience. In addition, references to 'frontstage' performances imply instances when informants act in their capacity as professional dancers. Such instances include auditions, rehearsal sessions, company classes and formal interactions with colleagues and superior figures. This follows from Goffman's definition of the frontstage region and it refers to the efforts of informants 'to give the appearance that their activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards' (1959:110). Performances in the frontstage have a significant effect on dancers' professional status and their performances in this space are evaluated with a view to casting, role selection, recruitment and so on. As it will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, there are certain gender and sexuality expectations in these spaces which shape dancers' performances.

Lastly, references to the backstage imply everything that happens in the studio, and the institutions, besides rehearsals, auditions and formal interactions. The backstage, therefore, includes everyday encounters and informal interactions where informants are in their work environment but can theoretically 'step out of character' (Goffman, 1959:115). However, as it will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, even when participants are involved in *informal*

interactions and encounters with other dancers and sometimes directors, teachers, musicians and so on –when they act in the backstage-, their performances are still partially influenced and regulated by the rules of the context and the expectations of the companies. These everyday informal encounters as informal as they might seem, they often influence the perceived capacities of informants. Hence, this study approaches the backstage as different from the frontstage; yet, it argues that backstage spaces often coexist with what can be perceived as frontstage spaces; as such, these are never free from norms. Even though backstage spaces can be seen as transgressive, interactions, actions and performances are still largely regulated by dominant gender and sexuality norms. The chapters that follow discuss the processes which occur in these spaces and unveil the tensions that characterise them.

Further, this thesis discusses dance in relation to the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999); it discusses the interplay of sex, gender and desire and the processes through which these are regulated, stabilised and potentially destabilised. It also engages with Butler's notion of 'heterosexual hegemony' (1993) to discuss the tensions that characterise dance institutions in the backstage and frontstage/onstage spaces. On the one hand, dance institutions are settings which provide and often encourage gender reflection. They also provide opportunities for dancers to question heterosexuality as 'hegemonic'. Yet, in other respects, as we shall see, they often reproduce heterosexuality as the dominant sexuality.

In addition, this thesis is concerned with dancers' bodies; the ways their dance background becomes embodied –their dance habitus-; and whether the latter is seen as influencing their performances of gender and sexuality. It therefore engages with Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus' and 'bodily hexis' (1984, 1985, 1990); yet, in contrast to Bourdieusian studies on dance (see for example, Tsitsou, 2012; Wainwright et al., 2006), these notions are used selectively, in certain parts and in conversation with theorists who have written on reflexivity (Cooper, 2013; Giddens, 1991).

Lastly, this study is concerned with dancers' performances, experiences and understandings of gender and sexualities and the ways these might have been influenced since they became involved in dance. Thus, this thesis engages with

concepts such as ‘creative self-invention’ (Cooper, 2013) and reflexivity (Giddens, 1991), to discuss dance as a sphere and a practice which has invited informants to self-reflect, question and problematize aspects of their lives and identities that they previously considered as ‘natural’.

As will be argued in the data-analysis chapters, in the backstage spaces men have increased opportunities to ‘undo’ gender and reduce gender difference (Deutsch, 2007). They can also engage in feminine performances and they can question their sexuality. However, the backstage often coexists with the frontstage. There they are often, but not always, expected to perform a self which will be perceived as masculine and heterosexual. Hence, possibilities for creative self-invention are not infinite and the social norms that prevail in the outside-of-dance society, the institutional context and the dance genre these men practise limit said possibilities. The theoretical framework is discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

Contribution

This study aims to make an original contribution to the sociological analysis of gender and sexualities in dance, to the sociology of gender and sexualities more widely and the body of knowledge that engages with men and masculinities in feminised work settings more specifically. This project aims to provide insight into a sphere which has not been widely studied and, in contrast to other sociological studies of men in feminised professions, investigate a population which is trained to perform; it can thus reveal great insights with regard to gender and sexuality as performed.

Studies on dance and dancers have focused mainly on bodies and the embodiment of dance (Foster, 2004; Wainwright et al. 2006); they have approached dance as a cultural practice (Thomas, 1995) and have applied Bourdieu’s framework to investigate dancers’ backgrounds and trajectories (Sanderson, 2001, 2008; Tsitsou, 2012, 2014). Sociological studies on gender and sexuality in dance are scarce; they mainly come from dance studies and dance education and are predominantly concerned with gendered representations or

movement in dance (Gard, 2001; Risner, 2008; Roeback, 2001). Very little attention has been paid to males employed in the performing arts (Rumens and Broomfield, 2014), whilst no attention has been placed to the study of gender and sexualities in dance in Scotland. Burt (2007) is one of the few theorists to have focused on male dancers and masculinities in dance, yet his study is based on dancers' biographies and historical narratives. This study is therefore novel in that it employs qualitative research methods and sociological theories to analyse dancers' micro-level interactions and dance as an institutional culture, the qualities of which can influence negotiations of gender and sexualities.

Further, although there have been some sociological studies on males in female-concentrated professional contexts, this is an underdeveloped area; for example, Robinson et al. (2011) studied male hairdressers; Anderson (2005) studied male cheerleaders and Pullen and Simpson (2009) studied male nurses and male teachers as men employed in 'traditionally female dominated and feminised work' (p.561). These studies suggest that female-concentrated contexts and contexts with feminised associations are more likely to enable men to renegotiate gender. This study and the direct attention it pays to gender *and* sexuality adds to this body of knowledge. As Cottingham et al. argued, 'studies of men in women-dominated occupations have focused intently on gender and the reasons surrounding men's movement into such occupations, with less attention [given] to sexuality' (2016:535). This study, therefore, contributes to this body of literature by demonstrating how gender intersects with sexuality and the ways that a context such as dance influences male dancers' negotiations of gender *and* sexuality.

In addition, the fact that dancers are specifically trained to perform and to reflect on their performances can deepen this discussion. Dancers learn how to perform and embody different selves for onstage performances. Their training and performing arts background also influences their 'everyday' performances and day-to-day interactions. Thus, interesting insights concerning the performance of social identities can emerge when we study these processes as they occur in contexts which specifically foreground the 'mastering' of explicit forms of performance.

Furthermore, the performing arts have been perceived as a 'gay-friendly' sphere, which engages a proportionally higher number of gay and bisexual men than other social spheres, and approximately equal numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual men (Burt, 2007; Dolan, 2010; Risner, 2007; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014). This characteristic in itself can add significant insights into the ways that sexualities are constructed and negotiated in spaces where heterosexuality is not 'compulsory' (Rich, 1980) and non-heterosexualities are as accepted as heterosexualities are. However, as it will be demonstrated in ensuing chapters, dance institutions are characterised by tensions. There are structures that enable, yet at the same time restrict, the renegotiation of gender norms and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). In common with Rumens and Broomfield (2014:369) this thesis argues that the depiction of the performing arts industry as 'a haven for LGBT people is facile and superficial', but provides a more in-depth analysis of the processes which enable and restrict dancers when it comes to dominant understandings of sexuality.

Finally, this thesis can be of use to dance practitioners and educators as it raises issues which can be crucial to dance education. This thesis discusses how a practice which has been attractive to non-heterosexual men often devalues non-heterosexualities by continuing to reproduce heterosexual hegemony during onstage performances. This is especially the case in ballet. It discusses this paradox and, whilst not its primary aim, it can raise awareness of non-heterosexual, as well as heterosexual, male dancers' experiences of being involved in this sphere. It also suggests that efforts which aim to attract more men in this context, despite their good intentions, often end up in devaluing homosexuality, which this context seems to be so accepting and welcoming of.

Structure of the Thesis

This chapter has outlined and contextualised this study's aim and research questions, overall theoretical approach, methodological choices and intended contribution. Following on from this, chapter 2 provides a critical overview of the literature that informs this project and a thorough discussion of the theoretical framework that informed this study's data collection and analysis.

This consists of a combination of theoretical approaches and conceptual tools, which enable the consideration of the micro-level processes that occur in dance institutions but also the macro-level structures that might influence these.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology which was employed for the collection and analysis of this study's data. It discusses all phases of the research, from the formation of the research aim to data analysis. Heeding the advice of Pini and Pease (2013) who argued that studies on men and masculinities rarely address the links between theory, epistemology and methodology, this chapter provides a discussion which considers all these elements. This chapter also demonstrates the ways that the study of the processes which occur in dance institutions can bring novel insights with regards to gender and sexualities.

Chapter 4 offers an original sociological analysis of key historical periods and events which influenced the gendering of ballet and modern dance. The discussion in this chapter is novel in that is employs feminist accounts and gender and sexualities literature to analyse ballet and modern dance's emergence and development. It discusses the conditions that led to dance's transformation into a domain which is mutually constitutive with femininity, male effeminacy and homosexuality and it provides the contextual background for the analytical chapters that follow.

Following from these, chapter 5 addresses a key question: if dance is not seen as an activity that young boys would normally be encouraged to participate in, what are the conditions that influenced informants' involvement in this sphere? This chapter draws mostly on interview data to consider the conditions that led to participants' involvement in dance. It discusses informants' social location and their familial background as important factors which influenced firstly, the time they became involved in dance; secondly, the genres they engaged with and thirdly, their career trajectories. As will be demonstrated different genres enable different opportunities for questioning and self-reflection. Hence, informants' trajectories are important factors that impact not only their professional development but also understandings of themselves.

Chapter 6 briefly discusses displays of gender and gender relations during onstage productions and the negotiation of these during frontstage sessions. Yet,

this chapter mainly focuses on the interactions and practices that occur in the backstage spaces, which enable dancers to 'undo' gender (Deutsch, 2007) and problematise 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). It provides observation material and interview extracts which suggest that dance institutions offer dancers more opportunities than the outside-of-dance society for reflection. The 'rules' which characterise dance institutions as contexts turn these work settings into safe spaces where dancers can create 'gender trouble' and challenge the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999).

Chapter 7 engages with issues around bodies and embodiment and investigates the intersections, continuities and discontinuities between dancers' every day selves, or the selves they perform during backstage interactions, and the roles they get to perform onstage. This chapter argues that dancers as professional performers *learn* to occupy different roles onstage but also in their social life; they are thus more aware than other people of their onstage, frontstage, but also backstage image as performing before others *is* part of their everyday realities. It suggests that their performing background enables them to manage the impressions they give before others. However, this chapter also argues that gender and sexuality are often seen as inherent parts of informants' identities. As such, they are seen as not as easily amenable and are sometimes perceived as influencing informants' ability to successfully embody certain roles. This chapter argues that the analysis of gender and sexuality in a sphere where performing is part of people's everyday realities, can contribute to our understanding of social identities as performed, but also as embodied and thus hard to amend.

Following from these, chapter 8 analyses the ways male dancers negotiate their practice of dance. It argues that male dancers 'normalise' their professional identity by stressing its conventionally masculine qualities. It also argues that dancing bodies, in their effort to attract more men into dance, promote images of conventionally masculine, heterosexual male dancers. These practices thus result in a paradoxical situation where dance is perceived as a gay-friendly sphere, but also one which privileges heterosexuality and normative gender binaries. This chapter also discusses the tensions that characterise dance by analysing it as a practice which has conventionally masculine qualities but is nevertheless associated with effeminacy.

Lastly, this thesis closes with a concluding chapter that discusses this project's key findings and main contribution. It approaches each of the research questions separately and discusses how this study's findings have contributed to the social analysis of gender and sexuality in dance, the field of sociology of gender and sexualities, and to sociological debates on men in feminised workspaces. This thesis concludes by arguing that dance culture enables increased opportunities for transgressing gender and sexualities norms, mainly in the backstage spaces, while at the same time it contributes to their reproduction through its formal practices.

Chapter 2
Theorising Gender and Sexualities

Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives that have influenced this thesis. The key principle that drives this project is that dance is a 'female-concentrated' (Lupton, 2006), feminised and 'gay-friendly' sphere (Williams et al., 2009). It has been suggested that environments with such qualities provide men with opportunities to reflect on dominant notions of masculinity (Robinson and Hockey, 2011). In such settings, new understandings of gender and sexuality can be invoked. Hence, a sociological study of gender and sexualities in the context of dance can provide important insights with regards to this matter.

Ensuing chapters draw on various concepts and theoretical approaches to analyse the micro-interactions, actions and practices which occur in dance institutions and the ways these are influenced by wider structures. These approaches mainly derive from symbolic interactionism (for example, Blumer, 1969; Cooper, 2013; Goffman, 1959); sociological accounts of gender and sexualities (for example, Brickell, 2003, 2005; Deutsch, 2007; Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002), and the body of knowledge which is concerned with men in feminised professions (for example, Robinson et al., 2011; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014; Pullen and Simpson, 2009); masculinities studies (Anderson, 2005, 2009; Bridges, 2014; Connell, 2005) and queer theory (Berlant and Warner, 1998; Butler, 1993, 1999). All of these are discussed in the following sections.

This chapter develops in three main sections. *Theorising Gender* begins with a brief discussion on early feminism and the emergence of the concept of gender. It then moves towards discussing theoretical approaches which enable the study of gender and sexuality as performed, done, embodied and undone. The following section, *Theorising Masculinities,* critically discusses key theories on masculinities and examines some influential approaches that this thesis engages with. The final section, *Theoretical Framework,* outlines the main theories and concepts which are used to analyse this study's findings.

Theorising Gender

> It was central to the feminist project [of the 1970s] to counter the assumption that existing differences between women and men were ordained by nature. The concept of gender was adopted in order to emphasise the social construction of masculinity and femininity and the social ordering of relations between women and men (Jackson and Scott, 2002:1)

The naturalness of sex differences and sex qualities began to be questioned in the 1940s. Beauvoir's famous assertion that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (1949:330) emphasised the socially constructed qualities of femininity and womanhood and set the foundations for the feminist analysis of gender that followed in the 1960s and 1970s. Second wave feminists turned their attention to the inequalities between men and women. The invention of new concepts such as 'gender', 'patriarchy' and 'compulsory heterosexuality' started to replace 'the language of sex roles' (Jackson and Scott, 2002:9) and 'indicated the negative nature of power' (Beasley, 2005:19). For example, Kate Millett argued in 1969 that 'sex is a status category with political implications' (p.24). Millett referred to the relationship between the sexes as 'a relationship of dominance and subordinance' (p.25); sexual dominion, Millett wrote, is 'perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power. This is so because our society [….] is a patriarchy' (p.25).

British feminist sociologist Ann Oakley was one of the first to 'disentangle "sex" from "gender" in the many fields where the existence of natural differences between male and female has been proposed' (1972:16). Oakley in *Sex, Gender and Society* asked: 'does the source of the many differences between the sexes lie in biology or culture? If biology determines male and female roles, how does it determine them? How much influence does culture have?' (1972:15). While raising these questions, Oakley distinguished between male/female on the one hand, and masculine/feminine on the other to suggest that 'sex is a biological term; gender a psychological and cultural one' (p.158). As Oakley argued, 'sex differences in personality […] must emerge very early in the process of cultural learning' (1972:52). While referring to Margaret Mead's earlier studies on 'the variation in masculine and feminine personality types in different cultures' (p.54), Oakley argued that definitions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' vary in different societies and cultures. Culture, according to her, 'plays an important

part in the shaping of male and female personality' (p.77); the role of biology 'in determining the development of gender identity' is 'minimal' (p.170).

Early feminist accounts developed a distinction between sex and gender, where sex referred to 'anatomy and physiology' and gender to 'self-conception and behavior' (Young, 2005:13). This distinction served well to challenge notions that supported the assumption that biology is destiny, but also to emphasise the different opportunities men and women had in various social spheres. Since that time, these accounts have been developed and the theorising of gender has become more complex.

Jackson and Scott theorised gender, and as we will see later sexuality, as multi-layered. Gender, Jackson and Scott argued:

> denotes a hierarchical division between women and men embedded in both social institutions and social practices. Gender is thus a social structural phenomenon but is also produced, negotiated and sustained at the level of everyday interaction. The world we inhabit is always ordered by gender, yet gender is also embodied and lived by men and women, in local, specific, biographical contexts and is experienced as central to individual identities. […] gender cannot be abstracted from the wider social relations with which it is enmeshed, gender intersects other social divisions and inequalities, such as class, 'race' and sexuality, and that meanings of masculinity, as well as femininity vary within, as well as between societies (2002:1-2).

Influenced by this approach, this project investigates dance as a gendered institutional culture. It investigates the gendered interactions and actions which occur within dance institutions, the ways gender intersects with sexuality and the ways it is embodied and experienced by dancers. Jackson and Scott's (2002) theorisation of gender enables the consideration of gender not only as done, but also as a structure which influences people's doings.

The following sections discuss theories and concepts which can be useful in the analysis of gender and sexualities as multi-layered. These revolve around symbolic interactionism, sociologists who analysed the intersections between gender and sexuality, theorists who wrote about gender as being done, as embodied, but also as undone.

Performing the Self, Accomplishing Gender

The Self as Performed

Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) applied a series of theatrical metaphors to analyse individuals' everyday social interactions as performances. Through the concept of 'performance' he referred to 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (1959:26). Goffman approached individuals as social actors who perform at a 'frontstage' region. A region, he argued, is 'any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception' (p.109); for each frontstage region there is a backstage region (p.109). The former refers to where the performance is given and the latter to where the performance is prepared. Backstage regions are out of the sight of the audiences and hence, places where social actors can 'step out of character' (p.115).

Yet, as Goffman suggested, there are 'items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes' (p.34); some of these are 'sex, age, racial characteristics; size and looks' (p.34). He referred to this as 'personal front'. Heeding, but slightly adapting, Goffman's division, dance institutions are in this study approached as contexts which consist of backstage, frontstage and onstage spaces where dancers take on different roles and meet different expectations (see also chapter 1).

Further, and importantly for this study, performances according to Goffman, aim at convincing those present during an encounter that the social actors are who they claim to be; he conceptualised this as 'impression management' and argued that:

> regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objective, […] it will be in the individual's interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him (p.15).

Goffman, as a theorist who is often associated with symbolic interactionism, and symbolic interactionists more widely treat individuals as *active* agents who have

the ability to control the impressions they wish to give to others (Denis, 2011). For symbolic interactionists 'individuals are primarily conscious and rational beings who are largely in control of their social performances' (Layder, 2006:76). As Blumer argued, the social actor has to 'construct and guide his action' (1969:15).

Additionally, for Goffman (1959), and symbolic interactionists more widely, the self emerges in interaction (Blumer, 1969).

> The self appears as a highly social product, which is the result of individually staged projections and responses taking place in social meetings as well as of institutional and societal constrains (Jacobsen and Kristiansen 2015:105).

The latter is important and, as will be demonstrated in the data-analysis chapters, the performance of gender and sexuality is influenced by the spaces individuals act, the constraints and possibilities these enable. As Goffman argued:

> this self itself does not derive from its processor, but from the whole scene of his action […]. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation –this self- is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. The self then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location […] it is a dramatic effect arising diffusively from a scene that is presented, and the crucial concern is whether it will be credited or discredited (1959:244-45).

The cited extract suggests two issues. First, the validation of performances by the audience is crucial for the self they will impute on the performed character as social actors need to be 'recognised' as the characters they claim to be. Second, it suggests that the self is produced in interaction; it is a 'dramatic effect'. The self thus, depends on social actors' performances *and* the interpretation of these performances by the audience they perform before. Cooper also argued that 'an individual can act as their own audience' (2013:69). Hence, social actors need to convince both themselves and others present that they are the character they claim to be.

Different situations involve different audiences, and hence different expectations; social actors need to adjust their performances according to the

changing demands of each encounter. Goffman referred to this process as ‘role distance’ (1961). As he argued, individuals have many sides to their personalities, which they may emphasise or deemphasise depending on the context they act and the ‘nature’ of interaction they are involved. Social actors follow ‘scripts’, an equivalent of the scripts that actors in theatre follow, which enables them to present the kind of character they wish to convey before others. Whilst Goffman created a distinction between the individual as character and a performer, the two, he argued, are equated: ‘the self-as-character is usually seen as something housed within the body of its possessor […] being a nodule, somehow, in the psychobiology of personality’ (1959:244). However, as he argued, the self as performed character is ‘a dramatic effect arising from the scene that is presented’ (p.245).

In his later work Goffman shifted his attention towards ‘frames’, or ‘the principles of organisation which govern events -at least social ones- and our subjective involvement in them’ (1974:11). Frames, he argued, are ‘schemata of interpretation’ (p.21) and exist as ‘primary framework’, ‘transformations’ or ‘reworkings’ of the primary framework. Primary frameworks may consist of natural or social frames. Natural frames refer to ‘occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, and purely physical’ (1974:21-22). Social frames on the other hand:

> provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being. Such an agency […] does what can be described as “guided doings”. These doings subject the doer to “standards”, to social appraisal of his action based on its honesty, efficiency, economy, safety, elegance, tactfulness, good taste and so forth (Goffman, 1974:22).

Social frameworks influence how social situations will be defined and interpreted. ‘People’s stock of knowledge, prior experiences, and expectations are used to decode social situations and make sense of what is going on’ (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015:124). In this sense, frames pre-exist social interactions and influence the meanings that can be negotiated. However, as Jacobsen and Kristiansen argued:

> frames might be given in advance, but actors have the ability and competence to find out which frame is at work, then to adjust their behaviour according to the frame and ultimately also to propose a new or even to change the prevailing frame. […] frames can be changed by the ongoing interaction (2015:125).

Hence, whilst admitting that previous knowledge does guide social actors' actions, Goffman insists on actors' active interpretation and their ability to 'rework' frames in order to adjust their behaviour and manage their performances.

Even though Goffman did not make any crucial claims with regard to gender, his framework can be applied to analyse gendered interactions and the ways in which individuals' presentation of themselves establishes them as gendered beings. Goffman only paid direct attention to gender in *Gender Advertisements* where he studied pictures of femininity in advertising images (1979:25). In that book he suggested that gender in the form of:

> femininity and masculinity are in a sense the prototypes of essential expression- something that can be conveyed fleetingly in any social situation and yet something that strikes at the most basic characterisation of the individual (p.7).

By 'expressions' he referred to 'the indexical signs' which are 'given off' by people in social situations (p.6). As Smith explained, people enact 'appropriate schedules of gender displays […] [which] serve to affirm basic social arrangements and they present ultimate conceptions of the nature of persons (our 'essential' gender identity)' (2006:92). For Goffman gender displays are learned during early socialisation and are 'expressed' in social situations. They are not essential in the sense that they do not pre-exist social situations. As Goffman wrote, 'there is no gender identity' (1979:8); yet, gender is felt 'as the most deeply seated traits of man' (p.7). The content of these displays, he argued, and the competence of people as members of a sex-class to sustain these displays, maintains their characterisation as such and the distinction between the sex-classes. He suggested that the facilitation of gender expressions 'runs so deeply into the organisation of society' (p.8) which sustains the perception of gender divisions as natural.

Overall, Goffman, and symbolic interactionists, suggested that the self emerges in encounters. People's interactions, and their interpretation of these, are always constrained by frames which influence how they understand, perceive, and (re)negotiate action. As Brickell argued, 'while Goffman understands the self to act and exercise agency within interactions, this is never unmediated agency or action, for the very form taken by that self arises in the context of the possibilities permitted within the culture' (2005:31). Brickell applied Goffman's framework to study gender and argued that the ways we express or can express ourselves as men or women 'is made available from schedules and reinforced by the doing of gender within social interaction' (p.31). Goffman's approach is useful because it recognises social actors as active agents who act, however, within constraints; his approach therefore considers both agency and social structures. His framework is also useful because it provides a series of concepts, which can be applied to analyse interactions and people's presentation of self.

Gender as Accomplishment

Like symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists also focused on micro-level interactions. The self for them however, is seen as an ongoing matter; the self is seen as *accomplished* within interaction and as such it needs to be continuously re-accomplished and reaffirmed. More specifically, and with regard to gender, Garfinkel argued that we all learn how to *accomplish* gender. He based this claim on the case of Agnes, an intersex person who was assigned the male sex status at birth but learned to accomplish femininity. Agnes sought to:

> secure and guarantee for herself the ascribed rights and obligations of an adult female by the acquisition and use of skills and capacities, the efficacious display of female appearances and performances, and the mobilising of appropriate feelings and purposes (1967:134).

Garfinkel's study reinforced the conceptualising of gender as constructed and accomplished through people's presentation of themselves within scenes of interaction. Agnes managed her performances to 'pass', and be perceived, as female. Agnes also learned to perform femininity to be recognised as a woman. However, and this is key for the tradition of ethnomethodology, meaning is

‘always fragile and ambiguous’ (Layder, 2006:100) and ‘truly derives from or arises out of interaction’ (Denis, 2011:350). Meaning thus needs to be constantly (re)negotiated, (re)accomplished and (re)transformed.

Further, as Garfinkel argued ‘persons are reminded to act in accordance with expected attitudes, appearances, affiliations, dress, style of life, round of life, and the like that are assigned by the major institutions’ (1967:125). He wrote about the ‘indexical nature of meaning’ to refer to the necessity for auditors in a situation to have some background knowledge to get a sense of the situation and the meanings that are being communicated. Whilst his view of gender as accomplished suggests agency and sees individuals as being able to learn how to present the selves they wish to convey, he also stressed all other factors, or social structures, which shape these interactions. Interaction therefore, is always seen as ‘an ongoing accomplishment created by people from within situations’ (Layder, 2006:101).

While his view might seem similar to that of Goffman (1959), Garfinkel criticised Goffman because ‘his analyses either take episodes for illustration, or turn the situations that his scheme analyses into episodic ones’ (1967:167). Garfinkel, in contrast to Goffman, argued that the accomplishment of self is an ongoing matter. As he argued, Agnes’ passing was active and required continuous work; as such, it was an ongoing process (1967:137). Hence, according to ethnomethodologists, for people to be perceived as men or women they need to perform continually the socially prevailing ‘signs’, which should accordingly be recognised by those who are being present in interaction (1967).

Garfinkel’s study of Agnes contributed to the study of gender as it convincingly argued that that which is conceived as femininity, or masculinity, are not naturally possessed qualities but rather performances that people can learn to accomplish. Like symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists also consider interactions to be important, and see social actors as active agents. However, ethnomethodologists stress that action and meaning must always be seen in relation to the context they occur in; objects, behaviors and their descriptions are seen as interconnected and as such they cannot be separately studied (Francis and Hester, 2004). Interaction is, therefore, always seen as ‘an ongoing accomplishment created by people from within situations’ (Layder, 2006:101).

Doing Gender

Influenced by both Goffman and Garfinkel's approaches, West and Zimmerman developed their framework based on three key concepts: sex, sex category and gender (1987). According to Messerschmidt, up until the mid-1980s gender theorisations 'suffered an impasse at both the "micro" and the "macro" levels' (2009:85); as Messerschmidt argued, West and Zimmerman's *Doing Gender* (1987) acted as 'a conceptual breakthrough that compellingly responded to the theoretical impasse and influenced feminist theory worldwide' (2009:88). West and Zimmerman's theoretical framework was revolutionary as it argued against gender essentialism and emphasised gender as *done*, or accomplished, within interaction. Following Garfinkel's work, their theory proposed 'an ethnomethodologically informed understanding of gender as a routine, methodical and recurring accomplishment' (1987:126).

In addition, being influenced by Goffman, they approached gender as 'socially scripted dramatization' which is created and recreated in social interaction (1987:130). Like Goffman, they emphasised the effect social situations can have on the display, and therefore accomplishment, of gender. At the same time though they recognised the influence that gender has on shaping social arrangements and maintaining social divisions. They criticised Goffman for 'relegating gender to the periphery of interaction' (1987:127) and, like Garfinkel (1967), they argued that gender is an ongoing accomplishment which involves:

> a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine "natures" […]. Gender, is an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society. […] participants in interaction organise their various and manifold activities to reflect or express gender, and they are disposed to perceive the behaviour of others in a similar light (1987:126-7).

According to them, 'the accomplishment of gender is interactional and institutional' (2009:114). To strengthen their approach, they proposed three analytically distinct concepts: sex, sex category, and gender. They associated sex with individuals' genitalia at birth or chromosomal typing before birth and sex category with the categorization of individuals into categories such as 'man'

or ‘woman’. Categorisation happens based on the ‘presumption that essential (sex) criteria exist and would or should be there if looked for’ (1987:32). As they argued, sex categorisation is achieved by the ‘socially required identification displays that proclaim one’s membership in one or the other (sex) category’ (1987:127), and it involves ‘the display and recognition of socially regulated external insignia of sex- such as deportment, dress, and bearing’ (2009:113). Lastly, their third category, gender, refers to ‘an ongoing situated process, a “doing” rather than a “being”’ (2009:114).

Their work has been mostly criticised for the ‘sex category’ concept and the ways it fits in the process of ‘doing gender’ (Messerschmidt, 2009). As West and Zimmerman argued in a later publication:

> the relationship between sex category and gender is the relationship between being a recognizable incumbent of a sex category (which itself takes some doing) and being accountable to current cultural conceptions of conduct becoming to -or compatible with the “essential natures” of- a woman or a man (2009:113-114).

Whilst they accepted Messerschmidt’s criticisms that ‘sex category incumbency is the ground against which peers evaluate one another’s conduct’ (2009:118), they defended their position and argued that ‘investigation of sex category production –and recognition- can only complicate and deepen our understanding of doing gender’ (p.118). Despite the criticisms their theory received, their concept of gender as something which is done contributed in the analysis of gender as something that is achieved and created in social interaction. As we will see in a later section, theorists developed West and Zimmerman’s notion of ‘doing gender’ and proposed that we should be also studying the ‘undoing of gender’ which refers to actions that reduce gender difference (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009). Their contribution in theorising gender was therefore important.

Gender as Performative

Judith Butler, like West and Zimmerman (1987), wrote about gender as done. However, Butler’s approach is very different from the theorists who were

previously discussed. Butler theorised gender as 'a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo' (1988:520). Gender, for Butler, is:

> instituted through the stylisation of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self (1988:519).

As she argued 'acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance' (1999:173). In *Gender Trouble*, one of her most cited books, Butler wrote that:

> within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative –that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed. […] there is no identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results (1999:33).

Butler employed Austin's work on performatives and suggested that the repetitive performances of gender result in what seems to be a stable and fixed gender identity that one is or has when in fact gender is a 'substantive effect'; it is, in this sense, performative.

Emphasis on the subject as 'discursive effect' has been common in post-structuralism and Butler's formulation of gender as performative 'denotes both a process of profound corporeal inscription and also a fundamental instability at the heart of dominant gender norms' (McNay, 2000:33). As McNay argued, 'poststructuralist theory has criticised the idea of the identity of the self by deconstructing its unity and revealing it to be an illusory effect emerging from the uneasy suturing of incommensurable discursive positions' (2000:17). Beasley also argued that 'postmodern frameworks conceive humans as no more or less than a social product organised by power' (2005:24). Butler's theorisation of gender is aligned with such frameworks.

Further, Butler discussed performativity as 'forced reiteration of norms' which construct the subject (1993:94); the subject 'is a performative construct' (Salih, 2003:44) that does not 'not pre-exist the deed' (Butler, 1999:33). Yet, as Salih explained, for Butler there is a distinction between performance and

performativity. 'Performance presupposes the existence of a subject' whereas performativity does not (2003:45); there is no subject behind the deeds as it is those deeds which construct the subject. 'The repetition of norms is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject' (Butler, 1993:95). In *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler argued that:

> power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for "our" existence and what we harbour and preserve in the beings that we are […]. Subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency (1997:2).

Through the concept of 'subjection', Butler referred to the subject and any form of agency which are always, at least partially, mediated by power and power techniques. As she argued, 'no individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected' (1997:11). Subjection, Brady and Schirato explained, 'allows subjects to be (recognised); and provides them with an entry to, and a narrational trajectory within, the wider socio-cultural field' (2011:26). Likewise, in 2000, Butler wrote that:

> the subject is itself constituted through the embodiment of certain norms that establish in advance and with considerable social force what will and will not be a recognizable subject. […] The kinds of differentiation that individuals undergo, as they attain the status of the subject, involve the individual's insertion into grammars of bodily action and speech, grammars that regulate the bodily performance of speech (p.33-34).

This body of work suggests that subjects become recognised as *subjects* within power matrices. Whilst Butler's theorisation of gender, sex and bodies has shifted throughout her work, at the core of her arguments has always been the importance of the 'heterosexual matrix' (1999), which is discussed in the following section. Every individual, she suggested, is 'compelled to "cite" the norms in order to qualify and remain a viable subject' (1993:232). Femininity, she argued, and masculinity too, 'is not a product of choice, but the forcible citation of a norm' (1993:232).

Butler's theorisation of subjects has been at the core of her work's criticisms (Brickell, 2005; Lloyd, 1999; Salih, 2004). Brickell argued that since the subject is constituted through discourse, Butler's theorisation of it does not allow

agency; however, by referring to *doing* or *undoing* gender she implies action and therefore agency (2005). Likewise, Nelson suggested that the notion of performativity needs reworking as it 'undermines attempts to imagine a historically and geographically concrete subject that is constituted by dominant discourses, but is potentially able to reflect upon and actively negotiate, appropriate or resist them' (1999:332). Despite these criticisms, Butler's framework has been used widely to analyse gender relations and, as demonstrated in the following section, the links of sex, gender and sexuality. Her theorisation of the latter is used throughout this thesis.

Sex, Gender and Sexuality

No study of gender can be established without the consideration of sexuality. As Jackson and Scott argued, 'sexuality is gendered in fundamental ways and gender divisions sustain, and are sustained by, normative heterosexuality' (2002:20). Butler also developed the concept of 'heterosexual matrix' to explain the complicated interrelationship of sex, desire and gender (1999). Whilst in a later publication she referred to this as 'heterosexual hegemony' (1993), the point she wished to communicate is that heterosexuality, as the dominant form of sexuality, regulates gender binaries. These in their turn contribute to the maintenance of heterosexuality's hegemonic position.

Butler's conceptualisation of the heterosexual matrix aims to:

> designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalised. […] a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality (1999:194).

Whilst acknowledging the hegemonic position which heterosexuality has, Rich (1980) and Butler (1999) are amongst the theorists who established that heterosexuality is as constructed as any other form of sexuality. Butler argued that heterosexuality is not the 'original' and homosexuality its imperfect 'copy' (1999). As there is no original in the first place, heterosexuality is just as much

of a ‘copy’ as homosexuality is. This can be extended to cover other forms of sexuality. Nevertheless, through the heterosexual matrix the established gender order and heterosexuality come to be seen as natural (1999).

Berlant and Warner used another concept, that of ‘heteronormativity’, to talk about the ‘institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality not only coherent —that is, organized as a sexuality— but also privileged’ (1998:548). Binnie however, whilst acknowledging that in some contexts or instances ‘heterosexual identities are uniformly normative’ (2007:33), argued that the concept of heteronormativity is no longer useful; ‘the notion of heteronormativity tends to lump all heterosexuals together in the same box, and can mask or obscure the differences between and within sexual dissident identities and communities’ (p.33). Indeed, such conceptualising of heteronormativity can mask the inequalities that exist even within a category which seems to be privileged. It ignores for example inequalities because of class, gender or ‘race’.

A final useful framework which discusses the ways gender and sexuality are linked, and heterosexuality as the prevalent form of sexuality was developed by Jackson (1999). Jackson argued that heterosexuality ‘is sustained not only at the institutional level, but through our everyday sexual and social practices, which indicates that, in some sense, it requires our continual reaffirmation for its continuance’ (1999:179-180). In addition to the institutional level at which heterosexuality functions, Jackson emphasised the role that everyday practices and micro-interactions have in sustaining it as the dominant form of sexuality. As Jackson argued, sexuality operates in different intersecting levels:

> At the level of social structure, sexuality is socially constructed through the institutionalization of heterosexuality bolstered by law, the state and social convention. The institution of heterosexuality is inherently gendered, it rests upon the assumed normality of specific forms of social and sexual relations between women and men. Sexuality is also socially constructed at the level of meaning, through its constitution as the object of discourse and through the specific discourses on the sexual in circulation at any historical moment; these discourses serve to define what is sexual, to differentiate the ‘perverse’ from the ‘normal’ and, importantly, to delimit appropriately masculine and feminine forms of sexuality. However, meaning is also deployed within and emergent from social interaction and hence finds its expression at yet another level –that of our

> everyday social practices, through which each of us negotiates and makes sense of our own sexual lives. Here, too, sexuality is constantly in the process of being constructed and reconstructed, enacted and re-enacted, within specific social contexts and relationships. Sexuality is thus socially constructed by what embodied individuals actually do. Finally, sexuality is socially constructed at the level of subjectivity, through complex social and cultural processes by which we acquire sexual and gendered desires and identities (1999:5-6).

Jackson identified four levels at which heterosexuality operates and is regulated as the prevailing form of sexuality: institutionally; at the level of meaning; in individuals' everyday social practices; and at the level of subjectivity (see also Jackson and Scott, 2010:3). The ways gender and sexuality function on these different levels are explored in the data-analysis chapters; chapter 6 discusses the ways that heterosexuality is often seen as a prerequisite of masculinity, whilst chapter 7 discusses the ways that certain gender performances signify certain sexualities and thus benefit certain people in dance. Ensuing chapters set to analyse the different processes that occur in different spaces in dance institutions and discuss the tensions that characterise this sphere.

Embodiment and the Gendering of Bodies

While previous sections discussed how gender might be approached as performed and done, this section discusses gender as embodied. It engages with Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (1984; 1990) and aspects of the reflexivity debate. One of the topics this thesis investigates is whether male dancers, as trained performers and skilled actors, are 'reflexive' (Cooper, 2013; Giddens, 1991) and able to manage the impressions they give before others (Goffman, 1959). As Cooper argued, 'the level of reflexive awareness involved is likely to vary considerably depending on the individual and their social context' (2013:69); male dancers, who act in a context of heightened reflexivity, might be thus assumed to have increased levels of 'reflexive-awareness' (Cooper, 2013) and the ability to manage their actions and practices. Nevertheless, theorists who write on embodiment stress the enduring parts of our identities and the ways these are inscribed on, and given off through, our bodies, comportment, movements, appearance and demeanour.

This section discusses aspects of this debate and introduces some of the theories that will be used in the data analysis chapters. Chapter 7, for example, places its attention on dancers' bodies and analyses aspects of gender and sexuality that are seen by some as embodied and by others as elements that can be performed and actively managed. Further, chapter 7 analyses aspects of dancers' bodies that are seen as signifying certain gender and sexualities, and the ways that these might influence dancers' dance practice, abilities and dance trajectories. However, the main focus of chapter 7 remains on gender and sexuality (for studies on dancing and dancers' bodies see: Fraleigh, 1987; Tsitsou, 2012; Wainwright et al., 2006; Wainwright and Turner, 2006).

Habitus, Embodied Dispositions and Reflexivity

Marcel Mauss in his *Techniques of the Body* (1973) discussed the socio-cultural construction of bodies. Mauss argued that there are no natural ways people use their bodies; these are rather socially learned and culturally dependent. He argued that people learn how to walk, swim, run, sleep, give birth and so on; the ways people use their bodies vary between different societies and cultures. Mauss used the concept of 'technique' to refer to everything bodies do which seems natural but is in fact *learned*. Gender, as has been established thus far, is also learned; gender norms regulate individuals' bodies, and as Butler has argued, the reiteration of those norms creates the effect of gender and sexed bodies (1999).

As Mauss argued, once one learns a technique, one 'cannot get rid of it' (1973:71). It becomes naturalised, and is experienced as part of one's self. Mauss used the concept of 'habitus' to discuss the biological, sociological and psychological mediators that influence the ways bodies move or the ways they are used. As he suggested, a consideration of all three mediators is crucial in understanding body techniques. Despite his innovative work the concept of 'habitus' became widely known through the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

Bourdieu defined habitus as 'embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – [habitus] is the active presence of the whole past of

which it is the product' (1990:56). Bourdieu discussed habitus as part of his theoretical elaboration of fields. He used the notion of 'bodily hexis' to describe the knowledge or history that is embodied. Hexis, Jenkins explained, refers to the embodiment of habitus and in Bourdieu's work 'it is used to signify deportment, the manner and style in which actors "carry themselves": stance, gait, gesture etc.' (1992:75). As Bourdieu argued, bodily hexis is 'political mythology realised, em-bodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking' (1990:69-70). Habitus, in the form of bodily hexis, becomes preconscious and seems, therefore, to be a natural and obvious way of acting (Jenkins, 1992:76). As Bourdieu argued, 'what is "learned by body" is not something that one has […] but something that one is' (1990:73). Sociocultural norms and knowledge are inscribed on, and are reflected and communicated to others through, bodies and body actions. However, as Witz et al. argued, 'bodily schemas or embodied dispositions are not fixed once and for all. To be effective, these require 'doxa' that aligns embodied praxis with the habitus' (2003:40).

While focusing on the impact social class has on habitus, Bourdieu argued that 'the notion of habitus expresses the rejection of a whole series of alternatives into which social science has locked itself, that of consciousness (or of subject) and of the unconscious' (1985:12-13). Habitus, for Bourdieu, is 'the system of structured, structuring dispositions, [which is] constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions' (1990:52). As such it becomes unconscious and operates through 'a feel for the game', which refers to all actions, reactions and so on which occur unconsciously. Social actors do not think about or reflect on what should be done or why. As Adkins argued, habitus 'concerns a dynamic intersection of structure and action. […] habitus produces enduring (although not entirely fixed) orientations to action' (2003:23). It is thus 'embodied history', which also guides individuals' future actions (Bourdieu, 1990:56).

Bourdieu's theory of habitus has been criticised for being determinist; however, as McNay argued, habitus for Bourdieu is a generative structure. Bourdieu's 'understanding of habitus […] is expressed in a dialogical temporality denoting both the ways in which norms are inculcated upon the body and also the moment

of praxis or living through these norms' (2000:32). As Adkins also wrote, Bourdieu's theory 'breaks with the dualisms (objectivism versus subjectivism, structure versus action)' (2004:193; 2003); his concept of habitus 'both generates and shapes action' (Adkins, 2004:193). However, as Jenkins noted, 'it is difficult to know where to place conscious deliberation and awareness in Bourdieu's scheme of things' (1992:77).

This thesis engages at certain points with Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and bodily hexis to investigate the ways dancers' involvement in (certain types of) dance conditions their body, and the ways they will be perceived by others in regards to gender. As dance, and ballet more specifically, relies on movement which might be conceived as feminine (for a discussion of the tensions that underline this argument see chapter 8), chapter 7 investigates the effects that men's involvement in dance has had on their bodies, embodied performances of gender and overall presentation of the self (Goffman, 1959). Like Thorpe (2010) who used Bourdieu's key concepts to study the culture of skateboarders and argued that the practical engagement of men in the snowboarding culture results in the development of a 'snowboarding habitus', this thesis too investigates whether men's involvement in dance results in a 'dance habitus' which influences their embodied actions and ways of coming across as gendered.

Further, a condition of dance is that dancers should be able to transform onstage and embody various roles; yet, Bourdieu would suggest that their bodily hexis would restrict this transformation; their bodies, and their embodied histories, would influence their ability to do this. The idea of habitus, as McNay argued, 'suggests a layer of embodied experience that is not immediately amendable to self-fashioning' (2000:41). Likewise, Ahmed argued that our bodies are transformed through the repetitions of actions and practices they engage in (2006:57). However, others, such as Cooper (2013) and Garfinkel (1967) for example, suggested that the embodiment of gender is never fully achieved; since it is a process, it involves identity work and enables 'possibilities for creativity […] and reflexive awareness of the relationship between bodies and identity' (Cooper, 2013:91). Likewise Witz et al. also suggested that 'modes of embodiment are unfinished projects and therefore open to transformation as part of the reflexive project of the embodied self' (2003:41).

An example of this argument can be found in studies on transsexual people who during their transitioning 'retrain' their bodies 'hoping to maximise the chances that their self-definition would be affirmed in their everyday lives' (Schrock et al., 2005:323). Schrock et al.'s interviewees for example worked to 'recondition their body movements and vocalisations- which altered [their] subjectivity' (p.323). Studies on transsexual people are a great example of how gender, and sex for that matter, can be monitored, relearned, experienced and performed through the body. Also, as we have already seen, for one to be seen as gendered one needs to perform oneself, manage one's behaviour, deportment, dress and so on as part of the gendered category one claims to be (Garfinkel, 1967). Hence, bodies, and the ways gender is embodied, performed and communicated to others are important in relation to whether others will attribute to the social actor the gender that the actor claims to *be*.

Further, Cooper discussed gay male identities to argue that gay men are 'aware and self-monitor how they dress and use body language in various social contexts' because of homophobic incidents (2013:96). Such incidents make gay men conscious of how they might come across. To avoid such incidents gay men monitor their performances and embodied practices. Gay men's 'reflexive awareness of embodiment is [thus] likely to be increased' (p.96). Cooper's argument draws on Giddens's (1991) theory, which suggests that social actors are able to respond flexibly to social situations and monitor their actions and practices accordingly. This is also aligned with Goffman's theory (1959).

Reflexivity, however, as Adkins argued,

> must be understood to involve reflection on the unthought and unconscious categories of thought, that is, the uncovering of unthought categories of habit which are themselves corporealised preconditions of our more self-conscious practices (2003:25).

Adkins, while developing Bourdieu's theory of practice argued that 'Bourdieu's social theory of practice leads […] to a situated reflexivity, that is not separated from the everyday but is intrinsically linked to the (unconscious) categories of habit which shape action' (2003:25). This suggests that reflexivity is also at least partially limited and influenced by previous knowledge and actions, or one's habitus.

In either case, it should be acknowledged that 'reflexivity' is influenced by the social and institutional constraints individuals face. Robinson and Hockey (2011) for example, argued that male hairdressers could contest gender norms and perform femininity because hairdressing is a feminised arena. Likewise, Cooper argued that 'individuals embody their social context, to produce a body which is both unique and a powerful signifier of collective norms. […] bodies are individual projects and also collective imprints of our social context' (2013:91). Hence, the cultural connotations a context has can *enable* or restrict opportunities for reflexivity and potentially gender subversion. As we will see in chapter 6, the backstage spaces of dance institutions create more opportunities than the outside-of-dance society for dancers to reflect on themselves and their previous knowledge with regards to gender and sexuality. This happens because of the cultural connotations the sphere of dance has.

Gender and the Body

Davis, while discussing feminist scholarship on the body, argued that there are 'two separate strands within feminist theory on the body' (1997:8). In the first strand, she argued, 'the body is rejected altogether as a basis for explaining difference' (p.8); by referring to Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement that 'women are made and not born' (1952 in Davis, 1997:8), Davis suggested that this strand of feminist scholars saw the differences between the sexes as socially constructed rather than biological. This however resulted in 'feminist theory concentrating on the cultural meanings attached to the body or the social consequences of gender rather than onto how individuals interacted with and through their bodies' (p.8).

This resulted in feminists beginning to question the sex/gender distinction. Butler for example argued that sex is as constructed as gender is (1999). Hugh and Witz argued that 'Butler is bent upon "troubling" the sex/gender distinction' by emphasising that sex is no less constructed than gender (1997:53). Butler wrote that individuals are assumed to have a (female or male) sex based on which their 'gender operates as an act of cultural inscription' (1999:186). As Hughes and Witz wrote, in *Gender Trouble* 'Butler is moving

beyond a notion of the sexed body as a substance upon which gender can work, towards a position where the body represents that which gender works through and indeed constitutes' (1997:53). In *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler argued that the materiality of sex and, hence, the sexed body is itself socially constructed. This, as Hughes and Witz argued, 'opened up a mode of radical "bodily thinking"' (1997:55).

In an effort to engage with the materiality of bodies, Butler shifted away 'from a focus on gender as a fabricated bodily performance, and towards a preoccupation with the discursively constituted materiality of the sexed body' (Hughes and Witz, 1997:54). In *Bodies that Matter,* Butler stressed the importance of power matrices, which construct gender relations and argued that the materiality of 'sex', and sexed bodies, is achieved through 'a forcible reiteration of regulatory norms' (1993:7). This functions to maintain sexual difference which itself maintains the 'heterosexual imperative' (1993:2). Butler's notion of 'matter', 'as a process of materialisation that stabilises over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface' (Butler, 1993:9), 'poses materialist questions' without though, Hughes and Witz argued, 'having to revert to a materialist ontological framework' (1997:54).

For the second strand of feminists, Davis argued, 'difference is treated as essential for understanding embodiment –that is individuals' interactions with their bodies and through their bodies with the world around them' (1997:9). Conditions of embodiment, she argued, 'are organised by gender, 'race', sexuality and more, resulting in different possibilities and constraints on individuals' body practices' (p.9). Young (1980) for instance, following a phenomenological approach argued that the ways females are socialised make it impossible for them to use their bodies and bodily capacities to the full. As she argued in a later publication, her essay 'Throwing Like a Girl' 'theorised socially constructed habits of feminine body comportment in male-dominated society, and their implications for the sense of agency and power of persons who inhabit these body modalities' (2005:6). Females' body movement, which is conditioned by social restrictions and possibilities, becomes thus, constrained. As Young wrote, 'bodily comportment, physical engagement with things, ways of using the

body in performing tasks, and bodily self-image' are all conditioned by the socio-cultural context one acts in and the 'norms' that form this (1980:141).

Further, Robinson and Hockey suggested that 'the concept of embodiment, takes us towards the body that we are and, as such, provides a fruitful starting point from which to understand the dialectical processes of identification as they unfold within particular social contexts' (2011:79). They moreover argued that 'gender emerges as the outcome of particular forms of embodied practice, performance, interaction and play which can act to not only reinforce or 'do', but also destabilise or 'undo' masculinity in its hegemonic or stereotypical forms' (p.83). This matter is investigated in ensuing chapters which discuss available possibilities for dancers to 'do' but also 'undo' gender. The study of a context such as dance, which is seen, at least in its backstage spaces, as subverting the dominant gender order, can be revealing with regard to the ways gender is done but also undone.

Undoing Gender, Transgressing Gender Norms

As we have seen in previous sections, gender has been theorised as socially constructed and dominant gender binaries as maintained through discursive and bodily performances, cultural paradigms, institutional and social structures. Gender norms are also seen as regulated through (hetero)sexuality, social class and so on. In addition to this literature, there is a body of work which discusses the possibilities for 'undoing gender', the subversion of gender norms, the blurring of gender binaries and the creation of 'gender trouble' (see for example, Butler, 1999; Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2007; Robinson et al., 2011).

Adkins argued that in feminist sociologists' accounts of gender transformation lays the view that 'within late modernity there has been a restructuring of gender regimes' (2003:27). Adkins suggested that there have been 'possibilities for critical reflection on the (previously unconscious and unthought) norms, rules and habits governing gender', precisely because modernity has influenced 'the previous synchronicity of habitus and field' (p.27). However, as Adkins suggested, this view places an 'overemphasis in the reflexive modernisation

framework on possibilities for a self-conscious fashioning of identity, particularly gender identity' (p.28).

Adopting a somehow different approach, Butler's theorisation of gender as performative also suggests its fluidity and therefore creates possibilities for individuals to 'undo' it (2004). In *Bodies that Matter* she argued that there is space for destabilising norms. Construction, Butler suggested, 'is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms; sex is both produced and destabilised in the course of this reiteration' (1993:10). The performative construction of gender identity, McNay explained, 'causes agency in that the identificatory processes […] permit the stabilization of a subject who is capable of resisting those norms' (2000:34-5). According to Butler, parody and drag can specifically reveal gender's performative nature. These are examples which suggest that the stability of male/female and masculine/feminine distinctions can be subverted (1999). Jackson also suggested that hegemonic forms of gender can be subverted. As Jackson argued:

> the complexity of social life permits considerable everyday choice and negotiation. The recognition of agency is crucially important if we are to admit the possibility of resistance to hegemonic forms of gender and heterosexuality, as well as the ways in which we might be actively complicit in their perpetuation. Agency is also central to understanding our individual sexualities, in that we each reflexively constitute for ourselves a sense of what it means to be straight or gay, feminine or masculine, we make active sense of what it feels like to desire another, to fall in love or to "have sex" (1999:24).

Jackson argued that resistance to hegemonic forms of gender, and sexuality, is possible, but presupposes the recognition of agency, which is, nevertheless, mediated by a pre-existing cultural order. The same was argued by Garfinkel (1967) and Goffman (1974). Hence, even though people are able to 'undo' gender, their ability to do so is still influenced by the contexts they act in and the frames that structure interactions in these (Robinson and Hockey, 2011).

Branaman suggested that each social context influences the available possibilities in relation to the ways social agents can present themselves, and the ways these presentations will be perceived by others. As Branaman argued, 'even though individuals play an active role in fashioning their self-indicating performances, they are generally constrained to present images of themselves

that can be socially supported in the context of a given status hierarchy' (1997:xlvi). The works of Spector-Mersel (2006) and Robinson and Hockey (2011) reinforce this claim and suggest that masculinities are context-dependent.

Following from these, Deutsch, whose theory is used throughout the analytical part of this thesis, urges us to focus on processes of 'undoing gender' (2007); as she argued, we need to 'put the spotlight squarely on the social processes that underlie resistance against conventional gender relations' (2007:107). Deutsch developed her argument by drawing on West and Zimmerman's theory of gender as *done*. West and Zimmerman's theory suggested that 'doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological' (1987:137). Hence, doing gender, Duetsch argued, should be employed to analyse 'social interactions that reproduce gender difference' (2007:122), whereas 'the phrase "undoing gender" [should be used] to refer to social interactions that *reduce* gender difference' (2007:122).

West and Zimmerman's (1987) theory, Deutsch argued, usefully 'alerted us to the taken-for-granted expressions of difference that appear natural but are not' (2007:108). However, doing gender came to be seen as a 'theory of conformity and gender conventionality' (Deutsch, 2007:108), where femininity and women exist as *different* from, and hierarchically related to, masculinity and men. 'Undoing gender' on the other hand, can be used to study the 'dismantling of gender' (p. 107).

Undoing gender refers to the reduction of gender difference and captures processes, actions and interactions which challenge gender binaries. Undoing gender, as was theorised by Deutsch (2007), can be used to study gender inequalities and interactions that reinforce, but also challenge these. Further, it can be used to study interactions which can be seen as less gendered or interactions where gender might be seen to be irrelevant. Doing gender, therefore, refers to the recreation and maintenance of hierarchical gender binaries whilst undoing gender refers to the problematising of categories such as women/men, masculinity/femininity. As such, it refers to the reduction of difference and all these actions, encounters, performances, discourses and so

on, which deemphasise gender, scrutinise prevailing gender binaries and their associated qualities.

Relatedly, Risman argued that 'doing gender research could be improved by more attention to undoing gender' (2009:81). Risman asked 'why categorise innovative behaviour as new kinds of gender, new femininities and masculinities, rather than notice that the old gender norms are losing their currency?' (2009:84). Following from this, Risman proposed that instead of trying to reinvent new masculinities or femininities to capture the ways individuals undo traditional gender norms in a changing society, we should rather focus on how traditional gender norms lose their currency through the ways people undo or challenge them.

Influenced by these arguments this project aspires to study actions and interactions in dance institutions to investigate the ways that gender and sexuality are done, undone and negotiated in a sphere which is feminised, female concentrated and gay friendly. Considering the qualities this sphere has, it can be assumed that there will be more opportunities in dance institutions than in the outside-of-dance society for male dancers to undo gender. Hence, this study aims to investigate what happens in dance institutions' different spaces and analyse whether, how and under what conditions gender and sexuality are done and undone.

Synopsis

This part discussed key theories which inform this thesis. This study employs Goffman's framework to analyse social actions and interactions. Heeding arguments which emphasise the importance of the settings social actors act in and the norms which characterise these, this study investigates dance institutions as environments with certain cultural attachments and the ways these influence the doing, but also undoing, of gender. Jackson and Scott's discussion of the 'multiple dimensions of gender and sexuality (structure, practice, meaning, subjectivity)' (2010:3) informs this project as this approach

considers both the macro- and micro- factors and conditions that influence gender and sexuality.

Further, ensuing chapters draw on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, and debates on embodiment and reflexivity to discuss whether dancers as trained actors and skilled performers can manage their presentation of self and successfully embody different characters or whether their 'habitus' limits their capacities to do so. Following chapters also discuss informants' engagement with dance and the ways this influences their comportment, demeanour and handling of the body to investigate how this influences the ways they come across before others in regard to gender and sexuality.

Theorising Masculinities

The previous part focused on gender and sexuality more widely. Attention in this part shifts towards some key theories on masculinities. Pro-feminist masculinities theorists distinguished the terms 'male', 'men' and 'masculinity' and discussed these as socially constructed (see also Beasley, 2005). Masculinity studies as 'an arena of academic scholarship has generally been concerned to offer critical analyses of masculinity' (Beasley, 2005:177). This section begins by discussing Connell's key work on 'hegemonic masculinity' (2005[1995]). It then engages with Anderson's theory of 'inclusive masculinity' (2005, 2008, 2009), and it provides an overview of key studies on men in feminised professions.

As has been already argued, heterosexuality presupposes and regulates the existence of binary categories such as men/women and masculinity/femininity. As Jackson and Scott argued 'the binary divide of heterosexuality and homosexuality clearly mirrors, and is interrelated with, that of gender, but also reproduces inequalities within gender categories' (2002:14). Jackson and Scott's claim was also discussed by Connell who wrote about the hierarchical relations within the category of men (2005). To conceptualise this, Connell developed a theory of masculinities always coexisting hierarchically with a hegemonic form or type, which she referred to as 'hegemonic masculinity' (2005).

Connell's framework emphasised the hierarchical relations of hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities. Through the employment of Gramsci's term 'hegemony', Connell defined hegemonic masculinity as a 'not fixed character type, always and everywhere the same, [but] rather as the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable' (2005:76). As she wrote, 'there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men' and hegemonic masculinity is the one which is 'culturally dominant' (p.78).

In addition to hegemonic masculinity, Connell also developed the term 'subordinate masculinities' to refer to men who exhibit qualities which are contrary to those of hegemonic masculinity. Connell specifically referred to gay men as being 'subordinated to straight men' in relation to 'everyday experience, political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse, legal violence, street violence, economic discrimination and personal boycotts' (p.78). She also referred to 'complicit masculinity' to discuss 'men who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:832). Lastly, Connell wrote about 'marginalised masculinity' to refer to 'subordinate classes or ethnic groups' (2005:80).

Connell's theory is useful but at the same time analytically limiting. The conceptualising of multiple masculinities emphasises that there is not just one, rigid type of masculinity but rather a diversity that can be associated with (not just) male bodies. This can be useful in understanding that masculinity is socio-culturally constructed and dependent on variables such as social class, sexuality, 'race', age, disability and so on. As Connell and Messerschmidt argued, 'the analysis of multiple masculinities and the concept of hegemonic masculinity served as a framework for much of the developing research effort on men and masculinity, replacing sex-role theory and categorical models of patriarchy' (2005:834). Indeed, since its emergence, Connell's theory has been applied to the study of masculinities in multiple contexts, such as sports, organisations, the military, education and so on.

Undeniably, at the time of its emergence this theory was useful as it opened up new possibilities for the analysis of gender. It acknowledged the hierarchies within and between gender categories and introduced a new conceptual

framework, which made the analysis of masculinities (in plural) much more complex. It provided a framework which enabled sociologists to study and reveal the 'sometimes visible and other times invisible mechanisms of hegemony' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:834). However, despite all the possibilities it allowed when it emerged, gender analysis has now moved a long way and has revealed the limitations of this framework.

The theory of multiple masculinities, as useful as it once was, has now come under scrutiny by numerous theorists, including Anderson (2005), MacInnes (1998) and Whitehead (1998). Criticisms revolve around the ambiguity that characterises the concept of hegemonic masculinity as the 'qualities' of hegemonic masculinity change when the socio-cultural context shifts (Anderson, 2005; Whitehead, 1998:58). As Brubaker and Cooper argued, when terms become 'infinitely elastic [they become] incapable of performing serious analytical work' (2006:11).

In addition, the 'qualities' which are seen to characterise hegemonic masculinity have been 'demonstrated by women' (MacInnes, 1998:14). MacInnes warns us about the danger of treating masculinity something that men *have*; 'we cannot see masculinity as a property of persons at all' (1998:64). MacInnes suggested that 'masculinity does not exist as the property, character trait or aspect of identity of individuals […] it only exists as various ideologies or fantasies, about what men should be like' (1998:2). MacInnes also emphasised the dangers of equating masculinity with males, and hence gender with sex (see also Halberstram, 1998). MacInnes therefore argued that instead of trying to define masculinity or masculinities, which is a 'fruitless task', we should ask 'what historical conditions encourage men and women to imagine the existence of such a thing as masculinity in order to make sense of their lives in the first place' (1998:3).

In a different manner to Connell, Anderson developed his theory of 'inclusive masculinity' which, he claims, captures the *changing* nature of men. As Anderson argued, we now live in an age of diminished cultural, institutional and organizational homophobia; this influences constructions and perceptions of masculinity. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, according to Anderson, is 'unable to capture the complexity of what occurs as cultural homohysteria

['the fear of being homosexualised'] diminishes' (2009:7). According to Anderson, 'in an Anglo-American culture with severely diminished homohysteria, homophobic discourse, and/or its associated intent to degrade homosexuals, is no longer acceptable' (2009:97). A similar claim was made by McCormack who uses Anderson's framework (2012).

Anderson's theory distinguishes between the archetypes of 'orthodox' and 'inclusive' masculinity (2005). Orthodox masculinity refers to 'men who attempt to approximate the hegemonic form of masculinity largely by devaluing women and gay men' (2005:338). As he wrote, 'orthodox masculinity' is 'constructed principally in opposition to femininity and homosexuality' (2009:52). Whilst his argument might seem similar to Connell's, Anderson explained that 'orthodox masculinity is not culturally hegemonic' (2009:8). According to him, for one to achieve hegemonic masculinity one 'must maintain all of the culturally ascribed and achieved variables' (2009:42). Orthodox masculinity on the other hand, can be achieved if 'one *acts* masculine: to be homophobic, misogynistic, willing to take risks, be muscular etc.' (2009:42). As he argues, 'race, class, religion and age are not part of the equation in achieving [his] notion of orthodox masculinity' (2009:42). He summarised this argument by saying that 'orthodox masculinity is more (although not entirely) about how you act, while hegemonic masculinity is more (though still not entirely) about what you are born with' (2009:42); what concerns him therefore is 'how one acts' (p.42). Anderson referred to 'masculine capital' to 'describe the "masculine level" of a man, as achieved through attitudes and behaviours' (2009:42).

In addition to orthodox masculinity, Anderson proposed 'inclusive masculinity', which refers to another archetype of masculinity that 'undermines the principles of orthodox (read hegemonic) masculine values, yet is also esteemed among male peers' (2009:93). Inclusive masculinity refers to 'men who view orthodox masculinity as undesirable and do not aspire to many of its tenets' (2005:338). He described 'inclusive masculinity' as 'a more encompassing form of masculinity, particularly for young, middle-class, and educated white men […] thought to be predicated in the social inclusion of those traditionally marginalised by hegemonic masculinity' (2008:606). He emphasised that the concept of inclusive masculinity is useful mainly because of the decline of

homohysteria; in times of declined homohysteria orthodox masculinity is as valued as inclusive masculinity.

Whilst Connell suggested that hegemonic masculinity is the dominant type of masculinity and the one valued the most, Anderson supported that inclusive masculinities are also valued amongst men. In this sense, one is not more influential, or more valued, than the other. He argued that neither orthodox, nor inclusive masculinity retain cultural hegemony as the two will not necessarily be engaged in struggle for domination. Anderson's theoretical framework is useful in that it recognises the changing social conditions; however, there exist a number of problems with his proposed theory.

The oppositional models of orthodox and inclusive masculinity document only two ways of 'doing' masculinity. As men's performances of masculinity can change between contexts (Robinson et al., 2011; Spector-Mersel, 2006) and according to the audience they are before (for example, Goffman, 1959), this model can be analytically limiting.

Further, he developed his arguments through studying white, middle-class and mostly educated men. Whilst he recognised this as a limitation of his theory (2009:15), he nevertheless keeps promoting the view that declining homohysteria is a phenomenon which describes Anglo-American societies as holistic entities, as if these only consisted of only white, middle-class, educated men. This results in Anderson ignoring factors such as 'race' or sexuality, and the influence these, as well as other variables, can have on the construction and valuing of certain masculinities, gender orders and power relationships. As O'Neill also argued, Anderson's theory 'deemphasises gendered power relations' in an effort to be optimistic about the current situation (2015:107). This results in making exaggerated comments which ignore for example that the situation in a large urban centre such as London can be extremely different from that in a small town (for a discussion on LGBTQIA geographies see Bell and Valentine, 1994; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Brown, Browne and Lin, 2007). It also ignores the ways power relations change for example, as individuals move between different work organisations (Adkins, 1995).

Likewise, Bridges argued that the declining homophobia which describes *some* (white, middle-class, heterosexual) men, is 'not sufficient evidence of a unilateral move toward greater gender and sexual equality' as Anderson (2009) and McCormack's (2012) theories suggest (Bridges, 2014:78). As Bridges suggested, the 'relationship between masculinity and homophobia is better understood as transforming rather than disappearing' (2014:59).

Lastly, Anderson's theory oversimplifies the complexities of current socio-cultural situations and 'effects the erasure of sexual politics' (O'Neil, 2015:111). Indeed, there have been positive developments during the past few years and LGBTQIA people are gaining cultural recognition and more legal rights. However, as the recent Scottish LGBT Equality Report (2015) suggested, LGBT people still face various forms of inequalities in society, their workplaces, the law, culture and so on. Hence, Anderson's studies and their focus on specific contexts and groups of people do not capture the tensions that characterise social reality.

Moving beyond Connell and Anderson's frameworks, Brickell suggested a slightly different approach for studying masculinities. Brickell suggested that 'those performing masculinity are constructs and constructors of symbolic orders; simultaneously productive and produced, loci of action and participants of interaction, they may perpetuate and/or resist hegemonic social arrangements' (2005:37). He proposed that an effective way of studying masculinities would emerge by combining Goffman's theorising of the self as '(inter)active and performed' with Butler's concepts of performativity and the 'queering of the sex order' through her notion of the heterosexual matrix (2005:25). As we have seen, symbolic interactionists and Goffman focus mainly on the analysis of individuals' micro-level interactions. In contrast, poststructuralists, such as Butler, turn their attention on the discursive structures and power matrices which construct individuals. A combination of these two approaches therefore enables an analysis of gender which considers structures, power, and agency. In a similar manner, McNay stressed the 'necessity of contextualising agency within power relations' (2000:4) rather than treating the two as distinctive.

Robinson et al. (2011) followed Brickell's theory and approached masculinity as performed. Yet drawing on Spector-Mersel's (2006) framework they argued that masculinity might 'vary not just between men, but within the same man as his

social context changed' (Robinson and Hockey, 2011:3). Spector-Mersel's (2006) theory of multiple masculinities argues that 'multiple masculinities are discussed in two contexts: across persons and within persons' (p.68). The first follows Connell's (2005) argument and refers to multiple masculinities that hierarchically coexist in each society. The second though relies on Goffman's (1959) theoretical framework and conceptualises masculinity as a performance, a doing rather than being, which varies as persons change social contexts. Importantly though Spector-Mersel argued that 'masculinities are bound to social clocks' (2006:70); she suggested that men are offered cultural scripts which inform them about how or what hegemonic masculinity is like at specific temporal and spatial contexts, and phases of their life-course. Her claim is further discussed in chapter 6.

Like Goffman (1959), who argued that individuals have many personality sides which they emphasise to a greater or lesser degree depending to the social encounter they are involved, Robinson and Hockey (2011) suggested that masculinity performances can vary as men move from one situation to another. In addition, they argued that growing older and going through different life-course events also influences those performances. Following from this they focused on how social contexts 'form' the identity category 'masculinity' and how individuals' movements between different contexts influences how they 'inhabit and manage their identities' (p.5).

Men in Feminised Spheres: Undoing Gender

> Work has been seen as a major influence on definitions and performances of masculinity (Robinson and Hockey, 2011:20).

It is well known that some professional spheres are associated to a lesser or greater extent with certain genders and/or sexualities. For example, despite the increased inclusion of women in sport, this is a sphere which has been studied as masculinised (Mennesson, 2009; Wheaton, 2000); on a contrary manner, professions in the care sector and other service work are still seen as signifying femininity (Adkins, 1995; Bagilhole and Cross, 2006). Many theorists argued that men who enter feminised professions are assumed to be gay and/or effeminate

(for example, Lupton, 2000; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014). Considering the intersections of sex, gender and sexuality, this section discusses a series of studies of men in feminised spheres.

Robinson and Hockey (2011) conducted a study on masculinities in the feminised context of hairdressing, the more neutral context of real estate and the masculinised context of firefighting aiming to investigate whether males did gender differently in different contexts and how 'embodied identities emerged within social practice' (2011:6). The overall finding of their study was that performances of masculinity vary both as men move contexts and as they grow older. They concluded that the understanding and doing of masculinity is influenced by the context and situations which individuals find themselves in. Following from this, Robinson et al. developed a paper on the case study of male hairdressers arguing that the context of the hairdressing salon, and the socio-cultural attachments this has, 'offers some men scope to play with dominant understandings of masculinity' (2011:46).

The context of hairdressing, they wrote, 'can provoke reflexivity among men who otherwise and elsewhere might be unlikely to question the specificity of their taken-for-granted masculinity and its associated privileges' (2011:117-18). Certain contexts therefore create possibilities that invite people to question that which they take for granted. This argument is discussed further in the data-analysis chapters, which investigate male dancers' involvement in dance as a factor which encouraged them to reflect on aspects of their social identities.

In addition, Anderson (2005) investigated the construction of masculinity amongst male cheerleaders to conclude that this conventionally feminised space enables, and even promotes, the construction and performance of both orthodox and inclusive masculinity. Anderson also argued that feminised contexts provide men the possibility to reaffirm or as easily challenge orthodox masculinity. He suggested that most (heterosexual) men who enter feminised professional arenas attempt 'to associate with masculinity and disassociate with femininity' (2009:51). To achieve that they challenge the assumption that associates their work context, and therefore them, with homosexuality and femininity. However, as he argued, this was the case with only some men; other men's masculinity was based on 'inclusiveness'. Inclusive men had more inclusive attitudes towards

homosexuality and male femininity. Similarly to Robinson and Hockey's study (2011), Anderson suggested that certain contexts allow men the opportunity to challenge gender norms and play around with understandings and performances of orthodox masculinity (2005).

Further, studies on men in dance can also provide insight in relation to this matter. Mennesson (2009), who focused on the worlds of ballet and jazz, argued that being a man in a feminised professional world such as dance influences the development of gender identities. Mennesson's findings suggested the existence of two categories of men in this sphere: those who wanted to 'remain a man' and those 'dancers desirous of being "both feminine and masculine", who refused to define the gender categories and dissociated gender and sex' (2009:191). The second category can be discussed via Deutsch's concept of 'undoing gender' where people's actions aim, or result, in reducing gender difference (2007). Mennesson's (2009) overall argument seems similar to that of Anderson (2005; 2009) who suggested the existence of two types of masculinity.

Lastly, Rumens and Broomfield studied men in the performing arts and argued that this is a context which 'has long been stereotyped as "gay-friendly" […] and an imaginative forum for portraying LGBT sexualities in the public arena' (2014:366-367). Within this space, they suggested, gay performers have the opportunity to challenge gender norms and sexual stereotypes. However, they also argued that the depiction of this context as 'a haven for LGBT people is facile' (p.369) because of 'heteronormative conceptions of gay sexuality' which assume gay performers' capacities for performing a range of conventionally male parts to be limited (p.375). A similar point was made by Bernstein, who argued that in theatre 'when cast members come out, they might find something resembling a "gay haven" or may find themselves cast out' (2006:13). This argument is discussed in the data-analysis chapters which unveil the underlying tensions that characterise the culture of professional dance.

These studies reinforce the claim that certain workspaces enable or constrain opportunities for gender renegotiation and suggest that some organisational cultures, due to the strong associations they have with certain genders and sexualities, influence to a greater or lesser degree social actors' ability to

challenge the established gender order and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). As Traunter argued:

> gender in organizations becomes simultaneously and continually performed and institutionalized. While organizational actors may believe they are expressing purely personal, preexisting tendencies and tastes when they dress in a particular way, manage disputes, or interact with their clients or colleagues, their behaviors and inclinations are strongly influenced by their surrounding organizational culture (2005:773).

Organisational cultures can accommodate, accept or reject certain displays of gender and sexuality. This affects possibilities for reflexivity (Cooper, 2013; Giddens, 1991); 'gender citation takes place under conditions of cultural constraint or "regulatory regimes", which compel some appearances of masculinity and femininity while prohibiting others' (Brickell, 2005:26). As will be argued in the data-analysis chapters that follow, the context of dance, as one that is associated with male homosexuality and/or effeminacy (Burt, 2007; Mennesson, 2009; Risner, 2007), turns into a fruitful space for the investigation gender *and* sexuality, and the ways these can be 'done' but also 'undone'.

Theoretical Framework

The previous sections provided a critical overview of the main theoretical stances that have influenced this project. This section outlines the theoretical framework employed to collect and analyse this study's data. This study sets at its core the analysis of actions, interactions and negotiations of gender and sexuality in different spaces of dance institutions, and the ways that dance as an institutional culture influences these. This requires a combination of different concepts and theoretical approaches, which can enable the capturing of the complexities and tensions that characterise the context of dance.

The data-analysis chapters that follow apply a range of concepts from Goffman's dramaturgical framework (1959) to approach social actors as active agents who, however, act in contexts of possibilities and constraints (Blumer, 1969; Branaman, 1997; Goffman, 1959). Discussions in ensuing chapters apply this

framework to investigate a group of people who are skilled performers and trained actors. The exploration of this population provides new insights, which enable us to comment on the processes which occur in a context which encourages social actors to be aware of the ways they come across before others.

Ensuing chapters consider Goffman's (1959) and Spector-Mersel's (2006) claims that social actors have many personality sides which they emphasise to a greater or lesser extent depending on the social situation they are involved. As such, they discuss whether male dancers can actively manage the impressions they give, but also give off, in different encounters and spaces. The discussions that unfold consider the performing side of these dancers' identity as a factor which might make them more consciously aware of their presentation of self and able to control the ways they come across before others (Goffman, 1959). This aspect of this study and its focus on people who are trained to shift between different roles, adds to current academic discussions on identities, their performance and management.

Further, the data-analysis chapters that follow explore the different levels that gender and sexuality function (Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002, 2010). Specifically, they comment on the complexities and tensions that exist as we consider dance institutions' different spaces and the processes that occur within these. The notion of 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999) is employed to discuss the formal practices in the frontstage and onstage which often, though not always, contribute to the maintenance of 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993), gender binaries and their hierarchical relationality, but also the interactions and actions in the backstage spaces which enable male dancers to 'undo gender' (Deutsch, 2007). The use of these concepts enables the unveiling of the complexities that characterise the different spaces within dance institutions and the ways that 'norms' influence, and are being influenced by, social actors' actions and interactions (Robinson and Hockey, 2011). The application of these concepts in the study of a sphere such as dance, which is widely thought of as signifying femininity, male effeminacy and male homosexuality (see also chapter 4), brings new insights and contributes to the

small body of work which investigates men and masculinities in feminised work contexts.

Further, ensuing chapters also engage with theorists who have written on embodiment (Bourdieu, 1984; Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Witz et al., 2003) and reflexivity (Cooper, 2013; Giddens, 1991; Goffman, 1959). Chapter 7 sets to explore aspects of gender as embodied but also performed and actively managed. Considering that dancers are trained performers, chapter 7 investigates whether their performing arts background influences their 'self-awareness' (Cooper, 2013). It analyses aspects of their identities which are seen as amenable to self-conditioning, but also others which are experienced as embodied and inscribed on their bodies. These discussions can add new insights, as dancers are trained performers and skilled actors who are actively encouraged to be aware of their performances of self.

Lastly, while partially engaging with Connell's (2005) and Anderson's (2009) theorisation of masculinities, chapter 6 introduces the concept of 'imagined masculinity' to analyse parts of this study's findings. Imagined masculinity is used as a 'sensitising concept', as this was defined by Blumer in 1954, and is one of the analytical tools employed. As such, it is not intended to be a theoretical innovation and is used selectively in only some parts and not in others. Influenced by Risman (2009) the concept of 'imagined masculinity' is used to convey that which informants understand as masculinity in this society and culture -without however framing it as hegemonic (e.g. Connell, 2005)-, and the ways some informants undid gender by distancing themselves from such paradigms and by challenging the validity of such imageries.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a critical overview of the approaches that have influenced this project. It developed in three main sections, which discussed the main theoretical strands which guided this study. It provided different theorisations of gender as performed but also embodied, done and undone. It also discussed gender as intersecting with sexuality and as functioning in multiple co-existing

layers. The theories which were discussed in this chapter provide analytical tools for the investigation of gender as done but also undone in the context of dance.

Overall, this thesis mainly engages with key sociologists of gender and sexualities (Deutsch, 2007; Jackson, 1999, 2012; Jackson and Scott, 2001, 2002, 2010; Robinson and Hockey, 2011), Goffman's dramaturgical framework (1959) and queer studies theorists such as Judith Butler (1993, 1999). By drawing onto these and other theorists' frameworks, ensuing chapters analyse the actions and interactions that occur in dance institutions' different spaces, the possibilities these provide and the restrictions they set with regards to gender and sexuality. The uniqueness of dance institutions as spaces with strong associations with certain genders and sexualities can shed interesting insights, which can inform current theoretical debates and literature on men and masculinities in unconventionally masculine work settings.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology that was employed in this study and the ways it corresponds to the theoretical framework that is adopted. Chapter 4 also draws to some of these theories to analyse how dance became gendered. Lastly, the data-analysis chapters which follow employ this framework to discuss how the study of dance institutions and the processes, interactions and actions which occur within them, can bring novel insights to the study of gender and sexualities in feminised work environments.

Chapter 3
Research Design

Introduction

According to Maxwell (2013), a research design consists of five key components. The first refers to 'goals' or the 'reasons why a study is worth doing' (p.4). The second consists of the 'conceptual framework', which refers to researchers' previous knowledge and existing studies that guided the research. The third refers to 'research questions' and the fourth to 'methods'. The latter broadly refers to the relationships established with research participants; selection of settings and participants; time, place and methods of data collection; and data analysis strategies (p.4). The final component refers to validity.

This chapter discusses all elements that are outlined in Maxwell's model; yet it discusses these in three main sections. The first section, *Methodology,* contextualises the study. As such, it discusses the epistemological underpinnings that informed this project, the aims of the study, the conceptual framework that guided data collection and analysis, and the reasons this study is 'worth doing'. The second section, *Methods,* outlines the research process. As such, it discusses the data collection methods, research sites where observation occurred, the participants that informed this study, and the ways data was analysed. The final section, *Validity*, discusses issues related to this study's validity.

Heeding guidelines of feminist research practice, this chapter provides reflective accounts to discuss aspects of my 'self as the researcher' (England, 1994:244), and the ways that parts of my identity might have influenced my relationship with participants, the data collection processes and my interpretation of this study's findings. In this sense, it emphasises reflexivity, which has been a key feature of feminist research (Wise and Stanley, 2002).

This chapter also discusses ethics throughout. This follows from feminist research principles and resides with my view that all social research should be ethically approached, conducted and analysed. This project followed the Ethical

Conduct of Research Guidelines set by the University of Glasgow[5] and the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association[6]. This project was granted ethics approval by the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee, University of Glasgow, in October 2013.

Methodology

Methodology has been widely defined as 'a general approach to studying research topics' (Silverman, 2013:122). Ramazanoglu and Holland, while discussing feminist research practices, defined methodology in social research as entailing:

> a social and political process of knowledge production; assumptions about the nature and meanings of ideas, experience and social reality, and how/if these may be connected; critical reflection on what authority can be claimed for the knowledge that results; accountability (or denial of accountability) for the political and ethical implications of knowledge production (2002:11-12).

The aim of this project is to explore and understand the conditions that led this study's participants to become involved in an unconventionally masculine activity such as dance; informants' experiences of being involved in a professional sphere with certain gender and sexuality connotations; and the ways that they negotiate their gender, sexuality and professional identity. Looking for in-depth understandings, detailed insights, and ways to uncover the views and subjective experiences of my informants, qualitative methodology was deemed to be the most suitable for this project.

Methodologies and research questions, Silverman argued, 'are inevitably theoretically informed' (2013:104). In a similar manner Denzin, while stressing the importance of reducing the gap between theory and methodology, argued that 'methodology, theory, research activity and the sociological imagination' are, or at least should be, interlinked (2009:5). Likewise, Pini and Pease, while specifically focusing on research on men and masculinities, argued that research

[5] http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/

[6] http://www.britsoc.co.uk/the-bsa/equality/statement-of-ethical-practice.aspx

on this topic rarely addresses the links between theory, methodology and epistemology (2013). Epistemology has been approached by Wise and Stanley as:

> a framework or theory for specifying the constitution and generation of knowledge about the social world; that is, it concerns how to understand the nature of "reality". A given epistemological framework specifies not only what "knowledge" is and how to recognise it, but who are "knowers" and by what means someone becomes one, and also the means by which competing knowledge-claims are adjudicated and some rejected in favour of another/others (2002:188-189).

While referring to Sandra Harding's work, Stanley and Wise suggested that epistemology is the 'foundation for method and methodology' (1990:26). Different aspects and qualities of feminist epistemologies -for example, feminist empiricism, feminist epistemological standpoint and postmodern epistemologies- have guided feminists queries throughout time (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). This thesis is mainly influenced by principles rooted in the feminist standpoint and postmodern epistemologies.

Heeding postmodern epistemological arguments, this thesis rejects 'universalising claims' (Stanley and Wise, 1990:27). Postmodern epistemologies challenged the claim that all women share the same experiences because of their subordinate position in society. This epistemological position 'relativises "experience" by locating it in within a micro-politics which is highly localised but organised through meta-narratives and more grounded ideological discourses' (Stanley and Wise, 1990:27-28). This argument guides this project, which acknowledges the diverse experiences that male dancers can have because of their sexuality, gender, social location and so on.

Further, this project is guided by principles of the feminist epistemological standpoint, which acknowledges that 'one's social situation enables and sets limits on what one can know' (Harding, 2004:43). Feminist standpoint epistemologies suggest that 'in societies which are stratified by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or some other such politics' (p.43), starting points for thought should come 'from marginalised lives' (p.40); this rationalises why women, and their experiences as socially marginalised and oppressed, have been at the centre of feminist research. Yet, in a somehow paradoxical manner, this

project, whilst feminist, sets to investigate the lives and experiences of *men* who are professionally involved in dance.

Even though men are more privileged than women in the wider society and most social, cultural and professional spheres, the participants of this project can still be seen as marginalised *within* their gender 'category'. As men, they belong in the dominant gender group. However, as Connell argued there are hierarchical relations *within* the category of men (2005). If we consider these hierarchical relations, this study's participants can be seen as marginalised; these men are professionally involved in an unconventionally masculine sphere, which has historically become associated with women, femininity and male homosexuality. These are qualities which are distanced from 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2005). Further, many of my respondents can be seen as marginalised because of their everyday practices, sexuality and gender. These conditions enable to approach them as marginalised people.

Additionally, heeding standpoint epistemological guidelines, this project relies on the insights of participants to understand how *they* construct and interpret the processes and relations that constitute *their* worlds and social realities. This project argues about the importance of drawing onto the experiential knowledge of the researched, their concerns, and emotions (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004:12; Stanley and Wise, 1990). For this reason, this project relies on in-depth, semi-structured interviews to gain insights into participants' valuable and situated knowledge and life experiences. Moreover, it employs observation to investigate and understand the ways that male dancers are situated within, and negotiate gender and sexuality during, interactions and performances in different spaces of dance institutions.

Lastly, this project shares the view that 'the nature of knowledge and truth is that it is partial, situated, subjective, power imbued, and relational' (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004:13). The feminist researcher, Ramazanoglu and Holland argued, '"knows" from a specific and partial social location' (2002:65). Considering these arguments, this chapter provides reflective accounts of instances where my personal beliefs, previous experiences and aspects of myself -for instance, gender, age and dancing background- might have influenced my 'knowledge' and thus queries, insights and understandings.

Stanley and Wise argued that feminist epistemological principles, such as the 'researcher-researched relationships; […] the intellectual autobiography of researchers; […] and the complex question of power in research and writing', should be present in both research behaviour and research reports (1990:23). Noting their argument, I discuss aspects of these throughout this chapter and this thesis more widely.

Aim and Research Questions

Studies suggested that feminised work environments enable men to challenge gender norms (Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Pullen and Simpson, 2009). Following these arguments, this study aims to analyse the processes, actions and micro-interactions which occur within professional dance institutions and the ways male dancers construct, perform and negotiate their gender and sexuality in different spaces in these contexts on the one hand, and their professional identity on the other.

In the 19th century dance transformed into a female-populated sphere and became associated with female femininity, male effeminacy and male homosexuality (see chapter 4). It is currently a sphere which consists of equal numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual males (Burt, 2007; Risner, 2002a, 2002b). Dance is therefore a context where heterosexuality and traditional gender norms do not prevail. These conditions transform dance more widely, and dance institutions more specifically, into a fruitful context for the study of gender and sexuality, the ways these are constructed, performed and negotiated.

Three key research questions guided the data collection and analysis:

a. Considering that dance is an unconventional activity for men, what are the conditions that influenced male dancers' involvement in dance?

b. How do different spaces, processes and relations within dance institutions in Scotland influence the negotiations of gender and sexuality?

c. How do male dancers in Scotland negotiate their dance practice with regard to their gender and sexuality?

Considering the scope of this study qualitative methods, and specifically interviews and observation, were selected as the most appropriate ones. Interviews were selected as they provide insights into people's stories, experiences, feelings and opinions (Reinharz, 1992); interviews, May argued, 'yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings' (2011:132). Further, the method of observation was selected because it enables the researcher to 'witness or experience what is going on in a setting' (Mason, 2002:89). Observation provides insights that no other method could do. As Wickes and Emmison argued, 'the phenomenon of doing gender', and arguably undoing gender, 'can only be faithfully researched […] when observational methods are employed' (2007:320).

The chosen research methods also comply with the theoretical traditions that guide this project. Considering the intended aim and research questions, it seemed reasonable to focus on a relatively small number of dancers and dance institutions as this would enable the collection of detailed data and the achievement of in-depth investigation of the matters that this thesis set to explore. Hence, the research was narrowed down to dance institutions, and men professionally involved in dance in Scotland, as there were no previous studies on gender and sexuality in dance there. It was decided that interviews will be conducted with men who were at the time of the research studying for a professional qualification in dance and men who were professionally involved in the production and/or performance of dance in Scotland; sampling was thus 'purposive' (Miles et al, 2014).

During its initial stages, this study aimed to conduct comparative analysis of ballet institutions and ballet dancers on the one hand, and contemporary dance institutions and dancers on the other for the following reasons. Firstly, ballet and contemporary companies differ in their scale. The former often employ relatively large numbers of dancers whilst the latter are usually smaller in scale and employ dancers according to the project they work on and the funding they have available. This results in these institutions being characterised by different power dynamics, structures, hierarchies and so on. All of these, it can be

assumed, influence social interactions and encounters. Secondly, ballet and contemporary dance companies have different philosophies, which derive from these genres' wider philosophies (see also chapter 4). Thirdly, whilst both genres are not conventionally masculine, ballet has become, more than any other genre, associated with male effeminacy and homosexuality; this condition would have added another dimension to the study. However, once data was collected it became evident that there were interesting similarities, tensions and contradictions that a comparative approach would not have captured. Hence, whilst some arguments rely on comparisons this is not a comparative thesis.

Conceptual Framework

A detailed account of the theoretical framework has been provided in the previous chapter. This section, therefore, turns its attention to some key studies and the ways that their methodologies influenced the methodological choices which were made in this project.

This study's intention to study micro-level interactions, practices and actions led to a combination of different approaches and concepts. One of these is symbolic interactionism and the work of Erving Goffman (1959). Symbolic interactionists suggest that 'empirical knowledge is generated from fieldwork' (Layder, 2006:77). According to them, the researcher needs to get 'as close as possible to the subjects of analysis and to give an insider account of what it is like to be a member of a particular group' (Layder, 2006:77). Whilst it was not possible to claim an insider status and *participate* in informants' activities as a professional dancer, the employment of observation enabled the collection of detailed accounts of the practices and processes which occurred in dance institutions. Observation also enabled the documentation of participants' performances of gender and instances where they engaged in gender doing and undoing. The same approach was employed by Robinson and Hockey (2011) whose work has influenced this project majorly.

Further, this study's intention to understand informants' views, experiences, understandings and negotiations of gender and sexuality led to the employment

of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. These enabled the exploration of the ways through which participants reproduced, but also challenged dominant notions of gender and sexuality. Interviews also enabled insight into informants' life-courses and the conditions which initiated their interest in dance. This data provided an additional layer of information that benefited the analysis process.

Lastly, this study was guided by my ontological position which sees a combination of action, actors and institutions as meaningful components of social reality. Like Mason, I believe that 'people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality' (2002:63). I treated my participants as the 'experts' of their situation and used direct passages from my informants' accounts to convey *their* views of *their* social realities (England, 1994:243). This action partly aimed to balance the power relations between myself as the researcher, and informants as the research subjects. However, as England argued, this does not remove power relations as in the end it was I who decided which quotes to include and whose knowledge to communicate (1994).

Goals: Reasons This Study is Worth Doing

This is one of the few empirical sociological studies to have focused on gender and sexuality in professional dance. Further, it is the first study to have employed interviews and observation to investigate negotiations of gender and sexuality in professional dance institutions in Scotland. As such, this study provides novel insights into an understudied topic. As a result, this study contributes to Sociology of Dance more widely, and the body of work which engages with gender and sexuality in dance more specifically. It sheds light into the actions, interactions and processes which occur in dance institutions, and the world of dance more widely, to demonstrate that when it comes to gender and sexuality, dance acts as a liberating, yet at the same time restrictive, sphere.

Further, this study contributes to the wider Sociology of Gender and Sexualities, and to the body of knowledge which is specifically concerned with men and

masculinities in feminised and gay-friendly work contexts. Whilst there have been some studies on men in feminised work environments (see for example, Lupton, 2000; Pullen and Simpson, 2009; Robinson et al., 2001; Robinson and Hockey, 2011), this is an area which warrants further investigation. This project and the attention it pays to both gender *and* sexuality provides novel insights, which can be valuable to sociologists who are interested in negotiations of gender *and* sexuality in feminised and gay-friendly professional contexts. This study explicitly focuses on gender *and* sexuality, the ways sexuality intersects with gender and the ways that both gender and sexuality are influenced by, as well as influence, the written and unwritten 'rules' in dance institutions.

Lastly, this study's focus on a population which consists of trained performers and skilled actors can reveal aspects of social identities which can be performed and consciously managed, but also other aspects which are less amendable. Dancers' professional training makes them potentially more conscious than other social actors about the ways they come across before others. The investigation of this population, therefore, provides an understanding of whether and how gender and sexuality are consciously and reflexively performed and managed.

Methods

The previous section discussed the factors that influenced this study's conduct. This section moves onto a discussion of the research process. It analyses all steps that were taken in this study, from data collection to data analysis. It begins by discussing the two data collection methods, namely observation and interviews, and then moves towards the data analysis process.

Data was collected through two main methods; observation at professional dance bodies and semi-structured interviews with men who were receiving professional training in dance or who were professionally involved in the production and/or performance of dance in Scotland during the time of the research. Fieldwork occurred between November 2013 and September 2014 across Scotland.

Observation

Observation, Mason argued, 'allows the generation of multidimensional data on social interaction in specific contexts as it occurs' (2002:85). Considering the interest of this study in the ways gender and sexualities are negotiated, 'done' and 'undone' within dance institutions, observation was seen to be the most suitable research method to employ. Since initially this project aimed to provide a comparative analysis between ballet and contemporary dance institutions, I requested access to observe classes and rehearsal sessions at four institutions: Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on the one hand, Kinesis and Chorotheatro on the other.

The selection of these companies was influenced by my intention to observe dancers with different levels of experience, of different ages, diverse training and performing backgrounds. Other companies were also approached to participate in this study; yet, only these four institutions gave me permission to conduct observation at their facilities. Observation occurred prior to interviews in each site. This enabled me to get a good insight into the research settings and achieve some familiarity with my informants. It also provided me with the opportunity to discuss my observation notes with informants and thus verify or reconsider my interpretation of events.

My role during observation can be approached as, what Denzin referred to as, 'participant as observer' (2009:190). According to Denzin, 'the participant as observer makes his presence as an investigator known and attempts to form a series of relationships with his subjects such that they serve both as respondents and informants' (2009:190). This seemed to be the most ethical and practical choice as I did not try to misinform my participants about my role in the setting. My role as participant as observer enabled me to clarify my role and intentions from the start. In addition, given the 'nature' of these organisations and that I was not a professional dancer I could not have claimed any other role. Having established my role as a researcher I began observing my informants, their interactions, language used, appearance, bodily actions, performances and so on. Following the tradition of symbolic interactionism, I considered that 'verbal utterance, nonverbal gesture, mode and style of dress, and manner of speech provide clues to the symbolic meanings that become translated into and emerge

out of interaction' (Denzin, 2009:7). As such, observation was key to this project and was conducted prior to interviews.

Research Sites

- **Scottish Ballet**

Access to study Scottish Ballet was negotiated with the company's artistic director and was granted by the company's manager. I first met Scottish Ballet's artistic director at an event in Glasgow. The director was part of a discussion panel and I was introduced to him at the end of the event through a colleague who knew him. I introduced my project and asked whether he would be interested in discussing the possibility of doing part of my research with the company. He appeared very positive and I therefore contacted him again a few days later. He then put me in touch with the company manager who granted access and set my observation periods. Due to the company's schedule and arranged tours, we agreed that observation would occur over two different periods of time.

The first period occurred in November 2013. No interviews were conducted during that time. Instead, this period was used to gain a first insight into the company, the dancers and the ways they worked. I also used this opportunity to introduce myself and my project to the company's dancers. The second phase occurred 7 months later, in July 2014. During that period, I was given access to observe the company for three weeks. I found that this acted to my benefit as I was re-introduced to informants, who this time approached me to ask questions about my study and my background. I found that during this period respondents became more interested in my project and were curious as to the reasons I was observing them.

During the second phase I also felt more confident in approaching informants or trying to have informal conversations on-site. This enabled me to get a better insight into the situation and also to establish a connection with respondents who this time acknowledged my presence in the studio. Perhaps it was that they

saw me more frequently and hence became curious about who I was or it might have been that they were more relaxed as summer holidays were approaching. I could nevertheless feel the difference between the first and second observation periods.

The same dancers were present during both observation phases. The company consisted of 17 male dancers and 19 female ones. It was interesting to observe a setting with approximately equal numbers of female and male dancers and the ways they interacted with each other. It was also interesting to observe a context which consisted of approximately equal numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual men. It was fascinating to observe how the same men's actions changed as the dynamics in the studio changed. Observation at Scottish Ballet occurred during different sessions; I observed the company's daily classes, rehearsals with male-only groups, female-only groups or mixed groups of dancers.

Every morning the company started with a one-hour class, which enable dancers to warm up and maintain/strengthen their technique and skills. Two days per week there were separate company classes for females and male dancers; in the female-only classes, emphasis was placed on point-work[7] whereas in the only-male classes emphasis was placed in pirouettes, jumps, leaps and so on. I also had the opportunity to observe different types of rehearsals; I managed to observe rehearsals with the whole company, with smaller groups of dancers, duets and solos. All these instances fall under the 'frontstage' space (see also chapter 1).

In addition to frontstage interactions I also managed to observe the ways dancers interacted in the 'backstage', during instances where they did not perform in their capacity as dancers but rather when they were involved in informal interactions. I hence had the opportunity to observe them during different interactional situations, and within different spaces. This provided me with a rich account of their daily work experience and ways they shifted their performances before different audiences and during different encounters. During

[7] Female dancers dancing with their point shoes on, exercises that strengthen their ankles and legs.

the second phase, I also conducted interviews with nine male ballet dancers, coming from different backgrounds, with different levels of professional experience, different age groups, and sexualities. These are discussed in the following section.

- **The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

Observation at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland occurred over a period of almost two months, between January and March 2014. Access was granted after I submitted a formal research proposal to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee of the institution. The leader and teaching staff of the modern ballet programme decided the length and schedule of the observation period.

The first time I was present at the institution a member of the teaching staff introduced me to the Year 3 students before the beginning of their morning class. I was later introduced to Year 2 students through the same process. I explained the aim of my project and asked students to approach me if they had any questions or reservations. Students were curious about the project and approached me during the break to find out more about my study and myself. They all seemed positive about the project and said that they could see why I was conducting this research. There was some sort of shared knowledge of the issues I was investigating.

Observation at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland occurred during different classes and rehearsal sessions. I had the opportunity to observe classes with the whole group of Year 2 and accordingly Year 3 students; classes with different instructors; single-sex classes; classes where students practiced solos, in duets - namely *pas de deux*[8]-, or classes where they rehearsed their own choreographic pieces.

Year 2 and Year 3 groups at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland consisted of seven male and twenty-three female students. This ratio is quite common in pre-

[8] Dance duet, usually between a male and a female dancer.

professional dance where there are many more females than males (Arts Council England, 2009). Observation at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland enabled insights into an organisation, which is in its majority populated by young female students and only a minority of male students. As with Scottish Ballet, I had the opportunity to observe a variety of encounters with different combinations of students. I also had the opportunity to observe how power dynamics and different spaces in the institution influenced students' actions and practices.

- **Chorotheatro**

Observation at Chorotheatro occurred over a period of two weeks in April 2014. Access was granted by the company manager. This company was introduced to myself through the Work Room[9], an organisation which provides support to independent artists working in dance in Scotland. Chorotheatro was a relatively small company, working with commissions and employing dancers on a temporary contractual basis. This was an interesting company to study because of its scale and the work it usually produces. At the time of observation the choreographer of the company was working with four dancers -two male and two female- and was in the process of developing two separate performances.

The small number of people interacting there meant that I could be integrated with them, something which did not happen at Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; I felt more as an 'insider' as they included me in their conversations and asked me to join them during their breaks. In many occasions they also asked me to help with their daily tasks. Yet, I was an outsider as I did not participate in their rehearsals and dancing activities.

During my observation period at Chorotheatro I was able to observe all rehearsals, which involved all employed dancers, the choreographer, manager and artistic director. In contrast to Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the boundaries between backstage and frontstage were almost non-

[9] http://theworkroom.org.uk/

existent as the small number of people and the close relationships they had meant that all interactions were informal. This enabled me to interact with the company members and have informal conversations with them on numerous different instances.

- **Kinesis**

Permission to observe Kinesis was granted for a period of a week. Despite the limited time for which I had access, I was on site every day from early morning until late evening. Access to conduct observation was granted by the company director who also acted as choreographer, and sometimes performer. I conducted an interview with him prior to the observation where he told me that he was going to start creating new work within the following months. I asked whether I could observe some of their rehearsals and after he spoke to his company members he confirmed that I could join them for a week towards the end of their production process as it was going to be too messy at the start. It was also agreed that interviews with this company's dancers, if they wanted to be interviewed, should occur after the shows, which was what actually happened.

This company consisted of six performers, three females and three males (including the company's director who often performed), with different professional backgrounds. Only two of them received formal professional dance training; the rest trained in theatre and participated in dance and movement workshops. Despite this, they all characterised themselves as performers whose style merges dance, theatre, movement and text. During my time with this company, I observed all of their rehearsals and work-sharing shows.

Kinesis was a revealing company to observe because of its distinctive style and topics of performances. This was a company, which relied on improvisation, the merging of text, live music, theatre and dance. The show they were preparing during the observation period, and other work this company has produced, problematised aspects of social reality and set to explore and question things and situations which we, as individuals, often take for granted. These conditions

made it an interesting selection for this project as its performers' movement was often agendered, with male and female performers engaging in intense physical contact with each other.

The small number of people employed in this company meant that they would all have lunch and tea breaks together. I was always invited to join them and we engaged in informal conversations during their breaks. This was particularly useful for my project as I could ask questions about things I had observed. It also enabled me to develop rapport with informants who shared information about aspects of their personal and professional lives. Like with Chorotheatro, I felt more as an 'insider' in this company rather than as an 'outsider'. I developed relationships with the performers and I learned about their lives, backgrounds and everyday realities. I also shared information about my life. Also, at numerous times I helped with different tasks on the site; I helped them carry/move stuff around; I contributed with my opinions; helped them during rehearsals and work-sharing shows. I also had access in private spaces that the company members used (dressing rooms, closed spaces, spaces with equipment). Yet, I was an 'outsider' in the sense that I was not a dancer, working for or with the company.

Interviews

In addition to observation and brief on-site unstructured conversations, data was collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with males who were professionally involved in dance in Scotland. This process left me with 28 interviews with male dance students and males professionally involved in the production and/or performance of dance[10]. Interview encounters were guided by interview schedules with a number of pre-set questions. However, more questions arose during the interview when participants were prompted to elaborate on their answers and provide more detailed accounts. This resulted in detailed data and thorough responses.

[10] For a detailed breakdown, see appendix 1.

Separate interview guides were developed for informants who were at the time studying for a professional qualification in dance; for professional ballet and contemporary dancers; and for choreographers and company directors. Despite some slight variations, there were four key themes that guided the interview process and the subsequent analysis of data. These were personal and demographic information; dance trajectory; experiences of being involved in dance overall and in relation to gender and sexuality more specifically; and social surroundings and attitudes towards their profession.

Participants were recruited through different means. Participants from Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland were informed about the research through their manager and programme leader accordingly. Participants from Kinesis and Chorotheatro were also informed through their company manager and director. In addition to the information they received prior to the fieldwork, I introduced myself and my project on the first day of my observation period in each context. I explained that I would be observing them and asked them to inform me if they had any further questions or wanted to be excluded from the findings. No one expressed such views. I then told them that I would be very interested in talking to as many of them as possible and asked them to let me know if they would be interested in being interviewed. Scottish Ballet's dancers also received an email invitation statement, which explained the study and invited them to participate. This was written by me and was communicated via the company's manager. Most interviewees approached me during breaks saying that they wanted to be interviewed and asking about whether the interviews will be confidential and anonymous. I reassured them that they would be and we agreed to have the interview at a time and day which would be convenient for them.

All interviews with Scottish Ballet's male dancers, with the exception of one which occurred in a coffee shop in Glasgow, occurred in private areas or 'regions' (Goffman, 1959:109) in the facilities of Scottish Ballet. I gave participants the opportunity to choose whether, when and where they would like to be interviewed. All but one preferred to have an unplanned interview within the company's facilities at a time when they were not in rehearsals or when they were not busy. As most of them said, their work is very demanding both in

terms of time and physical and mental prowess. Whilst they wanted to participate they did not want to have the interview on their ‘free’ time. Respecting their wishes, I asked them to approach me whenever they were free during their work hours.

Recruitment of dance students occurred in two ways. Some students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland approached me and others were approached by myself during the beginning of my observation period. I approached them to explain that I would be interested in conducting one-to-one interviews with them and asked them whether they would be interested in participating. They were all very positive about this and suggested a day and time for the interview to occur.

Interviews with dance students occurred at the end of the observation period. This was a precondition set by the institution. It was agreed that interviews will occur during students’ free time and after the teaching season. It was agreed that I would return to the institution to conduct interviews in May 2014. Hence, in May I spent my mornings at the institution waiting for students to approach me to set a date and time for the interview. Three approached me to conduct the interview over their lunch break, at a cafeteria near the institution. Two suggested to have the interview in a private room in the institution’s facilities, and two of them suggested to meet in coffee shops around Glasgow on a day they did not have to be at the institution. Following their wishes, I exchanged contact details with those who asked to have the interview at a later stage. All of them were very positive and willing to participate.

Participants in Kinesis and Chorotheatro were briefly informed about the research by their directors, but the intimate environment meant that I could have one-to-one discussions with them explaining the nature and aims of the study. I then asked them whether they would be interested in participating in an interview and they were all very positive.

Interviews with the dancers employed by Chorotheatro were conducted over lunch breaks in a private room at the community centre where they were based at the time. I feel that this might have influenced the information obtained as our time was restricted and I sometimes felt that interviews were quite rushed

as we sought to cover as much as possible. However, I had the opportunity to clarify the information that was obtained and ask follow-up questions during breaks in the days that followed the interviews.

Interviews with Kinesis dancers occurred a few days after the end of my observation period when the company had returned to Glasgow from touring. Two of the dancers asked to be interviewed together. Whilst I tried to avoid this to protect them and retain confidentially they insisted to be interviewed at the same time. This, as they told me later on, was mainly for practical reasons, but also because they felt very comfortable with each other and they would gladly have shared information in front of each other. They were very close and having been interviewed together did in fact help the interview process as they prompted each other and often engaged in discussions which were very revealing.

Lastly, in addition to participants from my observation sites I also recruited two dance students from one of Glasgow's colleges and other professional dancers who were at the time of the research working as freelancers and were employed in various dance companies. Contemporary dancers were recruited through The WorkRoom; I contacted the Residency Coordinator of the organisation who forwarded a letter I wrote inviting dancers to participate in my study. Some dancers and dance producers contacted me saying that they would be interested in participating in the study. I asked those who were involved in contemporary dance to arrange an interview. Interviews with these dancers occurred at coffee shops around Glasgow and other cities in Scotland.

The Interview Process

Before each interview, informants were provided with a Plain Language Statement and I made sure that they did not have any questions or concerns before we started. Informants were also asked for their signed informed consent to be interviewed and for the interview to be audio-recorded. It was also made very clear that even though I would do everything in my power to protect their anonymity, the small number of male dancers in Scotland meant that they could

still, potentially, be identified by colleagues and friends. Considering this, in making use of the data, I concealed or excluded information that might have enabled others to identify informants.

The time and place where interviews were conducted was decided by the informants. It has been argued that the setting where interviews occur might influence what is said or how it is said (Elwood and Martin, 2000); I feel that the space where interviews were conducted did not significantly influence the content of the interview or the whole interaction. I found that when informants wanted to share confidential information they still did so by lowering the volume of their voice. I also felt that because we were sitting in close proximity, on the same sofa in an isolated space, information could still be shared freely. Further, whilst I may not have selected these specific settings should I had the chance, I wanted my informants to decide where they would feel more comfortable to be interviewed. This also aimed to 'shift the relations of power between the research participants' (Manderson et al., 2006:1318); this is a key consideration of feminist research practice (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). Arguably, I cannot claim that this resulted in equal power positions between myself and my participants; however, I do feel that by letting participants choose the setting and time of the interview, I respected their wishes and time schedules and gave them some power over the interview process. Lastly, any information that was shared as part of a wider conversation or an interview and was asked to remain 'off-record' was not included in the analysis.

In addition, according to May, 'age, sex, race and accent' influence the type of information that will be obtained (2011:140). May suggested that 'before conducting interviews it is important to consider a match of characteristics, on the basis of not only race, but also such factors as age, sex and accent' (p.140). This, he argued, will best enable the researcher to 'blend in' (p.140). In this project I had an 'outsider' status in many senses; I was a woman studying men, I was an academic with some dance knowledge studying professional dancers and I did not share the same background with any of my informants.

However, I would argue that my outsider status as a woman studying men enabled me to investigate my informants' experiences in regards to gender and sexuality. Robinson and Hockey, while commenting on their gender and the

influence it had on studying men and masculinities, argued that 'access to men's emotional concerns was, overall, enabled by the gender of the researcher. Men would indicate that it was easier for them to talk to a woman, rather than a man' (2011:9). I would agree with Robinson and Hockey, and would suggest that my gender and sex did not negatively influence the conduct of the interview or the information obtained. I cannot know whether my informants would have shared as much information with a man, for example, but I would argue that my identification as a woman did not negatively impact the interview encounter; my 'outsider' status -a female academic researching male dancers- gave me access to my informants' experiences of gender and sexuality.

During interviews my participants opened up and shared information about negative experiences that involved discrimination and questioning of their masculinity by other young men. I would, therefore, suggest that my identification as a woman might have enabled them to share these stories without considering me as a 'threat'. As has been argued, when interviews are conducted by a female researcher, respondents might be able to 'talk about sensitive issues without feeling threatened' (Reinharz, 1992:20).This, as Williams and Heikes have suggested, resides on the view that 'men are more comfortable talking about intimate topics with women than they are with other men' (1993:281). This claim was reiterated by Manderson et al. (2006) and Hall et al. (2007).

Moreover, dance, as has been previously suggested, is a female-concentrated field. Due to this, male dancers are used to interacting with women. The majority of my participants talked about their closest friends as being women and, as they said, they feel more comfortable around women. This suggests that my identification as a woman would not have influenced the conduct of interview and information obtained in a negative or restrictive way. On the contrary, it might have eased the process for them; like Robinson, I would argue that 'my outsider status as a woman when interviewing my male respondents gave me an insider access to their emotional lives' (2008:11). One of my participants descripted the interview as 'therapeutic' (Tim, gay, 22-30); the experience of the interview as a safe encounter where he could share his negative experiences, I would suggest, was enabled by my gender.

Further, any type of interview, and in this case cross-sex interviews with a female researcher and male interviewees, enables us to think about the conduct of interviews as encounters in which both participants perform gender, as well as other characteristics of their identities such as professional status, sexuality and so on. A study of male fashion models, which was also conducted by a female researcher, suggested that interviews can 'provide evidence of how men 'do' masculinity in the context of a heterosexual encounter with the researcher –a young heterosexual woman' (Entwistle, 2004:59). It is my view that we all perform in social interactions and had the interviewer been somebody else, interviewees may have acted differently and given different information. However, as Manderson et al. argued, 'this does not render the account invalid, but it draws attention to the complexity and variability of experience and the significance of social interactions in collecting and interpreting research data' (2006:1331).

Another element of my identity which might have influenced my relationship with informants was that of age. Being in approximately the same age range as the majority of informants gave me an 'insider' status with many of this study's young participants. This improved our communication and mutual respect. As Manderson et al. argued, matching interviewers and participants by age 'takes advantage of opportunities of common experience to maximize easiness between the two' (2006:1320). Indeed, I felt that it was easier to communicate with participants who were approximately my age as we could understand the cultural references that were used in the interview; however, there were no difficulties occurring with older participants either. The only difference is that I felt that they sometimes explained their views and thoughts slightly more. For example, Tom, one of my participants, talked about 'his days' as a professional dancer and explained things in more detail (mostly straight, 40+). He made many comparisons with how the situation was back then and gave detailed examples which explained how the situation is different now. My outsider status –both in terms of age and lack of professional dance background- acted to my advantage, as he ended up giving me a very detailed account of similarities and differences between the time he was an active performer and now that he runs his own company.

All participants were between 18 and 67 years old and were at the time of the research living and/or working in different cities of Scotland. Thirteen of them self-identified as 'gay', one as 'bisexual', one as 'mostly straight', six as 'heterosexual' and seven as 'straight'. Hence, unintentionally, there were equal numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual participants. In addition, seventeen of them came from different parts of the UK and eleven came from other European and non-European backgrounds. Their nationalities are not specified to protect participants' identities; participants in this thesis are approached as being originally from Scotland, the rest of UK or as non-UK. Specific background information is included in the analysis only whenever this is important to understand the situation or story that is being discussed.

Participants' identity was protected through the following steps: firstly, participants are approached as members of four relatively wide age groups: 18-21; 22-30; 31-40 and over 40. The rationale behind this division is that dancers usually begin their professional careers around the age of 18. Hence, the first category refers to those who are at the start of their career. The second category includes dancers who might be slightly more established in the dance context with permanent contracts and more networks. The third one includes dancers who are heading towards the end of their performing career as retirement age for ballet dancers is usually around the late 30s or early 40s. Lastly, the final category is more likely to include directors and choreographers rather than 'active' performers.

Overall, fieldwork left me with approximately 300 hours of observation in four different dance institutions, and 28 interviews with male dance students, ballet dancers, contemporary dance performers, dance directors and choreographers. Additional interviews were also conducted with representatives from The WorkRoom and Creative Scotland[11]; yet these were used to provide contextualising information about dance in Scotland and have therefore not been used in this thesis.

[11] http://www.creativescotland.com/

Data Analysis

The analysis process began while I was still collecting data. I began with transcribing notes and recorded interviews and trying to identify reoccurring themes. This was particularly helpful as it made me realise discussion topics which I had not consider at the beginning; I included these in my interview guides and used them in subsequent interviews. As Miles et al.'s argued 'analysis concurrent with data collection helps the fieldworker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data' (2014:70).

This project followed thematic analysis. I first created 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) or detailed summaries of all my field notes which helped me think about and understand the collected data and familiarise myself with the information that was obtained. Following from this I uploaded all interviews, transcribed field-notes and thick descriptions on NVivo[12] and I began by coding my data through NVivo; I created codes, or analytical labels, of key concepts or ideas that described my data. Some of these referred to theoretical concepts such as 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2005), 'performances' (Goffman, 1959), 'doing' and 'undoing gender' (Deutsch, 2007).

During the initial stages of my data analysis, which Miles et al. (2014) referred to as 'first cycle coding', I had over 40 codes, each with numerous sub-codes. As the analysis progressed however, these were reduced and became more focused. By the end of the analysis process, I had six main codes: institutions, career trajectories, bodies, reflections on dance, gender and sexualities, and social surroundings. Each one of these codes had a range of more narrowed sub codes. Some of these codes, or themes, were created prior to the fieldwork and were informed by the research questions and framework that guided the study. Miles et al. (2014) named this coding method as 'deductive'. Other codes though emerged during data collection and data analysis; these are referred to as 'inductive' (Miles et al., 2014:80). The latter was the outcome of what Miles et al. (2014) referred to as 'second cycle coding', which refers to grouping the

[12] Qualitative data analysis software

summaries which resulted after the first coding cycle into ‘a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs’ (p.87).

Codes changed as data analysis progressed. During this process, new ideas emerged and theories which were not previously considered became integrated in the project. Over the process of data analysis, and the writing of data-analysis chapters, I engaged with different theories in an effort to understand and discuss my data. At the beginning I used Connell’s theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (2005) and I then moved to Anderson’s theory of ‘orthodox and inclusive masculinity’ (2005; 2009). I also engaged with queer theories (Ahmed, 2006; Berlant and Warner, 1997; Butler, 1993, 1999) and considered a variety of other theoretical approaches. As this study intended to follow an inductive data analysis approach, the framework which I ended up using was mainly influenced by the emerging data. As such, it was selected to reflect participants’ accounts and experiences. This shaped the analysis and the overall framework that was adopted in this project.

As it will become evident in subsequent chapters, data suggested that the ways participants organised their lives and experiences were heavily reliant on conventional gender and sexuality binaries. Participants’ experiences of gender, and especially sexuality, were mainly discussed in a framework of prevailing binaries where people could be *either* men *or* women, masculine *or* feminine and gay *or* straight. Thus, the framework which was employed revolved around these binaries. Queer theories were utilised only to a certain degree and through specific concepts such as, for example, ‘heteronormativity’ (Berlant and Warner, 1997), ‘heterosexual hegemony’ (Butler, 1993) and ‘heterosexual matrix’ (Butler, 1999).

Lastly, during the data analysis process some ethical dilemmas arose. I became concerned with whether I should anonymise the research sites. At the beginning I felt that it was my responsibility to protect my informants and conceal the identity of the research sites. However, after much thought I decided that regardless if I used pseudonyms for these institutions, the uniqueness of Scottish Ballet as the only national ballet company in Scotland and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as Scotland’s national conservatoire would have made both identifiable. Considering that both institutions train or employ relatively

large numbers of male dancers I decided that if I used pseudonyms for my informants, and if I concealed parts of their identity, I could still maintain their anonymity. I thus decided to name these two organisations but not the two small-scale contemporary dance companies as the number of dancers they employed was very small. This course of action was negotiated with the Ethics Committee of the College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow. After formal communication, the committee approved a formal consent form which was forwarded to Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Permission to name Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland was negotiated with key representatives of the two institutions and written consent was obtained. In the signed consent form, it is clearly stated that the only person who can have access and control over the data is the named researcher.

Validity

According to Cho and Trent, 'traditionally validity in qualitative research involves determining the degree to which researchers' claims about knowledge correspond to the reality (or research participants' constructions of reality) being studied' (2006:320). In this study, I tried to analyse my data in different ways and through different lenses. In my effort to convey an accurate representation of my informants' views, I created tables outlining key themes and relevant quotes. This practice enabled me to capture, and present, complexities and tensions in my dataset.

Further, by reflecting on the assumptions I have had prior to the beginning of fieldwork, and on the ways that data challenged and reinforced these, I believe that I have been able to provide analytical discussions that cover the studied phenomena in an accurate manner. Nevertheless, my interpretation of findings might have been different from that of another researcher; this is the case with all qualitative studies where the researcher is immersed in the research process. The subjectivity/objectivity divide is one that is widely debated in feminist research practice (Hesse-Biber, et al., 2004), with feminists questioning 'the possibility that knowledge can be free of the researcher's values' (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002:45).

Researchers bring their previous knowledge, experiences and personal beliefs to their research projects. This influences, even partially, the conduct of the study, from data collection to data analysis (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002:116). We all experience and interpret the world in different ways and our questions and data collection are always informed by previous knowledge and experiences. I would, however, argue that my position as a female researcher studying men, and with knowledge of dance but not of the professional dance world, have positively influenced this study and have contributed to the production of valid data and arguments. Also, my reflective accounts and discussions of the ways that aspects of myself, past experiences and practices might have influenced this study also contribute to its validity.

As Denzin argued, 'too often the sociologist enters the field with preconceptions that prevent him from allowing those he studies to tell it "as they see it"' (Denzin, 2009:8-9). I would argue that as a researcher with practical experience and knowledge of these dance genres I had a (partially) insider status. Having practiced dance for many years in the past I was aware of the vocabulary being used, the techniques being referred to, and the ways dancing feels on the body. Like Robinson whose climbing knowledge enabled her to 'interpret the data, notably around aspects of interviewees' emotional and bodily experiences, in particular ways, which may not have been available to a non-climber' (2008:10; see also Robinson, 2013), so did my dancing knowledge and past experience enable me to understand my data in particular ways. Knowing the expectations from dancers and the ways that dancing movements or certain dance positions feel on the body, I was able to understand what was happening and get a better insight into my participants' dancing experiences. This provided us with some shared knowledge and gave me an (partially) insider status. However, my lack of professional, intense training positioned me as an outsider. My informants asked me at several points whether I knew what they were referring to and in most cases I did. However, I did not have extensive knowledge on the matters that were discussed and they often had to elaborate on their responses to give me a better insight. This acted to my benefit as I wanted to explore *their* knowledge and experiences of these practices.

Lastly, my outsider status as a non-professional dancer and a female researcher, protected me from excessive 'empathy or subjectivism' (Robinson, 2013:137). The fact that I could not have identified with my participants in these ways enabled me to convey my data as 'objectively' as possible. My outsider status also enabled me to ask questions that might not have been asked by somebody who had professional knowledge of dance and who had shared the same, or similar, experiences with my informants. This gave me rich, detailed commentaries, which enabled me to get insight into participants' constructions of *their* social reality.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter provided an overview of the research design which was employed in this study. Discussing the five elements that Maxwell (2013) identified as part of a research design, this chapter provided an overarching discussion of my methodological choices and the ways these influenced this project. Special attention was given to reflexive accounts of aspects of my identity, which might have impacted this project's data collection and analysis.

This study makes an original contribution to knowledge partially because it is the first study to have used interviews and observation to investigate gender and sexuality in dance institutions in Scotland. The investigation of the organisational cultures of the four institutions that were included in this project, and the possibilities these enable with regards to the construction, performance and negotiation of gender and sexuality, provide novel insights which can inform current academic debates on men and masculinities in feminised workplaces. These methods also enable a better understanding of the experiences these men have had from being involved in this sphere. In addition, the exploration of informants' life-courses through interviews enables a discussion of the factors that influenced their initial involvement in dance, which adds another layer in the analysis that follows.

To conclude this chapter, it should be reinstated that like Goffman (1959; 1961) I also believe that as social actors we have many sides to our personalities.

Hence, any researcher can never fully identify with their participants. Even if we shared some characteristics such as gender for example, we would still have different experiences, which would have influenced how we see social reality and negotiate ourselves in interaction. We would also share different characteristics; these would influence our hierarchical positioning in relationships and social situations as notions of ‘self’ are differently produced in different contexts and influenced by power relations, which are always contextual and situational.

Chapter 4
An Historical Exploration of the Gendering of Dance

Introduction

Dance is one of those socio-cultural spheres which have been historically identified with women, femininity, male homosexuality and male effeminacy. This chapter provides a sociological analysis of the conditions that led to the gendering of dance. It discusses key historical movements and socio-economic transformations that influenced gender and sexuality norms on the one hand, and their interplay with dance on the other. The analysis that is developed in this chapter relies on the accounts of dance sociologists (Thomas, 1993, 1995; Tsitsou, 2012), the work of key dance historians (Banes, 1987, 1994, 1998; Burt, 2007; Daly, 1987; Garafola, 1985; Homans, 2010), sociological literature on gender and sexualities and key feminist texts (Banks, 1981; Connell, 2005; Elias, 1983; Forth, 2008; Foucault, 1976; Weeks, 2014).

Following the chronology of events, the narrative begins in 17th century France, the place where ballet emerged and developed. This chapter starts by discussing ballet as one of the most important forms of entertainment in the court of Louis XIV. As will be demonstrated, ballet, at the time of its emergence, was predominantly practised by the King and male courtiers; up until the end of the 18th century, ballet was a male-populated and masculine sphere. However, the outbreak of the French Revolution led to significant social changes in France; it impacted upon France's social stratification, its class system, beliefs and ideas around gender. This development could not have left ballet, an institution which was since its emergence associated with the court, unaffected.

In the aftermath of the Revolution, many ballet dancers migrated to London, which became the place where romantic ballet developed. The development of Romantic ballet had significant influences on the gendering of dance. For the first time in 19th century, female dancers outnumbered the male ones and the sphere of dancing became synonymous with women and femininity. As will be discussed in the second main section, during this period in Paris and London

dancing for men became highly disapproved of, yet in countries such as Russia it became celebrated. As it will be demonstrated, this was the outcome of the changing class system in these countries and ballet's changing ties with the aristocracy.

In addition to the gendering of ballet, the late 19th century was also important because it laid the way for the emergence of modern dance. As will be argued in the third main section, in the early 20th century the foundations for modern dance's development were set by Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) and Ballet Russes (1909-1929). This is important because modern dance challenged much of that which ballet represented and placed specific emphasis on gender and other social issues. As will be demonstrated in the final section, early modern dancers were predominantly females. Female modern dancers dramatised female subjectivity and through the production, performance and consumption of dance they aimed to challenge the traditional gender order. For this part, attention turns for the first time towards America as this was where most developments in relation to modern, and postmodern, dance occurred.

Court Society, Gender and the Role of Dance

> The conditions under which ballet emerged in the seventeenth century overlapped with the rise of the court society (Tsitsou, 2012:36-37).

Ballet, before it began its transformation into the spectacle it is today, was practiced for the pleasure of courtiers in the Italian court. Ballet travelled from Italy to France, when Catherine de Medici (1519-1589) married Henry II of France in 1533 (Homans, 2010). Catherine called dance masters and choreographers to Paris and, as Lee argued, 'an intensive period of instruction in figured dancing began in earnest, and the French court proved to be eager learners' (2002:40). According to Bland (1976), during Catherine's reign, court festivities acquired a new type of entertainment based on the arts. Especially dance came to symbolise the 'power and majesty of the court' (Tsitsou, 2012:33). Court dance,

the prevailing dance form by that time, transformed into court ballet[13] during Catherine's reign and was further developed in Louis XIV's court. By the early 17th century, ballet became a crucial element of the court (Au, 1997; Kraus, 1969:71; Tsitsou, 2012).

In 17th century France, the court was the 'most influential centre of society' (Elias, 1983:78) and Louis XIV's ballets depicted it as an idealised unity. In the court of Louis XIV, estates, etiquette, appearance and behaviour served as means of distinction between the higher and lower strata (Elias, 1983:54). Estates and the facilitation of social events were important for interaction amongst courtiers, and the display of their status. Etiquette was also crucial; demonstrating prestige and distancing themselves from 'lower ranking' people was an aspiration for the high-ranking people of the court as 'the practice of etiquette was an exhibition of court society to itself' (Elias, 1983:101). Etiquette was so important that it was incorporated in ballet 'as a set of behavioural patterns' and it served as means for education, 'social distinction, manifestation of status and position' (Tsitsou, 2012:38).

With Louis XIV's ascension to the throne in 1643, ballet became 'the strongest venue for social interaction among the nobility' (Lee, 2002:66). It also became a means through which courtiers and the King expressed their status and power to the rest of the court. The King, who participated in many ballets, separated himself from the crowd and other dancers, whilst dancers' proximity to the King reflected their hierarchical status in this society (Kelly, 2012:8). Thus, as Lee (2002:66) and Kelly (2012:06) argued, Louis XIV controlled his court through, amongst other means, controlling dance. Likewise, Roebuck argued that Louis XIV 'exploited and developed court ballet to fulfil his desire to proclaim himself as the embodiment of absolute political power' (2001:130). Ballet, therefore, at the point of its emergence, was associated with courtly power structures and the nobility.

[13] Court ballet was 'an organised spectacle, which involved dance, imitative gesture, décor, effects and costumes' (Tsitsou, 2012:33).

Ballet and Gender Relations in Louis XIV's Court

Roebuck, whose PhD thesis investigated representations of masculinity in contemporary dance, argued that dancers' gender and sexuality was not emphasised in Louis XIV's court; the authoritarian figure of the King and his power 'was not achieved by promoting his masculine difference' (2001:135). Others such as Prest, a scholar of early-modern French theatre, suggested that 'ballets under Louis XIV emphasised male-female relations at court' (2006:79). Despite these contrasting arguments, there is agreement amongst dance historians that ballets were at the time performed mainly by male courtiers (Burt, 2007; Homans, 2010). As Prest argued, 'at the beginning of Louis XIV's reign, the ballet stage was essentially male, and the performance of female roles by male dancers was an established convention' (2006:80).

Cross-casting was a common practice in ballet. Cross-casting during that period was emphasised as an illusion that was much celebrated. Prest also argued that male dancers, even when they were cross-dressed they still addressed the female members of the audience in an effort to seduce them (2013). Prest's argument relies on translated *verses*[14] and ballet *livrets*[15]; these texts emphasised cross-sex relations, and hence heterosexuality, in the court. The existence of verses, and the information these included with regard to the performer's biological sex and the gender identity they performed in certain roles, suggests a clear distinction between the performer's off-stage self and the 'character' they embodied on-stage; the spectator was reminded of that during the play.

These texts also served to signal 'an important transition away from the homoerotic or otherwise threatening potential of the cross-casted role' (Prest, 2006:85). Since cross-casting could result in a 'degree of anxiety', the use of verses helped to reassert 'the sexual identity [of the performer] as resolutely masculine and heterosexual' (2006:85). Considering that the performers' sex was not aligned with the gender they performed onstage, the intended role of the

[14] Verses were texts that 'drew attention to the different levels of theatrical illusion in court ballet' (Prest, 2006:84). These were distributed to the audience; they were meant to be read by audience members to guide their perception of the performance.

[15] Ballet livrets 'contained brief plot summaries, the names of the dancers for each scene and the vers (*verses)* for the courtly performers' (Prest, 2006:83).

verses as a means to reinforce their, perhaps questioned, (hetero)sexuality can be understood. Using Goffman's framework, it could also be suggested that verses guided the audience in relation to the 'self' they should impute to the performer (1959).

Another interesting development during this period concerned the costumes of the dancers. Male dancers danced wearing short skirts that enabled visibility of their legwork and less restricted movement. Female dancers' costumes however, were long and restrictive; considering that during that period 'the ideal woman' was 'someone who was beautiful, youthful and chaste- but ultimately also seducible' (Prest, 2006:103) justifies this practice. When male dancers performed cross-dressed, their costumes were adjusted to still display their legs. There were therefore different skirt types for females, for males and for males who were cross-casted to perform the roles of women onstage (Prest, 2006).

This practice raises two issues. First, it suggests that ballet, as an institution, reflected the different values, and expectations, associated with people according to their sex. Second, it suggests that material resources such as clothing can cover bodies and can contribute to the communication of a gender identity, which is not aligned with the corporeal body of the performer. The latter suggests that the (gendered) self may be approached as 'a dramatic effect arising from the scene that is presented' (Goffman, 1959:245).

This leads to a final issue, that of gender relations in the court. Women, during the reign of Louis XIV, were marked as the Other, as 'fundamentally being different from men' (Seifert, 2002:46). Relying on the analysis of pornographic novels and marriage treatises, Seifert argued that these texts 'never quite accorded women a complete ontological autonomy, nor did they articulate their submission to patriarchal dominance' (p.46). On a related note, Elias argued that court society was 'spacious' in the sense that spouses could lead 'independent lives' (1983:50). Whilst women were not seen as subordinate and directly dependant on their spouses, they were still marked as that which was *not male* and the Other of masculinity in a way 'which gives consistency to the male and the masculine' (Seifert, 2002:46).

Even though Seifert did not suggest that the othering of femininity implies its subordinate position, it seems that this was the case. The categorisation of individuals as male and masculine or not turns such categories of identification into the defining, unmarked ones, which signifies their higher position within the binary of gender relations. Also, as Prest argued, females were at the time excluded from the public stage (2006:7); this also reinforces the conceptualisation of women's position as subordinate which also explains their little involvement in, amongst other social spheres and public events, ballet.

Academie de Danse

During the late half of the 17th century, the nobility was growing in France. In 1661, Louis XIV established the *Academie Royale de Danse* to make dance less accessible to his enemies and growing noble circles (Roebuck, 2001; Tsitsou, 2012). At the time of its founding, Louis XIV appointed thirteen male dancing masters to the Academie. Likewise, dancers in the Academie were predominantly male and their membership in the Academie was a privilege that signified status (Homans, 2010:16). Since the production and performance of ballet was in the hands of males, ballet was both male-populated and male-dominated. As Homans argued, 'this was the era of the *danseur*[16]' (2010:20).

Homans, while discussing the concentration of males in ballet during that time, argued that 'physical appearance was taken to be a sign of inborn nobility' (p. 17). One's image management, performances and handling of the body gave the impression of nobility. The noble self, as Goffman (1959) would have argued, was the successful outcome of people's comportment, demeanour and interactions; convincing performances could let others to consider these social actors as members of the nobility. The request for ballet masters who would teach male courtiers 'elegant forms of behaviour' therefore increased (Homans, 2010:17). This led to a dramatic increase of dance schools in Paris in the 1660s. These schools, Homans argued, were 'devoted to training young noblemen to avoid dread braches of etiquette' (2010:18).

[16] A male ballet dancer.

During the same time, the number of female dancers started to increase (Prest, 2006:104). This, according to Kelly, occurred because of the establishment of 'a theatre with a school dedicated to training professionals of both genders for the stage' (2012:10). A minority of female amateur dancers performed but mostly in social balls or the queen's ballets (Kelly, 2012); the King's company consisted of only male performers who continued to perform the roles of women by wearing masks, clothing and wigs –items that signified femininity (Homans, 2010:20; Kelly, 2012; Kraus, 1969:73; Lee, 2002:50; Prest, 2006). This occurred because, as Homans (2010) suggested, males were seen as being physically, personally or for political reasons more able to perform than their female counterparts were.

The increase of female dancers and their engagement in ballet resulted in ballets with both cross-cast and straight-cast female roles (females playing women); the practice of cross-casting continued even when female dancers could have performed the role of women onstage. This practice, as Prest argued, occurred because, 'ballets continued to feature some female roles that were not considered appropriate for portrayal by women' (2006:104). As has been argued, women at the time were expected to be chaste, and some roles challenged these ideals (Prest, 2006). Whilst a clear distinction was drawn between the off-stage self and the onstage persona male dancers performed, the female dancers' onstage performances were still expected to uphold the feminine ideal. This, according to Prest, suggests a 'deeper level of anxiety with regard to the feminine ideal' (2006:104) and a need to control female behaviour both onstage and offstage in that it 'conforms as closely as possible to the desires of the heterosexual male courtiers' (2006:105).

It was only in 1681 that the roles of women were for the first time performed at the Paris Opera by female dancers instead of male dancers *en travestie* (Homans, 2010). Since that time, females' involvement in ballet began to increase further. According to Homans, 'as real nobles made their exit [from professional dance] their roles were taken up by skilled (but socially low class) professionals, [and] women found a place [in dance]' (2010:40). Homans' reference to dancers' social class is reinforced by Tsitsou, who argued that 'for female dancers of lower class origin a post in the Opera coincided with a marital strategy' (2012:51); lower-class women's involvement in ballet gave them an

opportunity to mingle with the aristocracy and the higher classes and establish sexual affairs with noble men (Kelly, 2012; Tsitsou, 2012). This phenomenon intensified in the late 18th century.

Despite that female dancers' numbers increased, their status in dance, and roles during onstage performances, remained minimal; female dancers were positioned as 'beautiful objects' to be gazed upon by the male audiences (Prest, 2006:105). Laura Mulvey's theory of the 'male gaze' can be used to briefly explain Prest's latter point. According to Mulvey (1975), the female becomes an object that is unconsciously viewed or consumed by the male spectator, who has the dominating role in a patriarchal society. Whilst Mulvey's theory referred to 20th century cinema and the visual pleasure men get from looking at women on screen, her work has been applied to analyse, amongst other things, ballet and the portrayal of the female ballerina (see for example, Daly, 1987; Drummond, 2003). Female ballerinas were positioned in ways which enabled them to be 'consumed' by the (assumedly heterosexual) males who were ballet's most prominent audience (Burt, 2007).

Overall, ballet emerged in the Court of Louis XIV and at the beginning it was mainly practiced by noble males. During the 17th century, ballet was a male-concentrated and dominated practice. However, with the establishment of the *Academie Royale de Danse,* nobles became excluded from ballet's practice and professional dancers began to take over. Females' involvement in ballet began to increase and females from lower social classes saw their involvement in this sphere as a strategy which could result in social advancement. New schools that trained male as well as female dancers emerged and new gender-specific vocabulary and movements developed.

18th Century France: The Revolution, Class Conflict and the 'New Man'

The French Revolution signified a new era in France; France's transition from the Old Regime to bourgeois society resulted in the aristocracy and the aristocratic lifestyle to become 'associated in the public mind with a distinctly

feminised sensibility […] excess and imposture' (Landes, 1988:47). Men of the aristocracy were disavowed for, amongst other reasons, their lack of masculinity. Notions of class and masculinity, or the lack of masculinity thereof, started to intersect in new ways. Landes (1988) and Forth (2008) referred to Rousseau's accusations towards aristocratic women for 'feminising' men in salons by teaching them refined manners.

Salons became places where social groups that were previously excluded from the court were taught 'the appropriate style, dress, manners, language, art, and literature' (Elias, 1983:24). Aristocratic women taught these groups 'proper' ways of 'presenting themselves', to use Goffman's terms (1959). Bodies, and their presentation, became crucially important to that. Hence, while referring to Rousseau's accusations, Forth argued that 'the French revolution logically represented a remasculinisation of the French manhood' (2008:128). As he continued saying:

> the corporealisation of the nation required bodies of a particular type: removed from comfort and subjected to effort and pain. […] these bodies were understood as being part and parcel of the "new man" inaugurated by the revolution itself, one who had been regenerated morally, physically and politically (p.128).

The public saw the bodies of the aristocracy and the King to be 'bloated and luxury-ridden' (Forth, 2008:128); revolutionaries therefore, turned to classical images of male bodies, which depicted what they took to be ideal male bodies and male action. Forth suggested that the wars and conceptions of nation and nationalistic culture turned military training 'integral to the process of masculinisation as a concomitant of nation-building, a method of creating people who would both embody and serve the interests of the state' (2008:124). The same was argued by Connell, who suggested that military performance became crucial in the construction of masculinity (1993). Hence, the masculine ideal of that period, or 'hegemonic masculinity' in Connell's terms (2005), became bound up with the middle-classes that contested the nobility and aristocracy.

The newly attention placed onto bodies was also reflected in ballet. *Action ballet*[17], which developed during the 18th century at the Royal Opera, emphasised dancers' bodies as 'elements under mastery' (Tsitsou, 2012:53). As such, it emphasised dancers' technical skills and their 'new levels of virtuosity' (p.53). In contrast to emerging private theatres, fairs and outdoor festivals, which became 'venues of deviant experimentation' (p.49), the Royal Opera remained 'an ideological mechanism of the court, which served royal interests, both aesthetic and political' (p.54). The distinction between the genres that were performed in the Opera and outside of it, therefore, grew and the work that was produced in these different spaces reflected the socio-political conditions and struggles for power in France (p.57).

After the revolution, during the beginning of the Napoleon Era, dance became restricted. Napoleon wanted to 'restore ballet and opera to their former grandeur' and he therefore, 'shut down all but eight theatres' (Homans, 2010:118). Paris before the revolution witnessed a considerable increase of theatres; however, during the Napoleonic era dance became significantly constrained and the Opera, as the 'only theatre which was allowed to mount ballets in the noble style, with gods, kings and heroes', came to represent once again the 'glory of the French nation' (Homans, 2010:119-120).

Further, under Napoleon, Homans argued, there was 'a strong push to rationalise artistic practices on the basis of merit' (2010:120). The Paris Opera School was therefore reorganised with 'clear guidelines for advancement' (p.121). Uniform dress became mandatory due to Napoleon's preference for military etiquette. Whilst ballet was not directly part of the gymnastic culture that prevailed during that time, it was still affected by the overall climate. According to Homans, boys especially had to wear 'tight pants, vests, and white stockings' (p.121), uniform which articulated the discipline and control that characterised the military.

Ballet during its emergence had close ties with the nobility and the monarch; these ties were reinforced during the Napoleonic Era. Ballet dancers and choreographers who kept practicing ballet in its classical style, therefore, became subject to disapproval and were widely seen as 'political traitors and

[17] The translation of a written story into dance narrative (Tsitsou, 2012:53).

servants of the monarchy' (Tsitsou, 2012:57). Many of them were therefore, imprisoned or 'forced' to leave the country. Many migrated to London, which became 'the locus where action ballet actually developed' (p.58). This was the first time that a country other than France took the leading role in relation to ballet. This is discussed further in the following section.

In relation to gender, there were no major shifts documented during this period. The only detail which might be important comes from Homans's discussion of *Télémaque* (1790). This was a ballet which was created by Pierre Gardel[18] (1758-1840) and, as Homans argued, was 'overwhelmingly feminine' (2010:109); *Télémaque* had a cast of 32 female ballet dancers and only two male dancers. However, the female dancers did not have important roles. Instead, they were 'decoratively and prominently arrayed across the stage' (Homans, 2010:109). Nevertheless, this was the first ballet in which female dancers outnumbered the male ones.

The female dancers formed the *corps de ballet*[19] and were depicted as 'sensual and erotic, not yet elevated symbolic figures' (Homans, 2010:113). This would soon change, but during this time female dancers' portrayal as 'sensual and erotic' contributed to their association with sex work. Sex, at the time, became a matter of policing, something that needed regulation through public discourses; 'sexual conduct of the population was taken both as an object of analysis and as a target of intervention' (Foucault, 1976:26). Such discourses contributed to the stigmatising perception of female dancers in the public imagery. Female dancers' social position worsened and remained negative until the emergence of romantic ballet.

Overall, the socio-political conditions of the 18th century influenced France's class-relations and the cultural, as well as gendered, attachments classes acquired. Power struggles were evidenced through the production and performance of ballet, and dance more widely. With regard to gender participation, ballet was practiced by both male and female dancers throughout the 18th century. However, as will be argued in the following section, the 19th

[18] Gardel was a key male figure of18th century ballet.

[19] Ballet dancers that dance as a group.

century was the time that the gendering of dance changed dramatically; for the first time ballet became a female-populated domain and male dancing became a subject of significant disapproval.

19th Century: Romantic Ballet and the Image of the Male Dancer

During the early part of 19th century, ballet, as well as other art forms, were influenced by the movement of Romanticism. The latter's roots dated back to the 18th century; yet it was not until the first half of the 19th century that it became prominent. Romanticism, Guest argued, 'was a symptom of a world caught up in a process of violent change' (1966:2). Guest explains that the Industrial Revolution caused dramatic changes in human life and Romanticism 'set up new conceptions of art in opposition to the rigid observance of form demanded by the academic schools which had dominated artistic activity in the 18th century' (1966:2). Artists of the 19th century sought 'more personal means of expression' (Guest, 1966:2).

The 19th century saw the birth of romantic ballet in France; *La Sylphide* (1832) is considered the first major ballet of this movement. Romantic ballet was different from previous ballet movements in that it emphasised romantic love, intimacy and a new ethos of feelings. Its themes revolved around the representation of beauty and romance, fantasy worlds and the supernatural, the representation of romantic (heterosexual) 'pure' and highly spiritual love, and the 'love-death couplet' (Bland, 1976:54; Burt, 2007:14; Guest, 1966; Lee, 2002; Tsitsou, 2012).

Romantic ballet, as Tsitsou argued, was 'cultivated by the romantic novel' (2012:64), which was itself influenced by the changing conditions and beliefs of bourgeois society. 'Romanticism was a literary movement, and every art-form it touched was to be strongly influenced […] by literary sources' (Guest, 1966:2). As Giddens argued, the 'rise of romantic love more or less coincided with the emergence of the novel' (1992:40).

The romantic hero, the romantic ballerina and the expression of human feelings were highly emphasised, especially in the theatres of London and Paris. Northern countries, and Scotland specifically, featured widely in ballets as settings where these love stories occurred as they 'introduced a mood of mystery and darkness [which was] associated with that part of the continent' (Tsitsou, 2012:64). During the 1830s and 1840s, Romantic ballet flourished, mainly in the theatres of European capitals such as Paris, London and St. Petersburg (Banes, 1998). For the first time in the history of ballet, important developments occur in France but also abroad.

As Romantic ballet developed, the image of the male dancer dramatically changed (Burt, 2007; Daly, 1987; Homans, 2010). In France and Britain, male dancers 'came to be only tolerated as a useful accessory' (Burt, 2007:27). Their role was reduced into 'displaying' the female ballerina. In Russia, however, male dancers' popularity grew. The reasons for this are discussed in this section, which approaches each context separately.

Ballet in France: The Rise of the Bourgeoisie and the Decline of the Male Dancer

Ballet was until the early part of 19th century divided into three distinct genres: 'the serious or noble, the demi-character and the comic' (Homans, 2010:122). During the early decades of the 19th century though, the genres began to merge and their distinctive qualities began to disappear. After the 1830s revolution 'the economic and social conditions of ballet production and reception in France had shifted' (Banes, 1998:12). The Opera converted into a 'state-subsidised but privately run commercial enterprise' (p.12) and the 'new, predominantly bourgeois, audiences exerted an unprecedented box-office power' (Banes, 1998:2). These new audiences rejected the 'academic conventions and classical allusions' that were previously celebrated in ballet (Guest, 1966:4). This, according to Burt, influenced the careers of male dancers in France because ballet came to exist 'under bourgeois rather than royal patronage' (2007:24).

As the ‘genre noble in its purest form, in which the male dancer specially excelled’ began to disappear, the importance of male dancers in ballet began to decline (Guest, 1966:20). Further, the introduction of pointe shoes with Marie Taglioni in 1830, the development of lighter tulle costumes, and the emphasis on illusion, scene design and ‘the atmospheric qualities in ballet’ (Bland, 1976:56) led to the exaggeration of the role of female dancers and the gradual dismissal of the roles of male dancers. Female dancers were increasingly expected to ‘perform prodigious feats of brilliance and balance, […] noiseless leaps and poses to produce an effect of being airborne’ (Bland, 1976:56).

Bonet de Treiches[20], in one of the reports he wrote about the problems ballet was facing, ‘mentioned his concerns that dancers were increasingly neglecting the noble style’ (Homans, 2010:122). Male dancers’ new dancing, their muscularity, athletic tricks and stiffness were highly criticised by ballet critics and audiences (Guest, 1966; Homans, 2010). Gautier (1811-1872), amongst other ballet critics, criticized men for their ‘masculine clumsiness’ (Kraus, 1969:87). He argued that ballet was about a ‘display of feminine grace’ that men could not present (Burt, 2007:25); as he wrote, ‘strength was the only grace permissible to men’ (Gautier cited in Kraus, 1969:88). For Gautier, male dancers invoked working-class masculinity, which did not correspond to ballet’s grace (Burt, 2007:25). Jules Janin (1804-1874), one of his supporter, also argued that ‘men who danced were not seen as manly as they should or if they did look manly enough they did not seem ideal for ballet’ (Burt, 2007:27).

Social class, notions of masculinity and the practice of ballet became therefore, interlinked in new ways. Militaristic training, muscular bodies and factory production came to be associated with working-class men. Aristocratic men came to be seen as effeminate and bourgeois men wanted to distance themselves from both paradigms. Ballet required strength and athleticism, qualities that were associated with working-class masculinity, but also grace which was distanced from it. Since male dancers should but did not combine these qualities, they became disapproved by both critics and audiences. As Garafola argued, ‘the effeminate sterility of the danseur became unacceptable to ballet's large male public’ (1985:38). Homans also wrote that:

[20] The director of the Opera at the time.

> by the 1830s male dancers were being reviled as disgraceful and effeminate creatures, and by the 1840s they had been all but banned from Parisian stages. […] for nearly a century to come, male dancers in France would be seen as embarrassing figures unfit to appear in public theatres, and their roles performed by ballerinas en travesti (2010:131).

For the first time ever in the 19th century, ballet was performed predominantly by females who were often cross-casted to perform the roles of the men. Only a minority of males remained involved in ballet. Nevertheless, even though the practice of ballet became feminised and the domain overall 'female-concentrated', to use Lupton's term (2006), the key organisational roles remained in male hands (Hanna, 1988). It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that women took the lead and produced their own dance.

Britain during the Victorian Era

As has been previously mentioned, during the 19th century Britain became an important place for the development of ballet. Before moving into discussing the developments with regards to ballet though, some information to capture the social conditions of the time is needed.

The 19th century brought significant social changes in Britain. Increased industrialisation and the division of labour furthered the distinction amongst social classes, the division between the private and public sphere and the association of the former with women and the latter with men (Giddens, 1992). These developments resulted in 'the emergence of forms of masculinity organised around wage-earning capacity, mechanical skills, domestic patriarchy and combative solidarity among wage earners' (Connell, 2005:198). Women became eventually expelled from heavy industry; their financial situation therefore, deteriorated. This led to them becoming dependent on either the male breadwinner or charity.

Alongside these developments, marriage and family life took on a new importance in the bourgeois lifestyle. Men and women of the bourgeoisie were more likely to get married because of mutual love rather than familial pressures

and networks; privacy, intimate relationships and emotional expression became central in bourgeois lifestyle. In contrast, with the worsening of their financial condition and their weaker role in the labour market, working-class women, who often struggled to survive and provide for themselves and their dependants, got married because of financial need. For working-class women 'marriage or cohabitation became their trade' (Cook, 2005:65). This led in them been seen as immoral (Cook, 2005; Weeks, 2014). These notions resulted in ideal femininity to become mutually constitutive with purity, and hence, women of the bourgeoisie. Middle-class women in the ideology of romantic love were seen as asexual, whilst men were seen as naturally sexual and forceful (Bloch, 1978:246). These ideals became reflected in the content and practice of ballet. Male sexual agency and female passivity became evident in most ballet plots and narratives.

Despite the promotion of bourgeois lifestyle as the ideal one (Weeks, 2014), Bloch argued that during this period paradoxically there were 'proper, middle-class relationships' but also a growing pornographic literature and lower-class sex work (1978:248). The temperance movement saw sex work as 'moral weakness that could be overcome by self-discipline' (Banks, 1981:17). Commercialised love along with homosexuality and other sexual practices were deemed to be dangerous (Foucault, 1976; Walkowitz, 1992:6). As Connell also argued, 'the potential of homoerotic pleasure was expelled from the masculine and located in a deviant group, symbolically assimilated to women or to beasts […]. Heterosexuality became a required part of manliness' and of 'hegemonic masculinity' (2005:196).

Further, women became increasingly associated with 'weakness and emotion' (Weeks, 2014:49) and men with strength, physical and mental power. Hence, gender differences were reinforced as if they were natural. This development resulted in hierarchies both within and between gender categories with heterosexual men being accorded higher status than both women and non-heterosexual men (Connell, 2005).

Alongside heterosexuality, achievement in sport became another 'index of masculinity' (Forth, 2008:137). In Britain, as in France, athletics became 'avidly pursued by young men determined to overcome the negative effects of brainwork on sedentary bodies' (Forth, 2008:137). As Forth argued, until the end

of the 19th century performance in sport became 'a more persuasive index of masculinity than academic success' (p.137). Achievement in sport became a signifier of 'hegemonic masculinity' in Connell's terms (2005). Sport, therefore, became a means through which distinctions between men and women, but also amongst men, were made (Forth, 2008; Weeks, 2014). Sport transformed from 'a means of filling in time' into a 'means of improving character' (Bourdieu, 1978:125). Games in Britain became a means through which 'the public schoolboy supposedly learnt […] courage, endurance, assertion, control and self-control' (Mangan, 1985:18); games were perceived as the means to 'create the confidence to lead and the compulsion to follow' (Mangan, 1985:18). The above described conditions influenced, amongst other spheres of society, dance.

During the 19th century, male dancers in Britain, like in France, were in a poor position; their roles were diminished and the majority of solos was given to female ballerinas. 'The whole point of the performance was to demonstrate the technical skill and beauty of the ballerina' (Kraus, 1969:91). The bourgeois feminine ideals of the time, which wanted women to be 'graceful, emotive and gentle' (Bloch, 1978:250), were reflected in ballet. Movement changed further and female dancers came to represent 'otherworldly beings' who 'served as symbols of sensuality, spirituality and eternal love' (Tsitsou, 2012:65). According to Kraus, female ballerinas acquired a 'spiritual and exalted role. The ballerina was raised to a new height of glamour and popular favor' (1969:87). As Burt also argued:

> in London, Paris, and most other European cities during the first half of the nineteenth century, as ballet came to be defined as an idealised feminine world, there was, on a material level, a decline in demand for male dancers (2007:24).

According to Burt (2007), and dance historian Garafola (1985), ballet audiences in 19th century consisted in their majority of bourgeois men. Burt argued that during the course of 19th century looking at male bodies became a source of anxiety as it implied pleasure and hence homosexuality which was contested (Connell, 2005; Foucault, 1976; Weeks, 2014). Burt further suggested that 'the fashion for the all-white, female corps de ballet must have contributed to the disappearance of men from the corps de ballet in most Europe' (2007:24). These

could be some of the reasons which lead male bodies to disappear from art, sculpture and dance (Burt, 2007).

A further development concerned the 'shift of ballet from a courtly, aristocratic art to an entertainment geared to the marketplace and the tastes of a new bourgeois public' (Garafola, 1985:35). The economic structure of ballet changed, and throughout the 19th century, ballet, in Britain at least, 'appeared exclusively in a commercial setting' (Garafola, 1985:39). Especially during the late decades of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century in London, there were three main types of dancing: 'the music hall turn, the semi-autonomous ballet […] and the dance element in spectacular productions' (Koritz, 1995:16). The role of dance within performances varied and was influenced by the material possibilities of each space. For example, 'the music hall turn', Koritz explained, could not use masses of dancers because of space constraints; this restraint influenced the onstage 'scenic effects', the 'value' of dancers as individual units, and the popularity of their acts (1995:16).

Success in the commercial sphere became something for men to aspire to during this time and dance as an art was devalued during the late 19th century because of assumptions that associated it with 'nature, women, the primitive and the exotic' (Koritz, 1995:28). These conditions, could have contributed in the decrease of demand for male dancers but also men's interest in participating in dance. On the other hand, women from the lower socio-economic strata began to get more and more involved in this sphere (Hanna, 1988). In 19th century, male dancers in all countries besides Russia and Denmark were reduced to comic characters and occasional 'lifters'; their role was to display the female ballerinas and alongside the *corps de ballet* to emphasise the female prima ballerinas (Garafola, 1985-6:36; Lee, 2002:156).

Ballet in Russia

Russia did not have a significant role to play in ballet up until the 19th century. Ballet arrived in Russia in the 17th century 'as etiquette and not as art. […] initially it was a standard of physical comportment to be emulated and

internalised -an idealised way of behaving' (Homans, 2010:247). Homans described ballet in Russia as a 'Westernising project […] part of making Russia European' (p.247). In addition to court etiquette, ballet in Russia became related to the military and Eastern Orthodoxy in 18th century. Ballet was taught to young cadets and military themes, such as battles, featured in Russian ballets throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. As Homans argued, this resulted in the training of dancers in Russia to be characterised by 'military-style discipline and regimentation' (2010:249). According to Tsitsou, the 'Russian School' introduced and established 'an energetic and highly athletic style of male dancing' (2012:82). This turned out to be crucial for the status of male dancers in Russia.

During the late 18th century, serf dance companies flourished in Russia. These played an important role in the social life of Russian aristocracy; male serfs in particular, Homans argued, 'were trained to attend balls and ceremonial functions' (2010:252). Many of these serfs became, as she suggested, 'genuinely cultivated artists and individuals' (p. 253) and in early 19th century they, and their children, were trained at the Imperial ballet school in St. Petersburg to become dancers (Homans, 2010).

During the 19th century ballet's popularity in Western Europe declined; in Russia however, it grew. Charles-Louis Didelot (1767-1837), who was appointed to direct the Imperial ballet in St. Petersburg, invested in the school and aspired to create 'Russian stars'. As a result, the 'school grew and training for the students intensified' (Homans, 2010:2055). This development and ballet's influence by literature and folk culture that followed the War of 1812 were key elements that contributed to the transformation of ballet in Russia. The work of Petipa (1818-1910) acted as an additional factor which contributed to ballet's growth in Russia.

Before being forced to flee the country in 1847, Petipa studied with Vestris[21] in Paris and after that, he worked at the Russian Imperial Theatres. Whilst at the beginning of his career in Russia his ballets resembled the French courtly style during his late years, as Homans explains, Petipa made his breakthrough (2010). Whilst working in Russia he absorbed the style of Italian, Scandinavian and

[21] Auguste Vestris (1760-1842) was an important French ballet dancer.

French ballet masters. This influenced the style of the ballets he produced. By the end of 19th century, Petipa challenged dancers' style and skills and created ballets with difficult movements, luxurious settings and Tchaikovsky's powerful music. These developments 'challenged the domination of the female balletic body in theatrical dance' (Tsitsou, 2012:82). Russian ballet, and more specifically Petipa's work, merged folk and classical styles of dance. This practice led to a more modern, distinctive and celebrated style of ballet.

Further, Alexander III's attempts to 'redirect the [Russian] culture away from Europe and onto a stronger and more self-consciously Russian path' influenced, amongst other social spheres, dance (Homans, 2010:271). His investment in the Russian arts had direct consequences; 'Russian dancers' salaries rose dramatically but ticket prices doubled, putting even the cheapest seats out of range for working people' (p.271). In contrast to France or Britain's diversified audiences, in Russia ballet aimed to attract the aristocracy and nobility; ballet was established as part of the 'high Imperial culture' (p.271) and thus remained an aristocratic spectacle (Koritz, 1995:124). Ballet in Russia 'had not had to please the masses because it was an aristocratic institution, and this patronage has given it freedom to develop ideas' (Koritz, 1995:124). This condition, alongside Petipa's challenging and innovative choreographies, contributed to the prevalence of the status of Russian ballet as *art*. This raised the status of Russian dancers, and male dancers more specifically, to artists. This development is further discussed in the following section.

Gender Relations, Onstage Representations

Ballet in 19th century continued to portray conventional patriarchal gender relations. Showalter argued that in Europe in late 19th century the 'New Woman', who was sexually independent and university educated, an 'anarchic figure', 'challenged male supremacy in art, the professions and at home' (1991:38). Alongside the development of the first wave feminist movement, conservative notions around gender and sexuality began to be challenged. However, ballet continued, and still continues, to recreate gender difference by projecting conservative and hierarchical gender binaries onstage.

As Hanna (1988) and Thomas (1995) argued, even though ballet during the course of 19th century focused on the female ballerina, the female ballerina was still an object in the hands of male choreographers and male ballet masters. Females were 'monopolising the balletomanes' attention; yet, the men on stage retained dominance in the representation by presenting and displaying (and 'creating') these object forms (female ballerinas) as their own possession' (Daly, 1987:60). Relying on Mulvey's (1975) theory, Daly argued that in the patriarchal society of 19th century female dancers were expected to embody male audiences' desires. As she wrote:

> in ballet, the female form has long been inscribed as a representation of difference: as a spectacle, she is the bearer and object of male desire. The male on stage is not inscribed as a form, but rather as an active principle […]. Masculinity is the strong jumper, the narrative's driving force, the creator rather than the created (Daly, 1987:57-58).

Whilst the late 19th century was an era of social change, ballet remained a sphere which contributed to the reproduction of traditional gender and sexuality norms. This might have occurred because males have controlled ballet since its emergence. Even when it became populated by females, decisions about its practise, content and production were made by the few males that remained involved in it (Banes, 1998). This, as will be demonstrated next, would soon be challenged with the emergence of modern dance.

Dance in the 20th Century: Towards modernism

The early 20th century marked a new period for dance; this is when the foundations of what came to be defined as modern dance were set. The work of Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) and Ballet Russes (1909-1929) were crucial in this. Their dance was influenced by the social conditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the late 19th century, America witnessed the formation of women's movements, which challenged women's exclusion from society (Banks, 1981; Humm, 1992). Middle-class women's role was crucial in this as they had the means and resources to take action. By the late 19th century, these women

achieved improvements with regard to their participation in secondary education. This, alongside the expansion of white-collar professions and semi-professions like nursing and teaching, led to the rise of employment opportunities for women and their access to the public sphere (Banks, 1981).

Further, the early 20th century saw the construction of early modernism in the west, which influenced, amongst other spheres, the arts; this was characterised by 'a reaction against the past (anti-Realism), a strategy for gaining attention (the avant-garde), and a sense of relationship to the general culture of the time (anxious)' (Butler, 1994:1). Innovative artists of the time, Butler argued, relied upon the idea that art should be 'subjective, intuitive, and expressionist in character' (p.3). This is evident in the work of Duncan and Ballet Russes. They attempted a departure away from the traditional balletic idiom and they aspired to develop a new type of movement, and choreographic representations, in political and aesthetic terms, and gender ideologies.

Isadora Duncan

The starting point for a discussion on modern dance is Isadora Duncan. Duncan 'disdained classical ballet' (Homans, 2010:294) and, as Franko argued, 'wished to contest the Victorian experience of female culture, […] the constricted movements of women's bodies in daily life and in theatrical self-display' (1995:2). Duncan danced uncorseted; she dressed in loose clothes to rebel 'against everything the corset symbolised' (Copeland, 1993:142). Her search for 'spiritual and physical renewal', which was popular at the time, and 'the urge for self-expression', which was a key element of early modernism (Butler, 1994), enabled her to invent a new type of dance (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994:1). She invented her 'barefoot and free-form "dance of the future" inspired by nature, antiquity, and a heady mix of ideas drawn from Nietzsche, Kant, Walt Whitman, and others' (Homans, 2010:294). This was a characteristic element of the artists of the early modernist movement (Butler, 1994).

Duncan struggled against 'the containment of women in the private sphere' (Franko, 1995:xii); by choreographing and producing her own dances, she

revolted against the male production of dance which prevailed at that time. Likewise, French dancer and choreographer Valentine de Saint-Point also contributed to 'de-essentialising the feminine' (Franko, 1995:21). Saint-Point in *Metachorus,* a work she performed in Paris in 1913 and New York in 1917, 'presented herself as both genders and neither' (Franko, 1995:22). This work rejected gender norms and whilst positioning the female in contrast to the male, Saint-Point also showed how people can 'slide across a continuum of sexual difference' (Franko, 1995:24).

The increased struggles and visibility of women's rights in late 19th and early 20th centuries enabled dancers such as Duncan and Valentine de Saint-Point (1875-1953), to embrace the theme of women's rights and dramatise it through their performances (Franko, 1995). 'They created an alternative market –and largely female audiences- for dance performances, outside of the male-dominated opera-house ballet stage and popular entertainments' (Banes, 1998:123). Burt, for instance, argued that for much of the 20th century 'the dance world tended to appear to be predominantly a feminine realm in terms of audiences, dancers and teachers' (2007:11).

Duncan, Saint-Point, and other dancers' dance practices were influenced by the conditions of their time. Modern dance was 'in part a rebellion against male domination in both dance and society' (Hanna, 1988:131), but also a 'political tool to awaken consciousness and affect change in society' (Prickett, 2013:1). As will be later argued, the work of these dancers influenced the work of their successors who explicitly dramatised gender issues through their performances.

Ballet Russes

Ballet Russes, which was founded by Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929) in 1909, was another important part of the 20th century dance history as it 'forced the Imperial ballet out of its 19th century mould and onto the cutting edge of modernism' (Homans, 2010:290). Interestingly, Ballet Russes performed abroad and mainly in Paris. Diaghilev's interest and involvement in the Russian arts and

crafts movement as well as his upbringing influenced his appreciation of the Russian culture, which he thought was dying. It became his mission to capture this culture, return it to Moscow and showcase it to Europe (Homans, 2010). He therefore began organising events, which focused on the Russian tradition in European capitals and most importantly Paris. The tsar, who was eager to build relationships with France, gave him permission to borrow dancers from the Imperial Theatres –Petipa's dancers- in order for his company to perform in Paris.

At the beginning of its existence, Ballet Russes's productions were inspired by the French romantic era. Ballet Russes became 'Russian' in the sense that 'the French came to understand it –exotic, Eastern, primitive, and modern' soon after (Homans, 2010:301). The first 'Russian' ballet produced was *The Firebird*. Tamara Karsavina (1885-1978) appeared in that ballet as 'remote and abstract, less a person than an idea or force. She was mysterious, commanding, and possessed magical powers, not the "eternal feminine" but the "eternal Rus."' (Homans, 2010:302). She appeared in 'oriental pants, adorned with decorative feathers and jewels, and crowned with an elaborate headdress' (p.302). In contrast to Romantic ballerinas who appeared in tulle skirts, Karsavina's appearance gave her dancing a 'newfound breath and sensuality' (p.302). This signified the first schism with classical ballet traditions, which had prevailed until then. The appearance and glorification of Nijinsky (1889-1950), one of the greatest male ballet dancers and Diaghilev's lover, signified the second.

Nijinsky's technical skills, transgressive roles and choreographies, challenged existing gender ideologies; the 'androgynous qualities to his dancing, stressing its male power and strength but female sensuousness' distinguished him from other dancers of his time (Burt, 2007:69). Nijinsky soon took over the stage and reintroduced dancing for men. He 'initiated and developed representations of masculinity that have dominated ballet and even, to some extent, modern dance throughout the century' (Burt, 2007:58). Nijinsky's dancing, it could be suggested, enacted a combination of qualities which are seen to exist as *either* masculine *or* feminine. The blending of these reduced gender difference or in Deutsch's terms contributed in 'undoing gender' (2007). This transgression can be explained if we consider the socio-political conditions of that time.

According to Healey, during the beginning of the 20th century, 'male sex work was becoming more commercialised' (2001:35); the interpretation of same-sex encounters as sodomy began to decrease and the 'commodification of private spaces, such as bathhouses and restaurants' enabled the growth of homosexual subcultures in Russia's large cities (p.35). As Stella has demonstrated, plans to modernise Russia included, amongst other initiatives, women's emancipation and the liberation of attitudes towards sexual matters (2015). This resulted in the decriminalisation of same-sex relations. Even though male homosexuality was recriminalized in 1930s, it can still be suggested that Nijinsky's transgressive work might have been partially enabled by the socio-political conditions of Russia during that time.

Nijinsky contributed to the development of modernism and neo-classicism in ballet. In 1912, he became the chief choreographer for Ballet Russes and his choreographies and roles 'created an ideological space for ballet that was outside social norms' (Burt, 2007:77). He modernised ballet by making it 'ugly and opaque' (Homans, 2010:312).

In addition, as Koritz argued while discussing the role of Ballet Russes in the gendering of dance:

> on the one hand, the increased status of ballet –its association with elite theatres and art forms- justified male participation, while on the other, the increased visibility of male participation in the Russian Ballet, as opposed to that typical of English companies, helped assure its higher aesthetic value (1995:133).

At that time, Koritz argued, displays of masculinity or femininity became less important than the 'aesthetic status of the performance' (1995:133); nevertheless, in the dances that followed male dancers 'had more dynamic leaps and jumps than the female ones' (Burt, 2007:79). This reproduced female dancers as different from the male ones and contributed to the interpretation of gender differences as natural rather than constructed through the continuing re-enactment of that difference.

This development and Nijinsky's eroticised roles enabled a heterosexual female spectatorship; the male partnering in *pas de deux* that Ballet Russes

reintroduced and the skills of Nijinsky appealed to female, homosexual and other members of the Western audiences (Burt, 2007). Whilst dance audiences until the 19th century consisted, as Burt argued, of (presumably heterosexual) males, during the early 20th century, audiences consisted of homosexual males and middle-class females, who had found increased visibility in the public domain, politics, society and culture (Humm, 1992).

This new generation of dancers and the technique they developed attracted balletomanes who, however, were no longer dukes and duchesses but rather students and intellectuals who, as Homans argued, ran to 'support a fresh, new kind of dancing' (2010:292). Mikhail Fokine, a key choreographer at the time who was inspired by art, music and theatre, questioned the 'unnaturalness' of the balletic body, dancers' standing positions and turned-out-feet and suggested that ballets should 'invent movement based on the art and sculptures' of the place and time they displayed (Homans, 2010:293). All these developments influenced the conduct of ballet and contributed to the emergence of modern dance.

Homosexuality and the Male Dancer

As has been demonstrated male dancers in most European cities in 19th century were perceived to be effeminate and were thus disapproved. During the 20th century, male dancers also came to be associated with homosexuality (Burt, 2007). Homans (2010) and Burt (2007) argued that many 20th century artists and dancers identified as homosexual; homosexuality, Homans suggested, was 'a genuine source of artistic innovation' (2010:306). Whilst Homans and Burt might be right, they do not explain the reasons for the concentration of gay men in dance. Some sociological literature can inform this discussion.

Notions of 'hegemonic masculinity' in Anglo-American culture became in 19th century distanced from homosexuality (Connell, 2005). Kimmel argued that women and homosexual men were seen as the Other, that which hegemonic men should distance themselves from (1994). As has been argued in the literature, in

times of high homophobia men reinforced their heterosexuality, and accordingly masculinity, by devaluing women and gay men (Anderson, 2005; Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 1994). Thus, it can be suggested that gay men who, as Scott argued, often feel to be more accepted by other gay men and women, might have found in dance a space where they would be welcomed (1998).

Also, dance, especially since the early 20th century, invited dancers to rediscover themselves and promoted the performance and communication of social issues and social realities. Hence, dance might have provided a space where dancers, and gay dancers more specifically, could question 'norms' such as gender binaries and heterosexuality. As Hanna suggested, gay men's involvement in dance might have acted as an 'escape' from homophobia, which they experienced in other social spheres (1988).

Lastly, the increased awareness around homosexuality alongside ballet's association with femininity might have reinforced the link between male dancing and effeminacy and thus, homosexuality. Burt (2007) while analysing this issue argued that the association of male ballet dancers with homosexuality began to exist only during Diaghilev's involvement in ballet. Diaghilev's promotion of male ballet dancers could have influenced the visibility of men in dance. This, in combination to Nijinsky's 'unorthodox' choreographies, might have contributed to the association of male dancing and homosexuality. Dance became, and still is, a sphere which is welcoming towards non-heterosexual or queer people (Burt, 2007; Hanna, 1988; Rinser, 2007).

The 20th Century: Modern and Postmodern Dance

'Modern dance', Banes argued, has been used as 'an inclusive term [that was] applied to nearly any theatrical dance that departed from ballet or popular entertainment' (1987:xiii). The term 'modern dance' is used in this thesis to discuss the dance forms that were developed in the early 20th century and were distinctive from ballet. Following a chronological order, this section approaches modern dance as the dance which was produced and performed between the early years of the 20th century and the late 1960s (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994) and

postmodern dance as the dance which has been produced since the 1960s (Banes, 1994). Despite using these terms, their vague meanings and multiple applications are acknowledged. However, due to the limited space there will not be engagement with academic discussions on the problematic nature of terms such as modern and postmodern (for a discussion on this see scholars such as Banes, 1998; Burt,2007; MacKrell, 1991; Thomas, 1995).

Modern Dance

The 1920s saw the formation and development of modern dance in Europe. A decade later, modern dance became prominent in America too. Despite the differences in dance between, as well as within, Europe and America, modern dancers had a shared vision: they felt that dance, as a contemporary art form, 'should communicate and comment on the 20th century world' (Pertsch-Bergsohn, 1994:49). Early modern dancers and choreographers contested romantic ballet narratives, onstage displays of gender, and ballet's 'patriarchal views of women' (Banes, 1998:124). They relied on improvisation, personal expression, representations and flexible body movements, to contribute to the challenge of patriarchy; females took the leading roles and became choreographers, dancers, company founders and managers (Copeland, 1993; Hanna, 1988:133).

Early modern dance 'had been the one art form to be almost entirely dominated by women' (Banes, 1998:66). Female dancers founded and ran their own companies and contributed to the emergence and development of modern dance as 'a ripe field for female creative artists (choreographers, that is, as opposed to dancers)' (Banes, 1998:123). Some of the most well-known female pioneers of modern dance were Mary Wigman (1886-1973), Martha Graham (1894-1991) and Doris Humphrey (1895-1958). This generation of dancers developed many distinctive genres and emphasised different elements of performance. However, according to Pertsch-Bergsohn, there were two main forms of modern dance in Germany in the 1920s: 'absolute dance' and 'theatre dance'. The first referred to dance as independent from music and other art forms -'dance for its own sake'. The second referred to dance in the theatre (1994:42). A key

representative of the first was Mary Wigman (1886-1973), whilst Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) and Kurt Jooss (1909-1979) have been considered as key representatives of the second.

Wigman was influenced by the expressionist movement that prevailed in the arts during that time (Banes, 1998). This movement relied on the expression of artists' emotions and their response to their 'external environment and experiences of life' (Heller, 2014). Dancers such as Wigman, used their bodies to create movement that reflected, or criticised, the social conditions and inequalities of the time; these movements were influenced by ritualistic themes and 'exotic' elements (Tsitsou and Weir, 2013:54). Laban, and later Jooss on the other hand, aspired to develop dance in the theatre (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994:27); these saw dance theatre 'as a truly revolutionary, artistic form of contemporary drama' (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994:42). Jooss, who was trained by Laban, 'was one of the first to recognise that the Modern Dance could and should find its place in the contemporary theatre' (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994:36).

At the same time, the American dance scene was also transforming and by the 1930s it became a 'leader in the international dance scene' (Pertsch-Bergsohn, 1994:49). Many European dancers migrated to New York during the booming dance period (Tsitsou, 2012). After the WWI, the popular entertainment industry in America grew. This influenced the emergence of new venues and shows. These developments resulted in dance being perceived as a popular entertainment activity (Thomas, 1995:100) or 'gymnastics for self-improvement' (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994:26) that aimed at the creation of 'healthy bodies' (Tsitsou, 2012:120). During the decade between 1920s and 1930s, dance was established as a form of physical education in many schools and academies of the United States.

Whilst gymnastics before this time aimed at young men, dance in the form of physical education aimed at both young men and women (Kraus, 1696:128; Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994:50). Influenced by the gender norms that prevailed, dance education took mainly two forms: the gymnastic dance for boys, which rejected the balletic orientation and was 'heavier and masculine', and the aesthetic dance for girls, which was characterized by expressive emphasis and difficult technical steps (Kraus, 1969:128). The emerging programmes and

colleges provided a platform for modern dancers to produce and showcase their work and 'furthered the process of dance reproduction and legitimisation' (Thomas, 1995:101).

Further, as Franko argued during the early 1930s dance became 'part of intellectual socialist production with roots in a long Anglo-American tradition of radicalism' (Franko, 1995:25). With the Great Depression in America came great unemployment and poverty. Unemployment and the worsening of living conditions that followed strengthened the labour movement and gave way to the emergence of powerful American Trade Unions. This led to increased class-consciousness and a self-identifying working class; dance, as well as theatre, became a context for young, radical left-wing (mostly female) artists to express the conditions of their time (Franko, 1995; Prickett, 2013).

These developments led to the Revolutionary Dance Movement, which was nurtured by the Workers Dance League[22]. Members of the latter also recognized the 'need for encouraging men to dance' (Franko, 1995:26). Revolutionary dance revolted against bourgeois forms, content and ideology and returned to folk-patterns and emotion; it embodied 'revolutionary ardour and energy through an aggressive occupation of space and an energetic acknowledgement of the body's right to flow' (Franko, 1995:33). These were in contrast to the balletic idiom and practice.

At the same time, Roosevelt promoted a relief programme in 1935 to contribute to the rebirth of the American economy and the fight against unemployment; by the late 1930s, America was emerging out of the Depression. The outbreak of WWII in Europe created a demand for goods from America, which led to a decline of unemployment and a demand for, amongst other professionals, artists. The end of the decade saw dance, music and painting flourishing in America. After WWII America had suffered relatively little (Connell, 1993) and attracted people from other countries who specialised in, amongst other fields, the arts; during that period 'the United States entered a golden age of art and

[22] Association of choreographers seeking to convey messages of social justice and equality through dance.

ideas' (Homans, 2010:452). New York 'emerged as the centre for avant-garde art' (Thomas, 1995:106).

Men and Modern Dance

While ballet continued to display traditional gender relations, which positioned the female ballerina as passive and the male ballet dancer as her guide, modern dancers empowered female subjectivity, escaped gendered representations and the eroticisation of the female dancer (Banes, 1998; Manning, 1997). Another characteristic of modern dance was that male choreographers and dancers, such as Ted Shawn (1891-1972), Rudolph Laban and Kurt Jooss, tried to attract more men in professional dance (Mennesson, 2009:174).

Despite modern dancers' wish to escape traditional gender representations, Shawn and as we will see next Martha Graham, in their effort to attract more males in dance, created work based on 'athletic, masculine movements' (Burt, 2007:87) which reinforced traditional masculine ideals. Gendered representations in Shawn's dance rejected the European balletic paradigm and with that, any signs of male effeminacy; yet, they reinforced notions of conventional masculinity. Shawn's productions drew on themes that displayed manual labour and factories, which were associated with working-class masculinity and the class struggles of the time.

> Shawn, Graham, and to a lesser extent Limón, each in their own way, developed in dance the image of heroic masculinity which is valorised with reference to nature, heterosexuality, and religion, and presented in a style and vocabulary that looks muscular and hard (Burt, 2007:86)

Despite Shawn being gay, his dance themes never revolved around homosexuality; instead they contested it. This could be perhaps explained if we consider the gay and lesbian rights movements and homophile organisations in the US during the 1950s (Blasius and Phelan, 1997; Jeffrey, 2003). The homophile movement 'attempted to prove that lesbian and gay men were no different from other people' (Kennedy and Davis, 1993:67). Shawn's productions and the display of conventional masculinities can be interpreted as a means to

de-emphasise the sexuality of his dancers in an effort to reinforce the claims made by the homophile movement.

According to Burt, Shawn's dancers 'retained distance from one another, never touched or assisted one another, except when the choreography dictated that dancers assembled together to create a single shape' (2007:96). According to Anderson and McCormack, until recently the act of men touching other men was contested and seen as a threat to one's sexuality and therefore masculinity (2015). This can explain why Shawn's dancers never touched each other. Shawn's early productions were also located at a time when 'coming out' was still not an option in the US (Burt, 2007:11). Hence, Shawn might have managed to partially raise the status of male dancers in America by reinforcing aggressive, traditional male dancing as the only acceptable type of dancing for men. This contributed to the maintenance of notions of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2005).

In contrast to Shawn, Martha Graham who began her career in Michel St. Denis and Shawn's school Denishawn, created an all-female company, which remained all female until the late 1930s. In 1938, Erick Hawkins (1909-1994) joined Graham's company as its first male dancer whilst Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) became its second in 1939. Many of Graham's works between 1938 and 1944 revolved around a central female character, usually danced by her, and two male roles performed by Cunningham and Hawkins. Graham, Burt wrote, 'as a woman was permitted explicitly to eroticise the male dancing body as the object of her heterosexual female gaze because her work identified as white, heterosexual, Christian, and American' (2007:104). Graham's choreographies and her positioning as a female dance creator and producer contributed to the reinforcement of the assertion and recognition of female subjectivity. However, like Shawn's, Graham's male dancers' movement represented machismo and heterosexuality; gender binaries and traditional gender images were thus reproduced through their dances.

In addition, in the decade that followed (1950s-1960s) dancers such as Alwin Nikolais (1910-1993), Jose Limón (1908-1972), Merce Cunningham and Erick Hawkins suggested that 'dance's concern with emotion needed to change […] as

this was a deeply feminine concern' (Banes, 1998:216). These dancers also rejected the technical virtuosity which prevailed in ballet and the 'fascination with the narrative –its conventions, its meanings, and its reception' (Banes, 1994:280). The latter is evident in the work of Cunningham in the 1950s and the productions of many dancers in the 1960s and 1970s.

Dances where the sex of the dancer did not influence dancers' movement emerged during this period; in Cunningham's pieces, for example, movement was abstract and presented in non-narrative form, it was chance-driven and often androgynous or agendered. Along with Nikolais, Cunningham 'pioneered what might be termed unisex choreography-theatre dance' (Burt, 2007:122). However, despite Cunningham's efforts to escape gendered images even in his most progressive works 'men did not partner men, nor did women lift or support women' (Banes, 1998:216; Carroll, 2003:93); Burt argued that Cunningham has been criticised 'for failing to recognise a need to challenge normative ideas about gender, 'race' and sexuality' (2007:123).

In the 1960s, a new generation of female dancers emerged and set representations of gender at the core of their practice. As Banes argued, several dancers –amongst them Yvonne Rainer (1934-) and Trisha Brown (1936-)– 'refeminised dance' by 'putting gender on the foreground' (Banes, 1998:216). This takes us to the final section of this chapter, which discusses postmodern dance, the dance which has been produced and performed since the 1960s.

Postmodern Dance

Following dance's chronological progression this section discusses the dance that has been produced since the 1960s (Banes, 1998; Copeland, 1993). As Banes argued, 'dancers of the 1960s were not united in terms of their aesthetic. Rather, they were united by their radical approach to choreography, [and] their urge to reconceive the medium of dance' (1987:xiv). As such, they differed from their predecessors.

One of many postmodern dancers' key characteristic was that they rejected 'emotion –especially the passions associated with love- as primary subject matter for a dance' (Banes, 1998:227). As Banes and Carroll argued 'postmodern dancers were engaged in a studied rebellion against modern dance, as represented especially by Martha Graham' (2006:49). Postmodern dance was an 'artistic revolution' that 'reflected upon the nature and limits of dance' (2006:50). The work of Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown are examples of this wave.

Postmodern dance developed alongside the second wave feminism in America (Banes, 1998). The latter comprised of women from diverse, but predominantly middle-class backgrounds, and various ethnic origins. This movement acted on sexuality and reproductive rights, anti-war and civil rights movements around the world. This form of action was influenced by the growing self-consciousness and organising of minority groups. Being influenced by the social conditions of their time these dancers' choreographies and on-stage performances challenged women's domestic oppression and the association between femininity and emotions. They 'ironised emotions through exaggeration and allusion' (Banes, 1998:221). They employed quotidian movements like walking, running, simple floor patterns and widely used pedestrian gestures, which, as they argued, could be seen to be dance (MacKrell, 1991). They thus challenged notions around the identity of *the dancer* and the specialist dancing body.

The Judson Dance Theatre was an important element of this wave of dancers. It was an 'amalgamation of avant-garde choreographers in Greenwich Village in the early 1960s' (Banes, 1994:211). As an 'institution', it challenged 'the hierarchical nature of academic ballet and the American modern dance community as it had evolved in the late 1950s' (Banes, 1994:211). Judson dancers problematized the distinction between dance movement and everyday movement (Carroll, 2003) and introduced a novel form of dance. A key representative of this group was Steve Paxton (1939-). Paxton's contact improvisation for example, used 'everyday or pedestrian movements […] which any able person could do' (Burt, 2007:131). It minimised gender difference and promoted gender-neutral movement. As Burt argued, Paxton's work could be characterised as 'an example of unisex anti-choreography' (p.133). As MacKrell

also wrote, ‘contact improvisation levelled out distinctions of gender, with women supporting men as well as being supported’ (1991:50). Contact improvisation gave a space for men ‘to develop a more relaxed awareness of the boundaries of their bodies, through flowing in and out of contact with another male body […] without triggering homophobic fears’ (Burt, 2007:135). However, as Burt argued, this did not deal directly with the problem of homophobia, but rather just ignored it.

In addition, many key representatives of this group were influenced by other media, which led to the implementation of film and text in their choreographies; this led to the ‘break down of boundaries’ between art forms, and artists in different fields. Judson dancers ‘liberated the body from its classical constraints and dissociated the female body from the prototypes of beauty embedded in dance forms’ (Tsitsou, 2012:146).

Further, a central ‘problem’ postmodern dancers wished to solve concerned ways to ‘exhibit the body in public without becoming an exhibitionist’ (Copeland, 1993:144). Rainer, for example, aimed to disassociate dance and the dancing body from erotic pleasure (see No manifesto, 1965). Rainer, who was influenced by the feminist ideas of the 1960s, insisted on refusing ‘the voyeuristic and erotic pleasures that dance has traditionally offered’ (Copeland, 1993:143). She did this by ignoring the presence of the audience -the averted gaze (Copeland, 1993:144). Postmodern dance pioneers thus drew connections between dance, the body *and* mind. Banes referred to this as the ‘intelligent female body’ (1998:219), which according to Copeland, explains the ‘prominence of spoken language […], the fascination with abstract thought, the impersonal, objective, mathematically-generated floor-patterns and the new conception of dance as a mode of “problem-solving”’ (1993:143).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, themes like politics, audience engagement and non-Western influences became explicit in dance performances (Banes, 1987:xix). Postmodern dancers acting after the 1960s were also empowered by gay liberation, which promoted ‘pride’ and ‘coming out’ (Jeffrey, 2003), and were thus enabled to challenge ‘heterosexual hegemony’ (Butler, 1993) and make homosexuality visible through dance. During this period, dance became more political; as a result, Banes argued, ‘political movements of the

late 1960s –anti-war, black power, students, feminist, and gay groups- used theatrical means to stage their battles' (1987:xix).

In the late 1970s, postmodern dance became 'more theatrical with a new twist' (Banes, 1994:253). There was, therefore, a further divide between the work of these dancers and the ones that preceded them. From the 1970s onwards many choreographers were concerned with issues such as pregnancy and parenting, variations within gender categories, class, 'race' and ethnicity inequalities, fascism, war and so on (Banes, 1998; Murray and Keefe, 2016). In the decades that followed key performers and companies -amongst others, Pina Bausch (1940-2009) and Lloyd Newson (1957-today), DV8[23]- emerged and sought to explicitly explore matters of gender and sexuality (Murray and Keefe, 2016:37).

Bausch and Newson's dance theatre reacted to the abstraction that characterised the performance of their predecessors. Bausch's physical theatre spoke about 'the social and ideological conditions and specificities which have driven [her dancers'] embodied behaviours' (Murray and Keefe, 2016:91). Likewise, Newson's work, influenced by Bausch's, revolted against the oppressive gender representations of ballet and, alongside Bausch's work, engaged with 'social, gender and sexual orientation issues […] constructing and choreographing the physical language of his pieces from the individuals with whom he worked' (p.92). Dancers' subjectivities and biographies were thus important in their work. As Lepecki argued, Bausch 'asked her dancers questions' instead of proposing movement. This was 'the compositional point of departure for her pieces' (2004:173).

Moving onto the 1980s and 1990s, dance 'began to use parody to both flaunt and criticize notions of femininity' (Banes, 1998:229). Dance, Banes argued, deliberately transgressed 'the rules of polite discourse about female bodies, joyously espousing bad manners and bad taste […] to push questions about gender in the arts and in society to the outer limit' (1998:229-230). The aim of these dancers was to emphasise the social construction of women and femininity; an example of this genre was Bausch's dance-theatre. This, in contrast to the cross-dressing in ballet that was discussed at the beginning of

[23] https://www.dv8.co.uk/

this chapter, aimed explicitly at challenging gender norms and at demonstrating the performative quality of gender (Butler, 1999).

Postmodern dance, therefore, has reflected, as well as challenged, the oppressive conditions of the socio-cultural and spatial-temporal contexts it represented. Blurring the boundaries of theatre and dance, speech and movement, it managed to raise awareness of the issues with which it engaged. This also characterises the work of some of the choreographers that were interviewed for this project and Kinesis, one of the companies that participated in this study. These artists merge dance with theatre, text and film to raise awareness of social issues and to communicate with their audiences in more direct ways.

Overall, postmodern dance creators, despite their variations and aesthetics specificities, focused on dance's potential 'for embodying meanings and generating affects' (Burt, 2007:140). As such, postmodern dance was often explicitly concerned with socio-political conditions and identity politics. It engaged with the multiplicity of identities that are produced by, and reflected through, dancers' bodies.

Looking at dance today it can be argued that this is still the case. Whilst there are dance pieces and dance choreographies that reproduce traditional gender identities and heterosexual hegemony, there are also many that have challenged these (see for example, Michael Clark[24], Matthew Bourne[25], Mark Morris[26], DV8 and so on). Following the traditions of dance choreographers who were analysed in the final sections of this chapter many dancers still produce work that aims to represent other, non-dominant, ways of being (Burt, 2007).

[24] http://www.michaelclarkcompany.com/

[25] http://new-adventures.net/

[26] http://markmorrisdancegroup.org/

Conclusion

The gendering of dance went through a series of key phases. Ballet emerged in the 17th century in the court of Louis XIV. Ballet at the time was a male-concentrated and male-dominated domain. The outcome of the French Revolution though and the changing social order in France led to a reconfiguration of gender norms. Social class and gender began to intersect in new ways and dancing was no longer seen as an 'appropriate' activity for men. By the early decades of 19th century, ballet transformed into a feminised domain in most countries besides Russia. As will be argued in the following chapters, the association of ballet with femininity still exists. The discussion in this chapter therefore, enables us to understand how these notions emerged and invites us to ask questions about the meanings these attachments have today and the possibilities this sphere allows when it comes to gender and sexuality.

Further, this chapter discussed the emergence of modern dance in the early 20th century. Modern dance emerged predominantly by female dancers, who produced and performed their own work. Rebelling against everything that ballet signified, modern dancers challenged, amongst other issues, traditional gender relations and ideologies. Modern dance, and later postmodern dance, enabled different subjectivities and embodied performances of gender and sexuality to be displayed onstage. Females took over the production, performance and management of their work. Further, men, who by the 20th century had largely disappeared from dance stages, were re-invited in dance.

Understanding the emergence and development of ballet on the one hand and (post)modern dance on the other enables us to understand these genres' histories, representations, philosophies and the ways all these shape companies' expectations from dancers. These, as we will see in ensuing chapters, contribute to the analysis of current dance companies and the different opportunities they provide when it comes to negotiations of gender and sexuality in their backstage, frontstage and onstage spaces.

Chapter 5
Routes into Dancing

Introduction

Dance in 19th century transformed into a feminised practice. It came to be identified with women, femininity and male homosexuality (see also chapter 4). This historical gendering of dance continues to have an effect. Recent studies suggested that only a small minority of boys and young men in the UK become involved in dance (for example, Arts Council England, 2009; Burt, 2007; Edward, 2014; Holdsworth, 2013; Kosmala, 2013; Sanderson, 2008). This can be attributed to the cultural attachments this practice has, but also to the fact that dance is not taught at most schools. Boys and young men are, therefore, not actively encouraged to become involved in this activity in their leisure time. Dance is, therefore, an unusual leisure activity and professional trajectory for most men and young boys. Considering these issues, and the history of dance, the analysis of the conditions that initiated my informants' involvement in dance can be particularly revealing.

During data analysis, it appeared that informants' familial background and social location were factors that influenced their introduction to dance and overall dance career. As will become evident by the end of this chapter, informants' social location and the environment they were raised in impacted firstly, the time they became involved in dance; secondly, the dance genre(s) they engaged with and thus, thirdly, the different companies they ended up being employed by. As will be argued in the following chapters, the practices and working cultures of different dance companies influence available opportunities for dancers to question and problematise gender norms and aspects of their social identities.

The discussion that follows is developed into two main sections: *Boys don't Dance: Dance Participation and Socio-cultural Stimuli* and *Dance Trajectories*. The former introduces dance as an unconventional activity for most young boys and discusses the conditions that influenced informants' involvement in dance.

It approaches informants according to the age they began practicing dance and divides them into early beginners and late beginners. This section approaches the intersections of gender and social location and the ways these affected informants' involvement in dance. The second main part analyses informants' career trajectories. It discusses the dance genres informants ended up practicing, the philosophies and aesthetic preferences that pervade these.

Boys Don't Dance: Dance Participation and Socio-cultural Stimuli

> While I was still at school boys just didn't dance you know. And as somebody who was really shy it was difficult for me to say that I was a boy that danced. That was a hard thing to say, and I think that, not that the two things are related, but I think coming to the fact that I was gay at the same time made it even more difficult. (Craig, gay, 18-21, contemporary dancer)

Craig's commentary was reiterated by many other informants. Dancing was seen as especially problematic during the time boys entered high school. Luke, for instance, suggested that during that time he felt 'embarrassed' that he danced. As he said, 'I had people making comments like you know dance is for girls and you shouldn't be doing that. Like there are gay people and things like that' (straight, 18-21, contemporary dancer). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argued that the processes that occur in schools and other training institutions influence the emergence, regulation and negotiation of young masculinities, and ideas of 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' styles of being (2003). Similarly, Nayak and Kehily argued that it is largely through schooling that children learn 'what it is to be a "proper" girl or boy' (2013:118).

Because of the cultural attachments dance as a practice has, informants' involvement in dance led to their disapproval by other boys of their age.

> I used to get bullied a lot in school. In primary school it [dancing] was like celebrated, […] but as soon as I got to high-school I got really badly bullied. People would just pick on me, call me names. So […] half way through year 8, 9 and 10 and 11 I told everyone I quit and that I wasn't a dancer just so I wouldn't get bullied. I still got called names like gay and the more nasty names but less for the dancing and

> more just because I used to do it. […] People would start fights just because I did ballet and stuff so yeah it wasn't very nice. (Chris, gay, 18-21, ballet dancer)

When these informants became involved in dance, which is widely seen as a 'feminised' activity, they became subjects of disapproval. Most participants, and especially those who started dancing in their early years, came across insults and 'name calling' (Alan, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer). In addition, in some cases, participants became victims of physical violence by fellow students who thought they were 'different' from them because they danced; Tim for example said, 'I was punched in the face and he pushed me into the road in front of cars. […] I had them pushing me down the stairs once, just really horrible things' (gay, 22-30, ballet dancer). Such stories suggest the importance of complying with dominant gender norms. At least this was the case during the time informants were at high school. These commentaries though also demonstrate the resilience of the respondents who did not give in to this pressure and continued dancing.

Young boys are expected to be involved in sport. Many of the sport being taught at schools are conventionally masculine, and are promoted as such through the school culture and curriculum, popular culture and so on (Renold, 2005). Dance on the other hand is considered to be an activity that is suitable 'for girls and gay boys' (Gregory, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer). It is also not taught at most schools. It is, therefore, a practice which most boys are not familiar with, or one that they are not encouraged to become involved in. As a result, most boys and young men, Burt (2007) argued, do not discover dancing or they discover it later in their lives (see also Risner, 2014). Surprisingly though the majority of this study's informants began dancing before or during their early teens (figure 1).

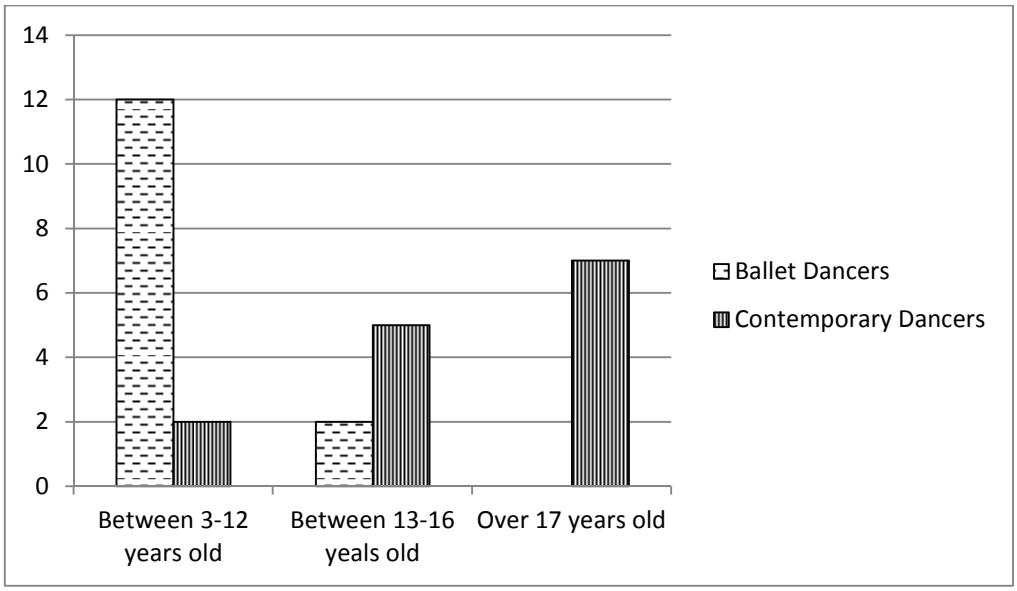

Figure 1: Age participants became involved in dance

Only seven informants began dancing after the age of seventeen whilst most of this study's participants started dancing between the ages of three and twelve years old. As it will be demonstrated in the following sections this is, at least partly, the outcome of their 'social location' (Bottero, 2005:4), their upbringing and parents' interests[27]. As we will see, the age they began to dance and the dance genres with which they engaged influenced their trajectory and had an impact on their career choices.

In the discussion that follows, informants are approached as members of two categories: early beginners and late beginners. The category of early beginners consists of informants who began dancing between the ages of three and sixteen years old, whilst the category of late beginners consists of informants who began dancing later than the age of seventeen. As it can be seen in the table above, all informants involved in ballet had an early introduction to dance, whilst all late beginners, and some early ones, were at the time of the research involved in contemporary dance. This is important as it suggests that to follow a career in ballet one must have an early introduction to dance, which is in itself influenced by certain social conditions.

[27] See appendix 2

As Bottero explains, 'all of us live within pre-existing relations of unequal power, status or economic resources; these unequal relations […] inevitably affect the choices we make in life, opening some channels of opportunity, and closing off others' (2005:3). This, Bottero argued, is 'a condition of social life (individual choice is always limited by the choices of those around us)' (p.3). Considering the interests of this study and its focus on gender and sexuality, the sections that follow discuss informants' social location and their familial backgrounds in its effort to answer 'how do people learn to consume [in this case a cultural practice such as dance] in particular ways' (Skeggs, 2015:209). Considering the cultural attachments that dance has, the sections that follow discuss the conditions that initiated these men's involvement in dance.

The remaining chapter discusses informants' familial practices and the cultural participation of their parents as conditions that provided them, or not, with cultural and economic resources that enabled them to engage in the sphere of dance recreationally and later on professionally. As such, it approaches class in line with 'the cultural turn' and discusses it 'in [broad] economic and cultural terms' (Bottero, 2014:547). Further, it looks at the relations between class and gender (Skeggs, 1997) precisely because dance is an unconventional activity for boys and young men. This chapter does not claim to be providing class analysis. Rather, this was a theme that emerged during data analysis and as such needs to be, even briefly, discussed.

There have been claims that class is no longer significant or that the relationship between class and stratification has changed (see for example discussions in Bottero, 2005). Whilst not an area that this research aimed to study, during data analysis it appeared that early beginners' parents in their majority were employed in professions widely associated with sections of the upper classes[28] and had interests, or were involved, in what might be considered middle class practices[29]. The category of late beginners on the other hand presented a relatively diverse picture; yet this might be attributed to the fact that they discovered dancing themselves through other activities or through their

[28] Doctors, CEOs, teachers, university professors, lawyers, artists, musicians, bankers, business owners, financial advisors, psychologists.

[29] Ballet and opera; arts and crafts making; gallery attendance; recreational dancing; playing musical instruments

engagement in related social practices. These issues are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Early beginners

Out of the twenty-one early beginners, fourteen were raised in families where at least one of the parents was employed in relatively high-ranking professions that are often associated with the upper classes and at least one of the parents consumed, or participated in, cultural practices. Only seven out of twenty-one early beginners were raised in families with parents in manual or low-paid professions[30]. From those seven, two began to dance after a teacher had suggested it. Early beginners' parents were in their majority professionally or recreationally involved in the arts. The parents of those informants who became introduced to dance through a teacher though had no artistic interests. This suggests that early beginners' early introduction to dance was enabled by the financial resources and cultural knowledge their parents had. As Bottero argued, 'the resources that are available to us growing up as children affect the success of our schooling, and so our eventual occupational careers, and the lifestyles we adopt as adults' (2005:3). It was the case that most parents who suggested dance as an activity for their sons were themselves professionally or recreationally involved in cultural practices and the arts. This resulted in early beginners acquiring, since a very young age, the means for understanding, enjoying and getting pleasure from dance. It made them appreciate dancing and see it as something worth pursuing.

Specifically, four early beginners came from a family with at least one of the parents being professionally involved in the arts; these parents were employed as musicians, music teachers or were involved in the making of art and crafts. Eight of them reported that at least one of their parents, and in most cases their mothers, used to have artistic hobbies: crafts making, painting and drawing, recreational dancing and/or theatre and musicals attending. Only a small minority of those respondents who began dancing after a family member had

[30] Taxi driver; builders; factory workers; unemployed

suggested it came from a family with no prior interest in the arts and dance. These findings reinforce Sanderson who argued that 'the influence of family background on young people's attitudes and perceptions of the arts is likely to be significant, even more so given the overall low level of arts provision in schools' (2008:474; see also Risner 2014). Early beginners' familial background and parents' involvement in artistic and cultural practices thus enabled, or at least influenced, their early introduction to dance.

Despite some slight variations in informants' recollections of the ways they became involved in dance, most early beginners said that they began dancing recreationally after their mother had suggested dancing as an activity they would enjoy. These mothers suggested dance as a leisure activity either because they thought that this would be something their child would enjoy or because another family member was taking dance classes.

> My mom used to accompany a ballet class so […] when I finished school I would have to wait for my mom to finish work […]. My mom asked if I wanted to join in. (Bradley, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer)

Bradley became introduced to dance when he was still very young. His presence in the studio where his mother played the piano for ballet classes familiarised him with this world from a young age. Other early beginners also suggested that their mothers proposed dance as an activity they could partake. It is important to note here that those mothers already had an interest, or were themselves involved in the arts more generally and dance more specifically.

The significant role mothers play in their children developing an interest, and becoming involved, in the arts was also demonstrated in Sanderson's study (2008). Only one informant, George, became involved in dance because of his father whilst the rest of them referred to their mothers as the persons who influenced their participation in dance, either through introducing them to this activity or through 'giving them permission' (Carl, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer) to participate in it. As George said:

> When I was growing up my mom was like an artist from home so she was basically with me all the time and when she would paint I would have helped her. We would always make stuff together and my dad would also play music with me or play music to me. We would be

> practicing and I would do my thing in the house. There was always really creative energy and I suppose that although they didn't influence me directly, I think the fact that they were so creative all the time just kind of got me into that site of things. […] I hated sports, I really hated sports and my dad was just trying to encourage me do something active, to do something with [my] energy and my dad was 'oh what about dance? That would be a bit more creative. I know that you hate sports so what about dance cause that's energetic and a little bit different'. So my dad suggested the first dance class that I went along. So I would say that it was my dad who suggested my first dance class. (George, gay, 22-30, ballet dancer)

George's parents were both professionally involved in the arts. George was the only participant who was motivated to start dancing by his father and his artistic background surely had a role to play. Also, George's father suggested dance mainly because it is a physical activity which involves exercise of the body and not necessarily because he wanted his son to become involved in dance; dance was in this case seen as an alternative activity to sports, which George hated. Some other informants also saw dancing as an alternative to sports which they disliked. However, some, mostly heterosexual informants, also approximated dancing to sports because of the physicality, athleticism, commitment and devotion needed. The latter justified their involvement in dance by emphasising its 'masculine' qualities and by comparing it to sports, which is a conventionally masculine practice and an expected thing for boys to do (Renold, 2005). This is further discussed in chapter 8.

Another, less common route into dancing, involved these informants becoming exposed to dance through live or recorded dance performances.

> I started dancing when I was 7 years old. I saw a film with Baryshnikov dancing, White Nights, and when I saw that it was very clear that this is what I wanted to be doing. (Andy, bisexual, 22-30, ballet dancer)

Andy, like two other informants, suggested that he became interested in dance after he had seen a dance film. These participants suggested that they found what male dancers were doing in shows and films exciting and wanted to learn how to do those movements. However, considering the young age they saw these films –Andy was seven, Carl nine and Elliot four- it can be argued that if it was not for their parents and their interests they would probably not have had the opportunity to attend these performances or watch these films. Hence, to

become involved in this sphere requires economic resources and to use Bourdieu's term, 'cultural capital' that will enable one's engagement with, but also appreciation of, this art form (1984).

Lastly, four early beginners became introduced to dance after a teacher had suggested it because they had seen some kind of potential in them.

> This teacher came in and he said that I caught the eye of the person who ran it [a dance workshop] and he said he thought I should try ballet. (Gregory, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer)

Gregory was one of the early beginners who became introduced to dancing through a teacher. Gregory's family had no artistic interests and if it not were for this teacher he might have not had discovered dancing. Since dance is not widely taught at schools, boys need to become introduced to it in their leisure time.

Early beginners' early involvement in dance was, thus, the outcome of their social origins, familial resources, parents' interests and cultural practices. In a similar light, Tsitsou reported that her informants' initiation in dance was 'the implicit outcome of their exposure to various artistic products and practices' (2012:200). Indeed, this is reinforced through this study's findings. However, this was not the sole factor that enabled these informants' involvement in dance.

Early beginners' parents saw dancing as a suitable activity for their sons. This might rely on their involvement in the arts but also in that, as Anderson argued, middle class men are more likely to be 'inclusive' (2005, 2009). Instead of trying to promote their sons' participation in conventionally masculine activities such as sports, these parents saw dancing as an 'appropriate' activity for their sons. Elliot, for example, said that after he saw a dance performance, 'I told them [my parents] that I wanted to start dancing and they never said no' (gay, 18-21, ballet dancer). Elliot's parents saw his interest in dance as 'normal', a possibility which in itself existed because of their background and familiarity with this cultural practice. A similar argument was made by Williams et al. (2008) who studied middle-class boys in London, in North and South of England.

Williams et al. found that a large proportion of the boys in their study were involved in extracurricular music and modern classical dance. Whilst they found this to be unusual, they explained that in the Northern city that they studied there existed 'a prestigious boys' dance group which promoted dance as a "cool" alternative masculinity and provided boys with a network of friends "like them"' (Williams et al., 2008:402). Williams et al. also suggested that these boys 'had male role models at home (who valued their alternative ways of "doing boy")' (p.402). Hence, social location and gender do seem to intersect and early beginners' early involvement in dance can be attributed to their parents' social background, cultural interests and views on gender.

Early beginners' parents perceived and presented dance as a 'normal' and appropriate activity for their sons. In addition, in their majority they were supportive when their sons decided to become professional dancers. This, it can be argued, was influenced by their social location, knowledge of, and familiarity with, this culture, which acted as factors that enabled them to envision a professional dance career for their children. However, some participants talked about their parents as being unsupportive of their professional choices mainly because of the associations dance has with gender and sexuality, but also because of the uncertainty of dance as a profession.

> When I started doing theatre my mother was super excited, we got this connection […]. Then I started dancing and she was still excited and then the moment I started going more and more serious in dance then it wasn't OK any more. Then it was a big drama. Of course I can understand better now, when I was a student in high-school I had very good marks and I was going to go to university but suddenly I started dancing and started saying I want to be a dancer so it was a bit too much for them. They had this son who had really good marks and was going to go to university and be a journalist or a writer. They were very supportive of the writing. So writing good, journalism good, dancing hmmm not so good. They were concerned also because it takes so much time to become a professional. When they came to see me at my first performances I wasn't very good. I was 16, everyone was dancing since they were five, they were much better than me so of course, when they started seeing what I was doing it didn't look very good I suppose so they were definitely not happy, but I kept doing the two things [university and dancing]. I didn't drop university, I almost did it but I didn't.
>
> *What were their [parents] main concerns of you being a dancer?*

> Being gay. Of course, definitely. That was one of them. They never said it but that was one of them. Or they never said it that openly to me but I know they were concerned about that I will become gay. Another concern I guess would be the sort of life that I would lead which seems very vulnerable or fragile life. In theory if you work for a newspaper or something like that it sounds like a job. If you are a writer, it sounds like a more respectable job but dance sounded like a very precarious, non-respectable job that could lead to drugs or all sort of evil things. (Richard, gay, 31-40, contemporary dancer)

Richard's parents were concerned about mainly two issues: first, they saw their son's involvement in professional dance as something which could turn him gay. This can be seen as the outcome of the cultural attachments dance has acquired through time (see also chapter 4). Second, Richard's parents saw dance as an unusual career or one in which it was hard to succeed. Dancers' financial situation, which is an indicator of 'success', varies according to the company that employs them and the position they have in it, the type of contract they work on, their age and experience. As participants suggested, there is much competition, both in ballet and contemporary dance scene. As the director of Scottish Ballet said during a recent public event, 'Scottish Ballet receives over 200 applications per month and only hires a handful of dancers every year' (personal notes, June 2016). Likewise, small-scale, project-based companies need to apply for funding for their projects. Dancers' employment and the production of work depend on whether their funding applications will be successful. As Robert said while comparing the current situation to the time he started performing, 'there is more competition now' (gay, 40+, contemporary dancer). Competition results in insecurity and financial difficulties for both companies and individual performers.

Likewise, other participants also mentioned the fact that dancers can never be sure about when they will have a job; therefore, they cannot expect a steady salary. This again varies according to the company they are employed in and the type of contract they have. For example, Scottish Ballet's dancers have yearly contracts and they know that they will be financially secure for the foreseeable future. Dancers who work freelance, however, cannot be sure about when their next project will be or for how long they will be employed. All these issues turn the profession of dance into a precarious one and some, though not all, parents were concerned about the uncertainty of their children's future.

Some parents objected to their sons following a career in dance because they aspired to a better future for them. This study's findings suggest that these parents in their majority received higher education and worked in well-paid professions (teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers and CEOs). Irwin and Elley conducted a questionnaire survey of parents with children involved in organised activities. Focussing on parents' social class they argued that 'middle class parents typically envisaged as a good job for their children a professional occupation and one which requires a university education' (2013:116). When participants whose parents objected to them following a dance career were asked what their parents envisioned them to become professionally, the occupations they mentioned were similar to the ones their parents had had -for example, doctors, CEOs, teachers. This suggests that these parents envisioned a successful future for their children and one which was in line with their own professional aspirations. As Andy, for example, said whilst we were discussing his parents' aspirations for him:

> he [my father] had a hard time [accepting that I wanted to study dance] because […] he just couldn't comprehend why I would go into a career that wouldn't make any money. You know he is a very successful businessman and he is like 'I don't know why you wouldn't want that [a successful career in the business sector]'. He is like 'I can help you go be that person'. (Andy, bisexual, 22-30, ballet dancer)

Andy is one of those dancers whose parents aspired for him to follow a different career path. Andy's father was confident that Andy could have a successful career and he was certain that he could assist Andy because of his position. This is in line with Irwin and Elley who argued that parents' expectations are associated with 'a sense of confidence about the prospects open to their children' (2013:117).

Further, other respondents referred to themselves as being 'good students' or 'achieving high marks' (Alan, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer; Richard, gay, 31-40, contemporary dancer) which, as they said, explained and justified their parents' aspirations and expectations from them. Some of these participants, therefore, were enrolled in schools that did both academic and performing arts classes. This was a condition which was set by their parents in order for them to receive institutional dance training. Yet, this suggests an affluent background and the

financial means, or economic resources, which turn this type of education a possibility.

Overall, early beginners' early introduction to dance existed as a possibility because of their family background and the cultural and economic resources they had available while growing up. This positioned dance as an activity they could partake but also one which was suitable for them in terms of gender. As will be argued next, early beginners' experiences, and routes into dancing, were quite different from those of late beginners.

Late beginners

Participants who began dancing in their late teens and early twenties were most often accidentally introduced to dance by college teachers or through workshops which were part of their college or university course. As they said, they began dancing later in life because it had not occurred to them that dancing was something they could do. In contrast to early beginners' parents who in their majority were involved in the arts, late beginners' parents did not have artistic hobbies. Of seven late beginners, only Billy's mother was recreationally involved in the arts. In addition, their parents' occupational backgrounds varied; four of these respondents' parents were involved in low-paying professions whilst the remaining three informants' parents were employed in occupations widely associated with the middle classes.

Late beginners' lack of awareness and/or familiarity with dance can be thus attributed to dominant gender norms which influence the activities which are seen as appropriate for people according to their sex but also to their families' social background and lack of interest in the arts. A combination of these conditions led them to discover dance accidentally and most commonly through university and college courses, workshops or other activities.

Late beginners suggested that their careers began with their decision to start dancing recreationally; however, they were in their majority encouraged to pursue professional training by teachers or other professionals (program leaders

and professional dancers who were delivering workshops), who saw some kind of potential in them that indicated they could succeed in this sphere. As Robert said:

> I was only dancing for about a year when I actually auditioned to go to a college in London and it was because another boy in the class auditioned and he got into a college and I was absolutely stunned. I thought surely to go to a college in London you had to start [dancing] when you were five. I didn't know it, but they would take boys with potential. […] I guess when you are a male it's like 'oh there is a boy coming into class' and they are desperate and are like 'oh come to us, come to us'. So it happened kind of quickly, I wasn't dancing for years and years and then decided to go into college. (gay, 40+, contemporary dancer)

Robert's account was repeated by other informants; being male acts as an asset in dance. The lack of male dancers results in less competition amongst them and, hence, more opportunities for them. As Ben also said 'boys have so much easier time [than girls] because there are so many girls' (gay, 31-40, contemporary dance). As he continued saying, 'if you are half decent you will get work, especially as a male [dancer]'. Male dancers' sex, combined with other elements such as good physical condition or flexibility, for example, meant that late beginners could still pursue a career and succeed in the sphere of dance.

Further, when late beginners were asked about their parents' reactions to their decision to change their career paths their answers varied. Some late beginners described their parents as being supportive of their dance choices and others suggested that their parents reacted negatively to these. Out of those who suggested that their parents reacted negatively, two came from a family with parents in manual, low-paying professions and described their parents as not being convinced that one could make a career out of dance. Daniel (straight, 31-40, contemporary dancer) was one of those two respondents. Daniel's parents insisted that he should have a 'good education', which resulted in him acquiring a university degree before getting professionally involved in this context.

Steven's parents were employed in the education sector. Steven referred to his parents' lack of knowledge of, and familiarity with, dance as the reason for their unsupportive attitude towards his professional choices. Steven referred to his

mother by saying: ‘probably my mother was thinking that this was a very unusual thing to do as profession. Yeah you dance but you can’t earn a living out of it’ (straight, 40+, contemporary dancer). Dance in these cases was seen as a recreational activity or a hobby rather than a successful career path one could follow. It should, however, be mentioned at this point that this view reflected mostly the views of the parents of older informants rather than younger ones.

Further, when late beginners were asked what might have introduced them to dance earlier they argued about the need for dance to be more visible and widely available. The majority of late beginners said that dancing was not something they had thought of doing as they were not exposed to it from a young age, neither at home or at school. Having not being exposed to this cultural form meant that dance did not exist as something which had any possible relevance to them; hence, seeing themselves as taking part in dance did not even exist as a possibility. Interest and involvement in cultural forms presupposes familiarity with these forms; as has been argued this is influenced by factors such as people’s social location and gender ideals. Especially with regards to an activity such as dance that boys are not usually encouraged to participate, there needs to be other stimuli to invoke boys’ interest. As Simon said when he was asked what could have introduced him to dance earlier:

> when I was younger it [dance] wasn’t accessible, it was quite elitist. So I think for a parent, I was from a single parent family for a long time, I think that made it difficult as well and my mom would have been ‘oh he is a boy so I am not gonna put him into a dance class’ (gay, 22-30, contemporary dancer).

Simon’s commentary summarises the key arguments that have been made in this section. As Simon suggested, dance can be seen as one of those activities which are elitist; his statement referred to the economic resources which are necessary for one to participate in it, but also to dance’s representations, and thus ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1984) which are necessary to engage with it. Particularly ballet and its continuous representation of movement, costumes and narratives that date back to the 19th century make this genre elitist. The same was argued by Sanderson who supported the view that ballet’s representations ‘appear incongruous to most young women and men, having little resonance with their own lives’ (2008:481). This study reinforces this claim.

Overall, late beginners' late involvement in dance is attributed to their familial background and gender ideals, which limited their opportunities to become introduced to dance earlier. Nevertheless, as we will see next, their late involvement in dance did not restrict them from pursuing a career in this sphere. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all late beginners followed a career in contemporary dance. Their late involvement in dance influenced their experiences, which in their turn influenced their life philosophies and dance practice.

The next section discusses how the time informants began to dance influenced their career trajectory and the companies they ended up working for. As will be argued in ensuing chapters this is important as the companies that dancers ended up being employed, the works these produce, and the topics they engage with, influence their opportunities for reflection and questioning.

Dance Trajectories

As has been argued in the previous section, the time informants began to dance was influenced by their familial background, their parents' involvement in cultural practices, the financial and cultural resources they had available whilst growing up. As it will be argued in this section, the time informants began to dance influenced their career trajectories. Their trajectories and involvement in certain genres, as it will be discussed in ensuing chapters, affected their life philosophies but also available opportunities to question and problematise aspects of their lives that they would have otherwise taken for granted.

All informants who followed a career in ballet were early beginners. Further, in their majority they were raised in what might be loosely approached as middle-class families, with parents employed in high-ranking professions and with artistic interests; only three ballet dancers came from what might be approached as working-class families. This is important as it reinforces arguments which suggest that ballet is 'predominantly enjoyed by the middle and upper social classes' (Sanderson, 2008:469). Further, it suggests that one's social location influences not only when will one become involved in dance, but also the genre one will become involved in, one's appreciation of certain genres

and so on. Carl, one of the students who wanted to join a ballet company after he graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, said:

> [my plan is to] get into a ballet company, work up to principal, hopefully not have any injuries and stop that and do something else, maybe contemporary, choreography or maybe just something else. […] I feel that I want to do more ballet whilst I am young and still able but I feel contemporary is something I can do after. (Carl, straight, 18-21, ballet dancer)

Carl's account was repeated by three more students; those students suggested that their primary aim was to get into a ballet company and perform ballet while they are still young and able. Further, having looked at these students' routes into dancing and genres they practised before deciding to undertake professional training in ballet, it appears that since their initial involvement in dance they practiced ballet; they learned to appreciate and value this form more than any other. David for instance said, 'I have learned from very early on to appreciate so much what we are doing, the quality of it [ballet], the value of it' (straight, 31-40, ballet dancer). As Bourdieu has argued, one's appreciation of an art form relies on one's education and cultural capital. As he wrote, 'a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded' (1984:2). These informants' involvement in certain dance genres, taught them to appreciate and value their dance practice as something which is worth doing. It also taught them to appreciate some genres more than others.

Other informants such as Craig, William and John who practiced other genres before studying ballet however, aspired to follow a career in contemporary dance and Luke in '[dance] companies [which are] doing some ballet and some contemporary [dance] work' (straight, 18-21, contemporary dancer). Devotion to, and appreciation of, certain dance genres is the outcome of one's engagement with those genres. It is the outcome of one's technical training and one's training into believing that this practice is the most worthwhile. This is evidenced in Billy's commentary:

> I am not drawn to it [ballet] just like I am not [drawn] to opera. […] I find the whole thing, the aesthetic of it, [to be] very like [pauses], it's like in a little room with some people who have been working [together] for ten years and have gone completely nuts together and

> you just watch it, there is no thrill. We don't work very much with set in my company. The last performance had four-five chairs and five bodies and the music is light, there is no projections, there is no fucking stuff. I quite like that. (straight, 31-40, contemporary dancer)

Drawing onto a comparison between ballet on the one hand, and the work he produces on the other, Billy, the director of Kinesis, referred to a few elements which he dislikes in ballet. He referred to ballet as 'a supposedly high art form that is incredibly expensive' and he seemed to be disregarding the aesthetics of ballet. Billy, since his introduction to dance has attended contemporary dance workshops, dance-theatre classes and theatre training. He thus learned to enjoy certain types of performances and value qualities, aesthetics, practices and so on which are characteristic of those genres. Kinesis's performances are very minimal in terms of settings and performers' costumes. The show this company was preparing during fieldwork involved only some chairs and tables, which they were bought from a retail shop. This was the outcome of Billy's wish for his performances to comply with the aesthetics of 'pure theatre' where, as he said, anything else other than a 'man walking across the stage and another man watching him' needs to be justified. This is the outcome of his exposition to this art form, its philosophy and so forth.

Further, contemporary dancers, and more specifically those who belonged to the late beginners' category, perceived their practice as enabling them to question or 'understand the world […] through my body and mind' (Billy, straight, 31-40). Steven, for example, discussed the 'role of the artist' and the purpose of dance. As he said, 'I think the job of the artist is to observe and to raise questions. […] a lot of my pieces can be quite thought-provoking or challenging on one level' (Steven, straight, 40+, contemporary dancer).

Informants, such as Steven, and Richard who also said that 'my work is always related to everyday reality and real situations and real people, it's never sort of abstract, it's quite real or it feels like that' (gay, 31-40, contemporary dancer), suggested that their work engages with the real world in ways that enable them to either raise questions or engage with social problems and everyday realities. Tsitsou in her study also found that 'contemporary dance-makers see dance as a fusion of arts aiming to represent human experience and stimulate emotions and ideas about the social world' (2012:182). This is at least partially influenced by

dance's history and the conditions which led to the emergence of modern dance (see also chapter 4).

Informants who were professionally involved in ballet emphasised the importance of having 'good' bodies, good technique and so on (see also chapter 7); this implies years of training and hence, an early introduction to ballet. Contemporary dancers on the other hand saw other qualities to be important. Some of these were personality, creativity and dancers' ability to communicate with the audience; these were seen as qualities which one *has* rather than one can master (for a discussion on presence see Murray and Keefe, 2016). Late beginners' late involvement in dance, therefore, did not restrict their career but rather enabled them to develop these crucial aspects of themselves. Richard, who works as a freelance choreographer and performer said:

> when I have the possibility to choose my dancers I choose always people that I know and I think it's always people that have a broad range of skills. I am not interested in quantity in terms of people who are very flexible or are technically super accomplished. I am more interested in people with personality, openness and generosity and I think people that are very able to be in the moment and be interested in communicating with the audience, people that are creative. (gay, 31-40, contemporary dancer)

Whilst ballet dancers should be 'technically accomplished', in contemporary dance, technique and physical abilities are only some of the elements that determine the 'quality' of the dancer. Rather what matters was, according to Richard, the work 'to feel quite real'. This view was shared by other informants. Billy, for example, said:

> I like to see the people somehow, and sometimes if you can see a really good dancer who is eating the technique properly you can see them [referring to the person the dancer is]. […] Ballet, for me, the technique of ballet creates a sort of body and a sort of movement that has its beauty, but it's not natural. Of course the things we do aren't really natural, but I kind of like to see movement that is somehow wilder, that's a bit constrained and I also like to see things break down. I like to see someone perform at the limit of their ability so they actually break or they almost can't do it anymore but they keep going. I like to see that thing and in ballet if the ballerina falls over they are really fucked up, whereas in my work if something like that happens it might be the best thing. So, it's not so much about the technique, it's about the perfection and I am not really interested in

> perfection. I like the perfection of imperfection. (straight, 31-40, contemporary dancer)

On a related note, Murray and Keefe while discussing notions of the 'real' argued that 'many examples of contemporary physical theatres distance themselves from "the acting as representation of character" model, and instead strive for an experience of the *real* through task, action and refusal of illusion' (2016:27). This characterised the work of Kinesis and informants such as Billy, Matt, Tom and Richard.

Late beginners' late involvement in dance influenced their trajectory in that it equipped them with experiences, which are seen as valuable in genres such as contemporary dance and physical theatre.

> I would say that ballet is a beautiful art form. They [ballet and contemporary] are both equally as enjoyable but I would say that ballet is a bit more restrictive in the sense of movement and the ideas behind a piece, whereas I feel that contemporary is a bit more risky. You can push boundaries. You can display topics on stage like rape and not that you enjoy doing it but it's a very different way of displaying whereas in ballet you might not see that because it's very classical and people know what to expect. In contemporary, I feel you can shock people and push more ideas to the audience. Contemporary is more risky, you can push their ideas more and the movement has a bigger chance to grow and to breathe. I think that classical ballet is gonna remain what it is now in years to come. (Chris, gay, 18-21, ballet dancer)

Chris received classes on multiple genres during his professional training. Some of these were ballet, contemporary and jazz. Ballet, in its classical form at least, cannot engage with social problems and current reality because of its history, tradition and the narratives which continues to reproduce. These often represent otherworldly creatures, fairy tales and fantasy lands. For example, some of Scottish Ballet's recent productions were the Nutcracker, Swan Lake, Hansel and Gretel, and Cinderella. These have no resonance with current realities. However, as Chris said, Scottish Ballet is a company which has a diverse repertoire.

> I love the diverse repertoire [at Scottish Ballet]. Scottish Ballet is a ballet company but it also has amazingly strong contemporary pieces. I think this is why I chose this because I wanted to be a ballet dancer because of my training. I thought it would be a waste if I just got into

> contemporary. I picked Scottish Ballet because it's so diverse. I think it's equally as good in ballet as it is in contemporary. (gay, 18-21, ballet dancer)

In addition to the productions that were discussed above, during the past two years Scottish Ballet produced in collaboration with sourced choreographers many contemporary or modern dance pieces. Some of these were the Crucible and Ten Poems. These were very diverse productions in terms of content, style and choreographic representations. The diversity of Scottish Ballet's productions was a reason that attracted Chris and other informants.

Overall, ballet presupposes years of training and high levels of technical ability. It thus presupposes early introduction to dance which will enable dancers to become technically accomplished. Early involvement in this world also enables them to learn to appreciate it. Contemporary dance, on the other hand, values qualities which one acquires throughout one's life course and engagement with the world. Thus, despite lacking the intense training early beginners had, late beginners still managed to have successful careers in this context. This was also partly enabled by their sex and the small number of males in professional dance. As we will see next, the companies and dance genres informants ended up being involved in, affects their philosophy and also opportunities for 'reflexive awareness' (Cooper, 2013).

Conclusion

Dance, in the UK at least, is still considered as an unconventional activity for most boys and young men. Dance is, therefore, not widely presented to boys as an activity which they could become involved in. Hence, for one to practise dance, one needs to *discover* this practice. As has been demonstrated in this chapter this requires certain socio-cultural stimuli which influence not only the time one will become involved in dance recreationally and professionally, but also the genre one will practice and subsequently the career one will follow.

As has been demonstrated, informants who were brought up in middle-class families were more likely to be introduced to an elitist practice such as ballet at

a young age. The findings of this project, therefore, reinforce claims which suggest that ballet is more likely to be enjoyed by the middle-classes. Indeed, as has been demonstrated, the majority of ballet dancers who participated in this study are members of this category. These ballet dancers were, in their majority at least, introduced to ballet via their parents who were themselves recreationally involved in dance or who were interested in attending ballet performances. These parents saw this practice as one which could benefit their child.

Late beginners' parents on the other hand rarely had artistic interests and were thus unfamiliar with this world; being themselves unaware of this practice, they could not have introduced their children to it. Late beginners discovered dance accidentally through university and college courses. Their late involvement in dance and lack of intense training though did not stop them from pursuing a career in dance. Instead, their late involvement in this sphere enabled them to develop other aspects of themselves which enriched their perceived abilities and benefited their practice.

Lastly, as has been demonstrated, the time dancers became involved in dance and the genres they practiced influenced their professional trajectory. All ballet dancers had an early introduction to dance. All late beginners followed a career in contemporary dance. This is not a coincidence but rather the outcome of their training, which conditions their bodies but also views towards, and appreciation of, these genres. The dance genres which informants practiced, and the narratives and expressions that companies display onstage impact, at least partially, informants' opportunities for exploration of themselves and their 'reflexive-awareness' (Cooper, 2013).

The findings which were discussed in this chapter relied on the data and rich insights that were provided during interview encounters. These shed light into aspects of these men's lives and their familial backgrounds which influenced the time they became involved in dance and the career path they followed. Thus, the discussion that was developed in this chapter contributes to understanding some important socio-cultural conditions that influenced these men's dance journeys, and as we will see next, views towards certain aspects of their lives.

Chapter 6
Behind the Curtains: Gender and Sexuality in Dance

Introduction

For the purpose of analysis, in this thesis, dance institutions are approached as environments which consist of three spaces: onstage, frontstage and backstage. The onstage refers quite literally to the dance performances which are performed before an audience. The frontstage refers to formal interactional sessions such as auditions, rehearsals, classes and so on and the backstage to all those informal instances that dancers do not perform a role or act in their capacity as dancers (see also chapter 1). As it will be demonstrated by the end of this thesis, these spaces are characterised by tensions, and at some instances contradictory gender and sexuality norms and expectations.

In addition to the variations that exist as we move from the onstage to the frontstage and the backstage there are also important variations as we turn our attention away from ballet and towards contemporary dance. These two genres, and different subgenres within them, enable different opportunities for male dancers to reflect on themselves, their 'knowledge' and their realities; dancers are in some cases invited or encouraged to embark a 'self-discovery' journey and problematise aspects of their social realities. In some cases, this relates to aspects of their gender and sexuality.

This chapter discusses these tensions in two main sections. The first section, *Onstage Performances, Frontstage Practices,* briefly discusses some aspects of ballet and contemporary dance productions, onstage representations of gender and sexuality and the role that dancers have in the creative process. As will be argued later in the thesis, this is important as onstage productions shape frontstage expectations for dancers. The second section, *From Onstage Displays to Backstage Practices*, discusses the backstage spaces of dance institutions as contexts which enable more opportunities than the outside-of-dance society for dancers to 'undo gender' (Deutsch, 2007), challenge traditional gender regimes

and ‘heterosexual hegemony’ (Butler, 1993). In these spaces, male dancers are able to create ‘gender trouble’ (Butler, 1999).

Onstage Performances, Frontstage Practices

This chapter, and the ones that follow, discuss different aspects of frontstage sessions, onstage performances and backstage interactions. The focus of this chapter is on practices and actions that occur in the backstage spaces of dance institutions and the possibilities these enable in relation to gender and sexuality; yet, before analysing these, a brief discussion on the onstage can provide some useful information that can contribute to the contextualising of the analysis. This chapter, therefore, begins by commenting on ballet and contemporary dance’s onstage displays of class, gender, gender relations and sexuality. This discussion contributes to the understanding of the complex ways that formal practices in ballet and contemporary dance can influence opportunities for reflection, questioning and gender trouble during the production process.

Modern dance emerged as a response to ballet and everything that ballet represented. Modern dancers wished to escape the classed and gendered connotations ballet had, and still has. Ballet narratives and onstage displays, which in their majority have remained the same since the early 19th century, reproduce a matrix of binaries, where female dancers are positioned as different from male dancers, masculinity as different from femininity, and heterosexuality is positioned as the normative form of sexuality. More often than not, classical ballet narratives revolve around romantic heterosexual love stories, gender representations and patriarchal gender relations that date back to the 19th century’s elitist society (see also chapter 4). The continuing reproduction of these narratives results in male ballet dancers to appear as leading the female ones, supporting and handling them onstage. For example, during fieldwork, students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland were practicing parts of the Swan Lake. This production, in its classical form, displays hierarchical gender relations and archaic gender imageries. Such productions ‘create the female dancers […] as male dancers’ own possessions’ (Daly, 1987:60). Female ballerinas appear to be passive, ‘objectified bodies […] which embody the

oppressive hegemonies of patriarchy' (Carter, 1999:91). As William, one of the dance students said, 'you [referring to male dancers] lift them [female dancers], you throw them around' (gay, 22-30). Traditional gender relations are maintained in classical ballet. However, there is a tension that needs to be acknowledged.

Male dancers appear to be dominating during onstage ballet performances; their representations, energetic movements and dynamic choreographies reproduce their leading role during onstage shows. As Carl said while referring to the only-male classes they have at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 'obviously the [only-male] class will change because we [male dancers] will do more jumps and turns and stuff' (straight, 18-21). Female dancers on the other hand, like in 19th century ballet, appear to be dominated, passive, and guided by their male counterparts. Their onstage displays have remained unchanged. Hence, during onstage productions the traditional regime of gender relations, binaries and 'heteronormativity' (Berlant and Warner, 1998) are reproduced.

These representations, however, do not correspond to the current social reality and everyday understandings of gender. Male ballet dancers might be seen as displaying masculinity onstage, but as Alan and other dancers said, male dancers are perceived as feminine outside of dance. As we will see in subsequent chapters this is the outcome of their long practice periods and intense training which becomes embodied and makes them come across as 'elegant' (David, straight, 31-40), 'camp' (Alan, straight, 18-21) and 'feminine' (Robert, gay, 40+). This is also an outcome of the feminisation of this sphere and its perception as 'a very gay world' (George, gay, 22-30). Craig, while discussing this issue, said:

> It feels a bit confused. [I refer to] the roles that we fulfil theatrically and how they relate to the person, but also how we can be so different from the expectations of society or stereotypes. So there seem to be these kind of quite different elements in order to have one male dancer. The expectation, the role like what you dance, and who you are. What you dance, who you are on stage and what you are after show. (Craig, gay, 18-21)

At the end of the interview, Craig began talking about the three parts that, according to him, make a male dancer. He referred to the roles that dancers

fulfil onstage as being the first element, and to themselves before and after the show -their backstage self- as being the second. Lastly, he referred to the 'expectation' society has of men and of male dancers specifically, to reflect on the complex relationship and dynamics that underlie the concept of the male dancer. Craig's commentary captures the tensions that characterise the onstage, frontstage and backstage spaces in dance, the possibilities these create and the restrictions they set on dancers.

In addition to these tensions, there are further variations as we shift our attention away from ballet and towards contemporary dance. In the early years of its emergence, modern dance challenged traditional gender norms and after the 1960s it questioned heterosexual hegemony and, amongst other topics, the naturalness of gender and sexual identities (see also chapter 4). It provided, therefore, an arena where dancers could question and problematise their social realities, social inequalities, identities and problems. Whilst it cannot be argued that contemporary dance is completely free from gender norms and projections, it has definitely provided a space where these norms could be explored and challenged. Contemporary dance productions[31] often problematise gender binaries and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). These issues are present in the work of many contemporary dance companies and contemporary dance choreographers. As Robert, for example, said:

> I've done gay men, addicted to sexual cruising, dreams, death, what happens when you die, different world cultures. I am a Buddhist, a humanist, a Christian, they all got this theory about what's going to happen. No one knows but everyone has their theories. Love, sexual relationships, playing with gender roles, [shows] based on films, books. (gay, 40+)

Contemporary dance provides a space for the exploration of a greater variety of topics often engaging with social problems, inequalities, power relations, sex, gender, sexuality. In works such as the ones Robert describes, male dancers can partner males and female dancers females. This, for instance, does not happen in ballet. Nevertheless, such practices are not characteristic of all companies. Even within the two companies I observed there were variations. In Chorotheatro male dancers partnered females dancers and the choreography they practiced

[31] See for example productions by DV8, Matthew Bourne, Michael Clark.

during the observation period displayed a dramatic heterosexual love story. Kinesis on the other hand produced work where the sex of the dancers did not influence their onstage roles or characters. The performance Kinesis was preparing during observation did not have any gendered connotations; it was agendered. Male and female performers alike engaged in intense physical contact, which involved licking, biting and touching. The only difference concerned the costumes female and male performers wore: dresses for the female dancers and trousers with t-shirts for the males. This though did not influence the perception of the piece or the meanings communicated as the dancers' sex and gender had no relevance to the piece.

Whilst classical ballet scripts still reproduce conventional, and potentially archaic, feminine and masculine imageries on stage, contemporary dance and more specifically genres such as dance theatre –for example, in the form of Cunningham's choreography-, often deemphasise dancers' sex and treat dancers as asexed and agendered bodies which move onstage (see also chapter 4). This practice was also apparent during the observation period at Kinesis, which did not rely on dancers' sex; rather female and male performers performed the same movements.

> I think the all-male projects challenged the classical ballet choreographies. Like Matthew Bourne's [dancers], they are not being camp or effeminate or DV8 has done a lot of male shows that challenge that notion. And then they are gay choreographers that play on this thing. They want to play with stereotypes and gender and have men being women and women being men. They play with this idea of sexuality. One of the most famous was Cunningham who was gay and he didn't want to put anything in his work that resembled emotion or sexuality. (Robert, gay, 40+)

There exist companies which use the sex of their dancers to destabilise gender and sexuality norms or explicitly deal with matters concerning gender and sexuality. Some of these companies are DV8 and Pina Bausch company (Murray and Keefe, 2016:37). Through such companies and performances, conventional gender binaries as well as the reproductions and portrayal of heteronormativity onstage are challenged. As Robert suggested, there are works that play with notions of gender and aim to destabilise the fixity of social identities and notions of what it is to be a woman, man, gay, straight and so on. As Steven also said, 'I think the job of the artist is to observe and to raise questions […]. A lot of my

pieces can be quite thought provoking or challenging on one level' (straight, 40+). Questioning is made possible because of the sphere these men are involved. As Craig, for example, said:

> I think purely the fact that we spend so much of our time analysing and questioning [has allowed me to develop a feminine side]. I think it's probably related to creativity and the arts rather than specifically dance. (gay, 18-21)

Craig's dance practice, and the questioning this entails, encouraged Craig to reflect on himself and, in this case, his gender. Dance, as a practice and a context, enables and often even invites 'reflexivity' (Giddens, 1991). Giddens suggested that 'in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a reflexive-project. […] the self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process' (1991:32-33). Self-reflexivity in this case though has less to do with late modernity, as Giddens would have suggested, and more so with dance as a creative practice and a context.

Contemporary dance companies often enable, and in some cases even encourage, the dismantling of gender binaries during the development, and staging, of dance performances. In these cases, dancers' movements and the choreographies they perform aim or result in the undoing of gender and the reduction of gender difference (Deutsch 2007). When male and female dancers' movements are not influenced by their sex, and when these are not seen as signifying certain genders, gender might be seen as irrelevant. This contributes to the reduction of gender difference, and, hence, in 'undoing gender' as this was theorised by Deutsch (2007). Likewise, contemporary dance companies often challenge heterosexual hegemony during onstage performances. Such performances, practices and the creative process involved in producing a dance performance can invite conscious reflection. For example, as Richard said:

> one of the things that I think happens is that when you are in the dance environment you are in the arts environment and when you are in the arts environment you tend to be more open, people are less judgmental. You feel more free and feel there is more room and you also learn a lot about your own perspective. You learn a lot about yourself and I think this goes together with accepting what there is, and your sexuality I guess is part of that so I guess when you embark on a dance journey there is less pressure I guess and so it's easier that there is less pressure. (gay, 31-40)

Richard discussed dance as an environment which enables dancers to learn about their perspective. Being in a sphere which is not judgmental and one that enables creativity encourages dancers to question and learn about 'themselves'. This is not to suggest that contemporary dance always enables this; Matt, for example, described an instance where he worked for a well-known choreographer to suggest that it is not often that 'dancers have very much agency in themselves'. As Matt explained, dancers 'have to just figure out the problem that the choreographer has put to them' (straight, 22-30). While discussing a piece he did a few years ago, he suggested that often dancers have to follow instructions and perform that which the choreographer is thinking. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, in contemporary dance, dancers are often expected to perform parts of 'themselves' and communicate certain realities. This process, as Matt also said, requires them to engage with the dance piece in ways that enable them to 'discover' parts of themselves:

> I think there is a choice, you either make a choice to go fully into it [the process of producing a dance piece] knowing there might be discoveries, beautiful, horrific, problematic [discoveries], things you need to talk to a therapist afterwards but that's the process and you go into it kind of hoping that this is making art. Or you do that thing where you go and say now that's a job I am just gonna turn up and do the job. […] And often the more the process asks from you the more comes back to something familiar [and] those shifts become slightly noticeable. (Matt, straight, 22-30)

The practice of dancing itself or the process of creating a dance piece sometimes enables dancers to 'discover' parts of themselves, which they might have previously not thought of or known about. In the above commentary, Matt discusses the fact that when he is committed and deeply immersed in the production process he sometimes experiences a change in himself. There exists thus an invitation to think, reflect on and question parts of themselves and their social reality in, at least some, contemporary dance performances. This occurs mostly during contemporary dance classes and onstage performances, which 'often include improvisational or choreographic component' (Garafola, 2005:215). In contrast, ballet classes, most often if not always, 'are exclusively devoted to technique' (p.215). Indeed, this was verified during the observation period. During the observation period in Kinesis, Billy, the director, asked his

performers to think about the topic of the performance and discuss their thoughts:

> Billy called the other performers to sit on the floor in a circle. He asked me to join them. I took my shoes off and sat down on my knees. Billy asked them to think for a minute about the topic of the show [which I will not name to maintain the company's anonymity. This revolves around an everyday human function]. He asked them how they felt about it. He then asked them to think back and remember examples from their life when they felt like this before. He then asked them to think why they might have felt this way. This continued for a while. Billy asked many more questions that aimed in making performers reflect on, think about, and understand their practices. (Field diary notes, Kinesis, 22/09/2014)

Processes such as the one described above invite dancers to reflect on their practices, question why they do that which they do and thus problematise the 'naturalness' of that which they know. This is unique to, at least some, contemporary dance as in genres such as ballet, for example, dancers follow their instructors' directions and practise until they achieve that which their director expects.

> I was observing a rehearsal session with five male dancers. They were trying to remember the routine from the previous day but they couldn't. They turned on the video recording from the previous day's rehearsal. The movements were not clear and Michael [one of the dancers] said 'I can't tell [what we are doing]'. Arthur [the instructor] calmly told him: 'I've been watching the video since 9am and I couldn't understand the movement'. Michael said 'let's be original'. Arthur replied 'no let's just do a port de bra[32] until we can ask Jolan [the director]. If Jolan wants something we have to respect it'. (Field diary notes, Scottish Ballet, 25/11/2013)

The above encounter reflects the hierarchies in large companies but also the philosophy of ballet, which expects from ballet dancers to act as the director's medium to convey that which the director envisions. In companies such as Kinesis, though, frontstage sessions and onstage performances relied less on instruction and more on improvisation. This, as we have seen in chapter 4, also characterised the work produced by Bausch and Newton in the 1970s. Dancers' biographies, experiences and ways of movement are in these dance forms important parts of the performance.

[32] This refers to hand positions or 'choreographies' of the hands.

Further, as Robert said ‘I like getting some sort of story across but I think dance is terribly badly equipped to tell stories. […] Dance is great for athletics and jumping and leaping but stories are very hard to put across’ (gay, 40+). This results in contemporary dancers often employing media such as text and film, and trying to merge the boundaries between dance and theatre or physical theatre. This has been a practice used by many dancers and choreographers since the 1960s (see also chapter 4). Kinesis’s work relied on the merging of dance theatre, live music, improvisation and text. Chorotheatro on the other hand used elements of dance, music and bits of film. Likewise, other directors and choreographers that were interviewed referred to their work as merging theatre with dance and music. Tom’s (mostly straight, 40+) work, for example, is ‘multi-layered’ as he said, and often invites, or aims to invite, audience members to reflect on issues related to identities and their everyday lives. To do this Tom uses visual means, film and images, text, dance-theatre and music.

Hence, ballet and contemporary dance have significant differences with regards to their production practices and onstage representations. The performances that are presented during onstage shows, the processes involved behind the production of dance and the philosophies of the different genres influence opportunities for questioning and problematising. While in ballet more often than not dancers act under very specific guidelines and are expected to embody characters which have no resonance with today’s reality, in contemporary dance, dancers are often invited to reflect on their own experiences, knowledge and biographies and to bring parts of themselves in the performance. Hence, in some cases dance as a practice, and as we will see next as a context, invites reflexivity, self-awareness and conscious self-reflection. I return to this issue in the following chapter.

From Onstage Displays to Backstage Practices

As has already been mentioned, interesting variations, complexities and tensions can be identified as we turn our attention away from the onstage and frontstage towards the backstage spaces in dance institutions. Dance, especially in the backstage, is a cultural context that because of the connotations it has acquired

through time acts as a safe space for non-heterosexual and gender queer dancers to explore, question and problematise prevailing gender and sexuality norms. Having discussed the formal practices that occur during onstage performances and frontstage sessions we now turn our attention to the practices and processes that occur behind the curtain, in the backstage spaces of this world. This part develops in three sections. The first discusses dance institutions as 'safe spaces' (Brown et al, 2007:4) for non-heterosexual dancers to 'come out' and 'be' out. The second discusses informants' views of masculinity in this society and culture, and ways they view themselves. The last section conveys field notes and analyses instances of gender undoing in the backstage spaces.

'It's a Very Gay World': Challenging Heterosexual Hegemony

> I came out when I was at ballet school, when I was 18 so quite late to be honest. I had been having these weird feelings for a long time and when I was in high school but I was kind of ignoring them or didn't really know how to process them. I was like intrigued by guys more than anything. […] Obviously going to a ballet school in London was the easiest place to come out because in my year everyone was gay and it was a very open environment.
>
> *Are you saying that being in a ballet school made it easier for you to come out?*
>
> Oh God yeah! It [ballet] is a very gay world and performing generally is quite, any kind of creative profession to be honest, design, theatre design, costume design, dance, all these kind of areas, all the men are gay, well a lot. Especially in the ballet world, and I think it made it [coming out] much easier. (George, gay, 22-30)

Dance academies are environments which make 'coming out' or being openly gay seem much easier. This condition characterises only a few contexts. The sphere of the performing arts thus acts as a 'safe space' (Brown et al., 2007:4) for gay, bisexual and gender queer people. Dolan, while referring specifically to theatre, argued that 'sexual minorities have found among theatre people a generous acceptance sometimes not available in dominant culture's more constrained, conforming ways of life' (2010:3). This was reiterated by Rumens and Broomfield (2014), and verified by this study's findings.

> It [dance] was really accepting of being gay. […] It didn't matter, you know. Suddenly it was an environment I could put myself in where people were not interested [in my sexuality] because I think it's quite common but also people see more than the stereotype or a box. (Craig, gay, 18-21)

As Craig and others said, being gay in dance is quite common. As a result, gay men are able to 'fit in' (Chris, gay, 18-21). Indeed, there were equal numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual[33] male dancers in the settings that were studied. This argument was also supported by many informants' accounts and other previous studies (Burt, 2007; Risner, 2002a, 2007). This condition turns the backstage spaces of dance institutions into spaces where heterosexuality is not hegemonic but rather valued as much as homosexuality and bisexuality are. Such commentaries suggest that the 'heterosexual matrix' is in these spaces challenged. This factor characterises only a few contexts. Hence, the study of dance institutions, and the processes which occur within these, can provide significant insights which can inform us about the ways gender and sexuality are negotiated in settings where prevailing norms do not apply. As Ben said:

> I don't know if it's just the [dance] industry that allows [gay men] to be more open. I know [gay] people out, who have been in masculine [professions], maybe plumbers or builders, but they have to kind of hide it a bit more because they'd get more jeering, more like mocking kind of things. Whereas in dance it's accepted. You are kind of against the rules if you are straight. (gay, 22-30)

Whereas in the outside-of-dance society people are expected to be heterosexual unless otherwise stated, men in dance are expected to be gay unless otherwise stated; as Matt said being gay in dance is 'an expectation' (straight, 22-30). While non-heterosexual sexualities are nowadays, at least in the UK, more widely accepted than they once were, homosexuality in the wider society is not seen as the 'norm' (Weeks, 2007); the outside-of dance society is still reproduced as mainly heterosexual (see also Bell et al.,1994; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Magni and Reddy, 2007; Skeggs et al., 2004; Simpson, 2013). As Matt said, 'there's always this invitation within it [dance] that I could question my sexuality' (straight, 22-30). This invitation exists because of this context and the relations in the backstage, which set homosexuality and bisexuality as normal and valued as heterosexuality. Dance is thus a sphere which is 'created in

[33] 14 identified as heterosexuals; 13 as gay and 1 as bisexual (see also appendices 1 and 3).

particular ways, often associated with sexualised and gendered norms' (Brown et al., 2007:4). The 'unwritten rules' of this culture create opportunities for dancers to question aspects of their identity which they previously considered to be natural. This is enabled because heterosexuality is not hegemonic.

> If I was in another field, I could see myself as being a heterosexual man because that's how the social norm and social expectation would be. It would be much easier to fit into that. Being in a place that is more creative you know, there are plenty of gay people already and it's well known that dance has many gay dancers. So I was like OK, you know. (Andy, bisexual, 22-30)

Andy's commentary suggests that sexuality, and in this case bisexuality, is constructed and heavily influenced by the social context social actors act in. Monro argued that there are two ways of understanding gender and sexual identities: 'fixed or essentialised on the one hand and fluid, mutable, and sometimes minimal (beyond categories) identities on the other' (2015:4). Indeed some participants talked about their gender and sexuality as essential, natural or fixed. Elliot, for example, said:

> Since I was in primary school as a person I was very feminine and I had so much bullying throughout my life for the way I was moving, my hands, my voice, my expressions, my choices, dance, ballet, clothes. […] I didn't choose to be gay, I didn't choose to fall in love with men. I didn't choose my emotions. (Elliot, gay, 18-21)

Elliot suggested that his sexuality, gender and other aspects of his identity feel deeply rooted in him. As such, they cannot perhaps be changed. Likewise, Craig talked about himself as *being* feminine. As he said femininity is something that he 'brings naturally'. As such, it is something which he finds 'harder to separate because you know, it's something that you bring of yourself and it's harder to undo because it's you' (Craig, gay, 18-21). Others, such as Andy however, discussed these elements of their social identity in such a way which suggests fluidity and fragmentation. Andy suggested that his identification as a bisexual man was influenced by the environment he acted and the unwritten norms that characterised this. Since the context of performing arts has been produced through time as gay-concentrated and as accepting towards gay and bisexual men (Dolan, 2010; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014), experimentation is possible and in some cases encouraged.

> I trained as a ballet dancer and when I got my first job in a ballet company it was quite a lot of pressure, it was quite a strong gay community there so I think that probably for a period of time I began to start feeling a bit uncertain what my orientation was. […] I don't think I ever considered myself gay but I suppose I kind of slipped into the age. I had a lot of gay friends. […] ultimately there were times I questioned my sexuality but that was sort of a long time ago. All the relationships I have had were with women. (Tom, mostly straight, 40+)

Being immersed in dance and being part of a sphere with a 'strong gay community' introduced informants, such as Tom, to new potentialities. Alan also said that being around so many non-heterosexual people 'makes you wonder, wait am I [gay]?' (straight, 18-21). These claims suggest that sexuality is fluid and influenced by the contexts and encounters people find themselves in (Goffman, 1959). Yet, it should be mentioned that despite the questioning that this sphere enables, most participants located themselves within a largely binary framework for sexuality where the only viable options are heterosexuality and (its opposite) homosexuality. With the exception of two participants who identified as bisexual (Andy, 22-30) and mostly straight (Tom, 40+), all others identified as *either* gay *or* straight regardless of whether they went through periods where they were unsure about what their sexuality was. Hence, male dancers might be able to reflect on their identities and transgress gender norms and heteronormativity (Berlant and Warner, 1997), but they still do this within the constraints of the prevailing binary framework, which makes homosexuality and heterosexuality the only available, or most prevailing, sexualities.

Robinson and Hockey argued that feminised environments 'can provoke flexibility among men who otherwise and elsewhere might be unlikely to question the specificity of their taken-for-granted masculinity and its associated privileges' (2011:117-118). This study's findings reinforce their argument but also demonstrate that the same can be argued in relation to sexuality. The fact that heterosexuality is not hegemonic enables dancers to reflect on their sexuality and question parts of their identity that they previously took for granted. This suggests that sexuality is also (at least partially) socially constructed. As such, it is influenced by the social contexts individuals act in and the norms that define these. This strengthens claims made by symbolic interactionists (Blumer, 1954; Goffman, 1959) and demonstrates the importance

of interactions, actions and the nature of encounters when it comes to negotiations of gender and sexuality.

However, these are not the only factors which influence gender and sexuality (re)negotiations. As Chris said:

> The last few years in my high school no one was gay, I didn't know any gay people from where I was from so I found that I was very scared to come out. I knew inside that I was [gay] but I was still dating girls and I felt that there was a connection between me and them but maybe not sexually. So when I moved to London there were people in my year and the year above who were out, gay and very proud and it made me realise that this was a place that I could fit in and I could feel comfortable with telling people. […] it was very accepting and easy to come out at [dancing] school. (Chris, gay, 18-21)

Some informants referred to their movement from small cities into places such as London as an additional condition which enabled them to 'feel free for the first time' (Tim, gay, 22-30). It was then that Tim, for example, realised that he could 'be whoever he wanted to be' in terms of his sexuality, gender and other parts of his identity. According to Doderer, urban spaces enable more opportunities for some LGBTQ people to 'live their identity and sexuality openly' (2011:432). Weeks named Brighton, London and Blackpool, amongst other big cities in the UK, as places where diversity is welcomed. In these places, he argued, 'lesbians and gays are an intimate and welcomed part of the urban scene' (2007:146).

Thus, dancers' involvement in dance, maturing, introduction to new social settings and movement to larger urban spaces with stronger LGBTQ cultural and political scenes created possibilities which were previously non-existent (for a discussion on this topic see: Bell and Valentine, 1994; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Brown, Browne and Lin, 2007). Overall, dance institutions were perceived, experienced and reproduced as contexts where gay and bisexual men could belong. Dance's backspace spaces are amongst the few contexts where homosexuality and bisexuality are as common, and equally valued, as heterosexualities are. Thus, in dance institutions, at least in the backstage spaces, experimentation, self-reflection and questioning are possible, welcomed and potentially encouraged.

Imagined Masculinity and the Undoing of Gender

> I think that my idea of being a male and being masculine is not that of the bloke. I don't want to be a bloke so I am perfectly fine being a male camp man I guess sometimes. (Richard, gay, 31-40)

Robinson and Hockey suggested that men in feminised environments find opportunities 'to stand back, reflexively, from the more pervasive or taken-for-granted dimensions of masculinity itself' (2011:117). Indeed, this argument is reinforced through this study's findings. As will be demonstrated in this section, there were differences between that which informants understood masculinity to be in this culture and society –I refer to this as imagined masculinity- and the ways they perceived themselves. Many informants were critical of conventional notions of masculinity and they consciously distanced themselves from such paradigms. For example, Matt said:

> It's something for me about understanding a permission I might have to feel aggression or anger or those things that kind of sit traditionally in a kind of male arena. You have to be able and willing to fight. There's this interesting phrase they use in this sex film [Sex at Dawn] which is the 'flintstonization', this idea of identifying with the cave man and that's male. And I understand myself in some way on the effeminate side that there's an emotional connection or a willingness to be vulnerable or those kind of things but I struggle with the fact that that has to be part of an effeminate side. I think I am questioning it. (straight, 22-30)

There have been claims that the nature of gender, and particularly masculinity, is changing (Anderson, 2009; Anderson and McCormack, 2015; Bridges, 2014). Indeed, these claims are reinforced through this study's findings. Through using the term 'imagined masculinity', this section demonstrates informants' understandings of masculinity in this society and culture, without though framing these as hegemonic. Like Risman (2009) who suggested that instead of trying to reinvent new masculinities or femininities we should rather focus on how traditional gender norms lose their currency, this section develops the concept of imagined masculinity to analyse the ways informants challenged or problematised dominant notions of gender, and particularly masculinity.

Matt was one of the informants who, as he said, is involved in gender politics and produces work that is often concerned with gender issues. Matt's

commentary raises a number of issues worthy of discussion. First, Matt talked about masculinity as being related to 'aggression or anger' as well as the 'will to fight'. These are qualities which have been traditionally associated with men and masculinity and have been promoted as elements that men naturally 'possess' (Anderson, 2005, 2009; Connell, 2005; Reeser, 2010). The ability to fight also refers to bodies which need to be strong and muscular and bodies which can cope with, or inflict, pain. Strength, prowess and bravery have at least since the 18th century been 'naturalised' as qualities that men (should) have (Connell, 1993, 2005; Forth, 2008; Weeks, 2014). This, as we have seen in chapter 4, was the outcome of the conflicts of that time, the formation of new class systems and new intersections between gender and class.

In addition, Matt commented on emotions, emotionality and vulnerability as qualities which are situated in 'the feminine side'. During fieldwork, I was observing a rehearsal at Chorotheatro where Philip, the choreographer, and Simon, one of the dancers, were discussing the piece they were practicing. At the beginning of the rehearsal, Philip told Simon the following: 'the piece was first created to show masculinity, but it was the exact opposite, he [the role Simon had in the show] was trying to show weakness and vulnerability' (Field diary notes, Chorotheatro, 8/4/2014). Like Matt, Philip suggests through this commentary that masculinity is thought of as the opposite of 'weakness and vulnerability'. This can be explained if we think that historically, expressing emotions and vulnerability came to be seen as weaknesses, unsuitable for strong, 'impenetrable men' (Buchbinder, 2013; Connell, 1993, 2005).

Nevertheless, whilst such elements are reproduced as part of that which they see 'masculinity' to be, informants such as Matt questioned their validity. This suggests a movement away from these understandings and conscious self-reflection. Many theorists argued that in modernity and postmodernity there have been more possibilities for greater self-reflection (Adkins, 2000; Giddens, 1991). Since society is changing, more 'inclusive' masculinities or other less rigid forms than the past can proliferate (Anderson, 2005, 2009; Risman, 2009). This is an example of that shift. Matt distances himself from these understandings; he problematises prevailing gender binaries and the qualities which are associated

with these. It can be thus suggested that Matt engages in 'gender undoing' (Deutsch, 2007).

Paul, another participant, reinforced Matt's claims but also added ageing as a factor which challenges these dynamics.

> I would say [that masculinity is] the bravado that covers up emotion, the banter, the comedy banter, the comedy which can be cutting, the comedy [that] can cover the chit chat, the da da da that cuts off, suppresses emotion apart from anger. I think that that is a trait that's masculine […]. I think being right has something to do with it and I think the focus being on how you will be perceived, so the projection of yourself is through the stereotype of being strong physically, emotionally, mentally, whatever and the tactics to achieve that, you know? Because you can be quite strong, moody and strong. This I think is masculine or the traits of being masculine and yeah, it's interesting when all the builders get older they are not so masculine. They are a lot more open, maybe because of age or maybe because their bodies don't work anymore and they have to change because they have no choice. And my uncle yeah is one of those masculine [men] and he has done, been everything. Prison, two families, but he is that amazing man, he has changed as well, you know because of his body, the hospital and stuff. (straight, 31-40)

As Paul suggested as men grow old and their bodies cannot handle the physical demands they lose their 'power', both in terms of bodily capacity and masculine privilege. This is aligned to Spector-Mersel's theory which argued that 'masculinities are bound to social clocks' (2006:70); as men move into different phases of their lives their level of abilities and, hence, (masculine) status shifts with them. This is an interesting argument because it signifies how changes of the body and the ways that the body is experienced result in changes in men's subjectivities and ways of experiencing themselves as weaker or less masculine.

In addition to physical strength, Paul commented on that emotional and mental strength which can be related to Matt's commentary on vulnerability. Also, Paul referred to builders as an example of whom he sees as being masculine. Other participants such as Robert also referred to 'working class professions [such as] builders, policemen, not theatre, not contemporary dance' (gay, 40+) as being masculine. Builders working in construction sites are involved in manual labour whilst the profession of building is very class-bound, Thiel argued (2012). This

can also explain the reasons that working class boys are less likely to be introduced to dance (see also chapter 5).

In a converse manner to dance, manual labour is predominately male-dominated, male-concentrated and class bound. Hence, perhaps unsurprisingly, both Paul and Robert's commentaries refer to masculinity as being interlinked with social class and particularly working-class men. Buchbinder also argued that traditionally 'men are deemed to use their bodies' (2013:123). While referring to contemporary culture which glorifies 'well-shaped muscular bodies' he suggested that until recently well-shaped muscular male bodies signified working-class masculinity and manual labour. This demonstrates that the connections amongst certain bodies, social classes and genders, which have been the result of various socio-cultural developments and historical events, are still, at least partially, relevant today (also see chapter 4).

Another aspect of imagined masculinity was related to some bodily performances, which were seen as signifying aggression and dominance.

> Certainly where I grew up [Glasgow] that [masculinity] was aggression, a lot of it. You probably see it a lot in Glasgow as well where the guys will sort of puff their chest out and walk around like that, show a bit of strength and they will get eye winkles by their twenties cause they walk around angry. That's really showing their masculinity and that's the absolute antithesis of what I was as a kid. Those people in my age, the guys, were going out and were playing, acting, but that was what they think that were the most masculine qualities they have. And they would exaggerate them in what they said and what they did. You would see them taking this up and using it more and more and turning into the adults that they are: aggressive, [with] physical dominance, less friendly attitude and faces. (William, gay, 22-30)

William's references to masculinity can be analysed through Goffman's dramaturgical framework (1959). By 'puffing their chests out' these men 'managed' their bodily performances and exaggerated qualities of their bodies to create the effect of being strong, 'aggressive, physically dominant, and less friendly' men (William, gay, 22-30). These men managed their image to come across as, what might be read as, traditionally masculine; to convince their audience and arguably themselves too (Cooper, 2013), that they are the character they present. These practices, however, as William suggested,

influence the adults they have become; these practices became embodied and part of their 'personal front', which follows them wherever they are (Goffman, 1959:34). These became part of their 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990). According to Bourdieu, habitus is 'the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product' (1990:56). Hence, the imprinting of aggression as a signifier of masculinity remains inscribed onto their bodies and whole being. As such, it influences their ways of handling their bodies, their behaviours and practices which exemplify their past. This is further discussed in the following chapter.

Finally, a theme that emerged was concerned with the intersection between masculinity and heterosexuality. As George said, 'to be seen as masculine you also must be straight. If you are not seen as masculine you are [assumed to be] gay' (gay, 22-30). A large majority of informants correlated homosexuality to male effeminacy and campness. In their vast majority, they referred to heterosexuality as a prerequisite for masculinity. They also used the words 'masculine' and 'straight', as well as 'feminine', 'effeminate', 'camp' and 'gay' interchangeably; they therefore seemed to understand these as interrelated and overlapping. Whilst sexuality is interrelated with gender (Butler, 1999; Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002), gender and sexuality are not the same. Whilst gender can be partially read and communicated, sexuality is not something visible. Yet, it is assumed that certain gender performances correspond to certain sexualities and the other way around. This is evident in the following excerpt:

> I wouldn't say I am the most masculine guy. Take Josh for example. […] He is very masculine, very straight.
>
> *What makes Josh so masculine?*
>
> I feel like just because he is very built [up] he already comes across very strong physically and then the way he speaks to people you can tell he is very straight, masculine. I feel like with more feminine guys who are not as masculine they would say things like 'hey girl'. You know what I mean, the way they speak you can tell if someone is masculine or not.
>
> *I notice you refer to straight guys as masculine guys*
>
> [Interrupting me he said] I would say that straight guys are more

> masculine than gay guys just because I feel like gay guys, me being one, have feminine traits in how we say things. A straight guy and masculine guy will be like 'hey are you ok?' [stops smiling, deepening his voice]. But a gay guy might be like 'hey girl' and 'how are you' [in high pitch voice whilst smiling] and hit the girl on the bum or pull the face whereas a straight, masculine guy wouldn't. I would say that's a general thing. (Chris, gay, 18-21)

Chris's argument was repeated by most participants. Chris altered his bodily and verbal performances as he tried to communicate how straight and gay men would act. He employed a 'serious' performance that would be read as conventionally masculine to describe straight masculinity and a slightly effeminate performance to describe the way a gay man would talk and present himself. The fact that he was able to manage his performances and adopt a conventionally masculine speech style suggests that gender is, at least partially, a performance that can be communicated through bodily clues and other practices during interactions.

Chris's, as well as George's previous commentary, suggest that gender and its correspondence to a sex are sustained through heterosexuality and vice versa (see also Butler, 1999). Hence, when one's sex does not correspond to one's gender performances one is considered to be non-heterosexual. Since the prevailing opposite to heterosexuality is homosexuality, in these cases one is assumed to be gay. Also, when one does not identify as heterosexual it is assumed that one's gender will not correspond to one's sex; in this case it is assumed that gay men will be effeminate.

Finally, Chris's references to Josh's built body, appearance, vocal and bodily performances as qualities which enable him to come across as 'very strong physically, very straight, masculine' suggests that these are qualities which one can rehearse and acquire. Yet, they are often thought of as qualities which one has. This is significant if we consider that dancers are trained performers who are expected to be able to shift between roles for the purposes of onstage performances. They often embody 'masculine' characters onstage; yet when it comes to think about this in relation to their everyday lives, gender and sexuality are often seen as deriving from *within* their bodies rather than being the outcome of the stylisation of their bodies. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, despite that the majority of informants seemed to be equating gender with sexuality, a minority of informants, like Robert, problematised the direct links between gender and sexuality.

> When I go to the gym, I never see anyone being camp or even slightly effeminate. They all seem to be very over-masculine men and they are very muscular and very straight. They don't talk much, that is a definite. I always like gazing at them. And in dance school you get boys that are very camp and kind of out there.
>
> *In what ways?*
>
> Very outrageous and feminine and camping around and stuff. And some gay men aren't like that at all and some straight men can get very camp and some straight men are very butch. There are all different definitions. I think there is the cliché with the beard and they like football but I think there are all sort of kinds of men. (Robert, gay, 40+)

Whilst Robert began by reproducing previous statements, towards the end of the interview he appeared to be questioning the correlation between sexuality and gender. Robert's commentary suggests a more complex view of the situation. Robert takes a critical stance against dominant understandings and suggests that 'there are all sort of kinds of men'. Sexuality and gender, in this case, do not necessarily correspond to each other. His argument also suggests that men regardless of their sexuality might perform conventional masculinity or challenge it by 'undoing gender' (Deutsch, 2007) and by engaging in 'creative self-invention' (Cooper, 2013). Such views though reflected the views of a minority of informants.

As has been demonstrated in this section, some informants actively distanced themselves from dominant notions of masculinity. There is therefore, for some men at least, a departure away from traditionally masculine ideals towards more 'inclusive', to use Anderson's term, attitudes and behaviours (2009). The findings of this study reinforce arguments about the changing nature of gender, and particularly masculinity (Anderson, 2009; Anderson and McCormack, 2015; Bridges, 2014) and demonstrate how reconfigurations of gender in the dance context, at least, are possible. As will be argued next, in the backstage spaces

of dance institutions these men are also able to perform gender in ways which do not comply with dominant gender norms.

Performing Gender: Messing About and Blurring the Boundaries

This section discusses informants' performances of gender in the backstage spaces of dance institutions. It analyses interactions, actions and practices during which these men 'undid' gender (Deutsch, 2007) by consciously or unconsciously problematizing gender binaries and the qualities which are associated with these.

Stella, in her discussion of lesbian women in Russia, argued that 'specific bodies and embodied performances are more likely to be recognisable and read as "lesbian/queer"' (2015:97). In a similar manner, this section provides examples of observation notes that describe embodied performances of male dancers which are likely to be read as gay and/or effeminate, and argues that these performances are enabled because dance institutions, at least in the backstage, are spaces that welcome such performances.

> At the beginning of the class, Jenny, one of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland students, said: 'we have this class and we are doing a part from the *All that Jazz*. Is there anyone who wants to participate?' Elliot jumped around looking extremely happy saying 'oh oh yeah me me me'. Elliot uses his hands quite a lot and drags his voice when he speaks. His movements and facial expressions are very theatrical, very animated. (Field diary notes, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 10/03/2014)

Dance is an environment where, as Robert said, 'you get boys that are very camp and kind of out there' (gay, 40+). Elliot, as can be seen in this extract, performs bodily movements and speaks in a way which can be perceived as effeminate. Hennen in his analysis of male effeminacy developed a typology of effeminacies, which consists of four main elements: 'political effeminacy', 'moral effeminacy', 'cosmetic effeminacy' and 'somatic effeminacy' (2008:49-51). This section engages with the latter, somatic effeminacy. Somatic effeminacy, according to Hennen, can be further broken down into 'kinesthetic' and 'anatomical' effeminacies.

Elliot's performance in the above extract can be discussed through Hennen's concept of kinesthetic effeminacy, which refers to when a 'man moves or uses his voice like a woman' (2008:51). Elliot's, like so many other dancers', presentation of self, his demeanour, comportment, speech style and movements can be read as effeminate. Dance, as a female-concentrated and feminised space, provides men the opportunity to challenge gender norms, reduce gender difference (Deutsch, 2007) and engage with the 'feminine' (see also Anderson, 2005, 2009; Deutsch, 2007; Mennesson, 2009, Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Robinson et al., 2011). Performances of femininity through the body -kinesthetic effeminacy- were very common in dance institutions. Another similar instance is presented in the following extract.

> The company laid a long red rug in the front of the studio as they were going to have guests and potential funders observing the rehearsals between 4.30-6.00pm. During the morning class, the dancers were in the studio and the instructors started arriving. Adam, one of the instructors, said to Arthur, another instructor, 'darling they got the red carpet out for you'. He kissed him on the cheek and hugged him. (Field Diary Notes, Scottish Ballet, 15/7/2014)

Adam during his interactions with dancers at Scottish Ballet came across as serious. He did not talk a lot, and he never joked with the dancers. He held a very professional manner. In the frontstage, he assumed a professional role. Yet, in the backstage, during his informal interactions with other staff members, he emphasised other parts of his social identity rather than his role of the instructor; in these instances, he too engaged in gender bending performances, used humor and speech style, which might be read as effeminate. Instances such as this one reinforce the division between the backstage and the frontstage as during informal interactions Adam, as well as many of the dancers of this study, presented different characters; these characters varied depending on the nature of interaction and people they interacted with.

Further, it should be noted that Adam was also present at some of the Royal Conservatoire's classes. During his interactions with the students, he presented a different character, he often joked and teased the students. His presentation of self was, thus, very different at Scottish Ballet and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. It was also different in the different spaces of the same institutions. These instances reinforce the validity of Goffman's framework which stresses

the importance of the setting that performances are given and the scene of interaction (1959). Another similar instance is described below:

> I arrived to the studio. I sat down in the front corner and was waiting for the class to start. Craig told me 'we are wearing matching socks today' [we were both wearing purple socks]. Everybody, including me, laughed. He was wearing a purple t-shirt and a purple sweatshirt. Jenny asked him 'did you plan the sweatshirt [so it matches with the colour of the socks]? Craig said 'yes' and everybody laughed again. He then pulled down his zipper and showed to everyone his purple t-shirt and leotards and said 'I wanted to get girly today'. (Field notes diary, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 12/03/2014)

Craig (gay, 18-21) was one of the participants who described themselves as 'a bit feminine'. By saying that 'I wanted to get girly today' and by acting to achieve that which can be read as an effeminate performance he showed a wilful 'staging' of aspects of femininity. Even though Craig's performances might be read as transgressive or gender bending, they still reproduce prevailing gender discourses, which equate certain genders with certain performances, behaviours and qualities. Such actions change the relationality of gender but still reproduce the prevailing binary framework where femininity is positioned as the opposite of masculinity.

Nevertheless, acting girly is enabled in this sphere. Craig's conscious actions position him as a 'conscious and rational being who is largely in control of his social performances' (Layder, 2006:76). Giddens argued that in modernity 'self-identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour' (1991:5) and suggested that in a diversity of options, the self is 'a reflexive project' (p.5). However, in this case, these reflexive processes occur, at least partially, because of the knowledge and unwritten rules that characterise dance institutions as organisational cultures.

Further, such processes occur because the practice of dance invites dancers to reflect on their image, presentation of self and so on. As Paul said:

> I am conscious of the image that I project […]. I think I am very conscious because I also work very visually and spatially and I am very attuned. This is the way my brain works and the way I learned and the way I see things and the way I learned to look, so I am very conscious of that all the time. […] [it depends on] who I am talking to in space

> and whether it's female or male definitely and whether the guy is gay or more feminine or more touchy or more open in other ways then I would change and I am aware of that. […] Same as my language. I become you know depending to who I am talking to my accent would change, become more posh, less posh. I was in Lidl car park this morning talking to builders asking if I could park there and all of the sadden I was like 'alright mate' you know [and imitates Glaswegian accent with deeper voice]. I suddenly went into let's just say I became more masculine, I put on an accent. So yeah, and now we are talking about dance and things and I become slightly more posh and camp, I do don't I? (Paul, straight, 31-40)

Paul suggested that as a performer who works spatially and visually he learned to think about, and reflect on, his onstage as well as everyday performances. This is a context which encourages social actors to be conscious of their performances and ways of coming across before others. It is therefore more likely that dancers will be more self-reflexive than people in other professions. Dancers are skilled performers; since their introduction to dance, they practise in front of a mirror. During their dancing journeys, they also take on a number of roles. This results in them knowing how they appear before others both in their work setting and outside of it. A similar claim was made by other performers too (Daniel, straight, 31-40; George, gay, 22-30; Richard, gay, 31-40; Robert, gay, 40+). These claims suggest that dancers can, at least partially, actively manage their presentation of self, with gender being part of that.

Also, being in a dance context enables Paul to be 'slightly more posh and camp' as he argued. Outside of work though, depending always on the encounter, he performs what might be read as conventional masculinity. This change relies on his aspiration to 'lead the audience to impute a self to a performed character' (Goffman, 1959:244). Gender can, therefore, be seen as 'a dramatic effect arising diffusively from a scene that is presented, and the crucial concern is whether it will be credited or discredited' (Goffman, 1959:245). Performances are thus contextual and it is important to study them as such (Cooper, 2013; Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Robinson et al., 2011). However, this is not to suggest that all aspects of gender are subject to change and conscious management. As will be argued in the following chapter some parts of our identities are embodied and thus not amendable to self-fashioning. In either case, dance as a context provides increased options compared to the outside-of-dance society. In its backstage spaces it invites dancers to be reflexive and

enables them to disrupt normative associations of certain performances with certain genders and sexes.

> At some point two female photographers who are probably part of the company's team came in the studio to video record the rehearsals and take some photos. Nobody was paying attention and everybody kept practicing as they always do. At some point Tim went to one of them and told her 'take some shots of me babes' and started posing. He used his hands quite a lot and he adopted what can be read as feminine poses. For example, in one of the poses he enacted, he had his legs slightly bent together and his hands placed on his knees, smiling quite excessively. During the afternoon, he kept posing for fun by showing/emphasizing his legs. Then he took the book Anna was reading during her break and started pretending that he was reading it in front of the camera. (Field Diary Notes, Scottish Ballet, 1/7/2014)

Tim during our interview said 'I like being expressive, I like entertaining people, I guess I like attention, I guess' (gay, 22-30). In the above extract we see this in practice. Tim placed himself at the centre of attention. He did that by, I felt, presenting himself in a feminine manner, by exaggerating his movements and facial expressions and by over-performing himself. He seemed to be performing movements which would be read as effeminate -kinesthetic effeminacy (Hennen, 2008). This was intentional and deliberate, intended to be a joke; hence, it could be suggested that his performance in this instance challenged gender norms and the association of certain genders with certain sexed bodies. It problematised the matrix. Tim's performances and their reading as effeminate might be also influenced by Tim's physique and comportment which might make him come across as effeminate. Hennen referred to this as anatomical effeminacy (2008).

Another instance where humor was used can be found in the following extract.

> The boys were practicing for the solo pieces they would be performing in the end of the year show. Bradley [straight, 18-21] was practicing his piece whilst Craig [gay, 18-21] and Carl [straight, 18-21] were waiting for their turn to come. Whilst they were standing waiting for Bradley to finish his solo they began to imitate feminine balletic poses. They tilted their necks, and placed their hands with their fingers pointing together, on their front. They were pretending to be the princesses who were waiting in the corner of the studio for Bradley, who had the role of the prince, to finish his solo. Adam [gay, 31-40] said something like 'the princess. Charming!' and Craig replied

> ‘careful you, the princess listens’ [referring to himself] whilst continuing to stand as he did and they both laughed. (Field diary notes, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 26/2/2014)

This is another instance where we see humour and ironic enactments of the feminine. The encounter described in the above commentary demonstrates how men in this sphere can make jokes about gender by engaging with representations of what can be read as femininity. In these spaces new articulations of gender and gender relations are possible. Especially Adam’s reference to Craig as princess and Craig’s positive response to this comment suggest that such behaviours are accepted and normalised in this context. It should be mentioned that both Adam and Craig are gay; it can be suggested that Adam’s calling of Craig as ‘princess’ and at another instance ‘doll’ are practices which are welcomed and shared amongst them. As Richard also said:

> there is a certain complicity that I have with gay choreographers or dancers.
>
> *What do you mean with complicity?*
>
> I don’t know how to explain it but because he is gay and I am gay there are certain jokes, cultural references, ways of being, degree of campness that I can relax myself. I would hold these back with a heterosexual male choreographer or someone that doesn’t belong to that subculture. So when I am working with a gay choreographer I sort of immediately know that there is this sort of complicity. (gay, 31-40)

Like in the previous extract, in this one we see the ways that one’s sexuality influences one’s interactions. Adam interacts differently with Craig who is gay, and Richard argued that his interactions with other gay men in this space are different from those that he has with heterosexual dancers. However, since dance is a space which consists of relatively large numbers of gay and bisexual men this ‘subculture’ is made known and men in this sphere are familiarised with it. This invites them to question assumptions they have had with regard to sexuality and gender.

Overall, gender, within this context at least, can be seen as fluid. Gender performances change as performers move between different interactions and settings of action. In either case though, this fluidity is partially enabled because

in this context male effeminacy, non-binary or queer performances are accepted and normalised. This claim is supported by participants such as George.

> George came to me outside the main studio during the break and asked me about my study. […] He told me 'I can come one day wearing mascara, it's ok, it's normal but if a girl comes and she is masculine it will not be ok; it's ok to be a feminine man in ballet but not a masculine woman'. He said that 'we [male dancers] can wear make-up and enjoy the lights, and the glamour and it's fine but it couldn't go the other way around [for female dancers to be masculine]'. (Field diary notes, Scottish Ballet, 1/07/2014)

In this extract, George raises many interesting issues worthy of discussion. I will however, for the time being focus only on the possibilities dance offers for male dancers to engage in feminine performances and actions that reduce gender difference. As George suggested 'it's ok to be a feminine man in ballet'. Male dancers can become involved in 'creative self-invention', to use Cooper's term (2013). They are able to appear as camp and feminine, to wear make-up and 'enjoy the glamour'. Practices such as wearing makeup and being 'covered in glitter' (Ben, gay, 22-30) are understood to be 'signalling effeminacy' (Hennen, 2008:50); Hennen referred to this as 'cosmetic effeminacy' (2008:50). This is something that is enabled in this sphere. Such performances disrupt and confuse normative associations of make-up, for example, with women and problematise the prevailing gender order.

Brickell argued that we should consider gender and the gendered self as 'a social accomplishment through its presentation and performance, within the context of cultural resources, prohibitions and compulsions' (2003:172). Indeed, as has been demonstrated, the backstage spaces of dance institutions offer male dancers certain cultural resources which enable them to present themselves in ways which might have been otherwise contested. They enable them to challenge heterosexual hegemony, experiment, question norms and engage in performances which might have otherwise been contested.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, there are important differences in relation to onstage performances as we move from ballet to contemporary dance. Ballet shows, most often, display gender relations which date back to the 19th century; as a result, male dancers appear onstage as dominating and female dancers as passive and as relying on the their male counterparts. In contrast, contemporary dance shows have more resonance with contemporary society. As these often engage with representations of social issues and social phenomena, in some cases contemporary dance performances challenge prevailing gender norms and heteronormativity.

Further, significant insights can be gained as we turn our attention towards the backstage of dance institutions. Robinson and Hockey asked 'if gendered organisational cultures contribute to wider processes of identity formation' (2011:35). As has been demonstrated in this chapter, the gendered attachments the sphere of dance has can contribute to processes of gender and sexuality identity formation. Dance institutions' backstage spaces are contexts in which gay informants felt free to 'come out' and environments which enabled them to fit in. In the backstage spaces there exist opportunities for dancers to reflect on aspects of their identities, and question parts of themselves such as sexuality and gender.

Backstage spaces also enable them to take a critical stance towards (dominant) understandings of masculinity. They can 'undo gender' and become involved in practices and performances which either reduce gender difference or change the relationality of gender. However, most participants' accounts were created in ways that reproduce a largely binary framework where people are/can be *either* masculine *or* feminine, and *either* gay *or* straight. Besides two informants, all others' experiences were discussed within the homosexual/heterosexual divide. Even though many informants experienced their sexualities in ways which suggest fluidity and fragmentation, they still adopted the largely used labels of homosexuality/heterosexuality to discuss themselves and their identities.

Lastly, the nature of these dancers' profession and the conscious reflection, questioning and performing of different characters it involves, makes them self-

conscious, able to reflect, and sometimes alter, at least partially, their performances and ways of coming across. Their dance practice turns them into explicitly conscious performers who are aware of the ways they come across before others. This enables, at least some of them, to actively manage their image depending on the nature of the interaction; it enables them to try to convey a character which will be interpreted by their audience as ‘appropriate’. However, as it will argued in the following chapter, not all aspects of our identities can be consciously thought of and self-monitored. Gender is also embodied and some aspects of it are enduring.

Chapter 7
Embodying Gender, Dancing Gender

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed some characteristics of the onstage and the backstage to uncover some of the hidden tensions that characterise the sphere of dance. The discussion focused on male dancers' actions and interactions in the backstage spaces of dance institutions, and the world of dance as enabling, and often inviting, male dancers to reflect on themselves, question dominant understandings of gender and challenge heterosexual hegemony. This chapter turns its attention to the relations between the backstage, frontstage and onstage. As such, it aims to discuss aspects of gender and sexuality as embodied and, thus, evident in backstage interactions, frontstage sessions and onstage dance performances.

Considering that professional dancers are trained actors, and thus skilled performers, who are expected to embody different characters for different shows, this chapter approaches informants' backstage selves as distinctive and discontinuous from the characters they rehearse and perform in the frontstage and during onstage dance shows. However, as will be demonstrated, parts of themselves are continuous and remain present as they move from the backstage to the frontstage and the onstage. Considering that onstage and backstage characters are communicated through the same medium -dancers' bodies- this chapter engages with relevant theoretical strands to discuss aspects of bodies which are amenable to self-conditioning, but also those which are not. It discusses the dancing or performing body as one that is expected to be retrained to meet the several prerequisites of the different roles required by dance performances, but also as the carrier of one's knowledge or history –embodied social structures- which might limit such capacities for amendment. It discusses these issues by, however, emphasising that performing and acting is part of dancers' everyday realities.

There are arguments which suggest that masculinities, or the masculine self, vary as individuals move across temporal and spatial contexts (Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Spector-Mersel, 2006). There are also theories which argue that embodied subjectivities are continuous through time and across settings and thus not as easily amendable (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990). This chapter engages with such approaches and explores debates on bodies, embodiment and subjectivity.

The discussion which follows is developed in two main sections. The first, *Dancing Bodies: Bodies Dancers Have and Bodies Dancers Are,* discusses elements of corporeal bodies which can influence dancers' suitability for certain roles and thus might affect their career trajectories. The second, *From Backstage to Onstage Performances*, focuses on gender and sexuality and investigates the intersections, continuities and discontinuities between dancers' every day selves, or the selves they perform during backstage interactions, and the roles or characters they get to perform onstage.

Dancing Bodies: Bodies Dancers Have and Bodies Dancers Are

Robinson and Hockey (2011) in their exploration of the 'relationship between workplace identities and the body' drew on a distinction between the 'body we have' and the 'body we are'. The first refers to 'the object body that we might alter in some way […] the body through which identities may be claimed or imposed' (p.79). The second refers to the concept of embodiment which enables us to 'understand the dialectical processes of identification as they unfold within particular social contexts' (p.79). This chapter discusses both. It begins by analysing some corporeal elements of dancers' bodies which can be 'trained' and altered. Whenever appropriate it discusses these in relation to gender and sexuality and the ways that certain bodies invoke certain genders and/or sexualities. It also discusses the subject body and the ways that embodied aspects of informants' gender and sexuality might influence their frontstage practices.

Dancers' corporeal bodies and their appearance, size and shape can be approached as elements of their 'personal front' which follows them as they take on different roles, move between contexts and encounters (Goffman, 1959). These elements, informants suggested, can influence their trajectories. Ballet dancers overwhelmingly referred to their bodies and the possibilities these allow in relation to their dance practice. While contemporary dance performers seemed to value other qualities such as 'realness' or 'honesty' more (see also chapter 5), ballet dancers argued that there are onstage characters which some people are better suited to perform than others. This happens because, as they suggested, some dancers' corporeal bodies are aligned with the bodily images which have been established as ideal in the ballet culture (see also chapter 4). Homans described these bodies as 'long, lean and elegantly proportioned' (2010:26). Having the 'right' body, therefore, acts as a form of asset which creates further possibilities for these dancers. Nevertheless, this also creates forms of inequality with certain bodies being perceived as unsuitable for ballet.

Most ballet dancers seemed to be aware of their corporeal bodies, their shape, height and appearance and whether these were close to, or distanced from, ideal balletic bodies. They were, therefore, aware of the ways that their corporeal bodies can affect their dance practice. Dancers more widely, and ballet dancers more specifically, learn to reflect on their bodies and self-image from the time they begin to train professionally. Elliot, for example, while talking about the pressure young dancers have to comply with balletic bodily ideals said:

> [a negative element of studying dance is that you are] seeing yourself in the mirror every day and you are in the same shape and you are like oh I need to lose more weight here and there, I need to be more strong and things. (gay, 18-21)

Elliot and his colleagues learn to be conscious of their body image. They are encouraged to reflect on their body image and presentation of self (Goffman, 1959). When their image does not comply with the balletic ideals, they are encouraged to take action to modify their bodies through exercising and dieting, for example. This though refers to aspects of the body which are amendable and

can be controlled. Other aspects of bodies, such as height, shape, colour and so on are not, or not wholly, amendable.

Bodies matter in all dance forms as dance is created and communicated mainly through dancers' bodies. Ballet, however, is perhaps the most 'formalised' dance genre; it has a very long history which influences that which seems 'ideal' not only in terms of bodies, but also in terms of performances of gender, sexuality and so on. Therefore, bodily characteristics and capacities have potentially more significance in ballet rather than any other dance genre.

> To do ballet you also need to be given the right body. Have legs and feet and turn out. […] I think I didn't realise until I got a job how good it is to be tall. Finding good tall guys is quite hard. I think I do have a good body but I think it can always be better. You need to learn to be satisfied with what you have. (Alan, straight, 18-21)

Alan commented on bodily capacities such as height and good turnouts[34] as aspects of his biological body which can benefit his career trajectory. The first cannot be amended whilst the latter can be partially improved through exercises which can loosen up dancers' joints and strengthen their muscles. Likewise, another participant, Carl, who referred to himself as being 'small' physically, said:

> It [my height] is a problem I have to deal with. Because the ideal in quotes ballet dancer is much taller than I am. But there are very many dancers that are my size and even smaller. So it's not like absurd but it's just harder for us. (straight, 18-21)

Carl was one of the shortest participants and Alan one of the tallest. Whilst they represent the two extremes, the fact that they commented on their height as either benefiting or restricting their practice implies that biological qualities can influence their trajectories. As Witz et al. argued, 'the body as it is apparently most immediately apprehended (size, shape, bearing and so on) is materialised within fields of social relations' (2003:40). By that they meant that elements of the body and 'embodied dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1984 in Witz et al., 2003), which signify certain genders, class practices and so on, acquire value within certain 'fields of social relations' (Witz et al., 2003:40), organisations and

[34] Outward rotation of the legs from the hip. This is necessary for most poses and movements.

employment settings. In a similar manner, dancers' body shape and size are materialised and acquire value which either enables or restricts their possibilities as dancers. However, Carl's reference to the 'ideal in quotes ballet dancers' might suggest that he questions these ideals and their validity today.

Nevertheless, biological qualities of bodies matter in ballet; Scottish Ballet for example requires from artists who are interested in joining the company a 'full CV giving details of height, weight, nationality and professional training and experience […] a head and shoulders [picture] shot, a clear photograph in arabesque[35] and in a jump' (Scottish Ballet, 2016). Ballet dancers' commentaries, and the formal requirements ballet companies have, suggest the importance of material bodies in ballet.

In addition to appearance and the proportions of dancers' bodies, dancers' performances of gender and sexuality also seem to matter in dance. Considering that dancers are trained performers and skilled actors it was interesting to investigate their views on their own, and their colleagues', performances of gender and sexuality. Alan in the following quote, for instance, described a male dancer who 'danced like a girl'. Alan commented on both biological and socially learned elements of this dancer's body to argue that his physique, movement style and appearance signified femininity rather than the required masculinity.

> When I did the competition there was a male dancer who was great, super super gay and amazing dancer but he danced like a girl.
>
> *Can you describe that [how he danced like a girl] just to get an image?*
>
> It was partly also because he was very petit and he was very quick and I think it's almost something that he might not be able to change about his dancing but he danced like a girl. I think if you imagine someone talking, the way that he dances is the way that he would talk, which is like 'oh hey how are you' [using high pitch voice, smiling excessively, dragging his words]. I think it was more the wrist, the wrists were weaker, he wouldn't make strong positions. He would perform in a way that was like more feminine in the fact that he wouldn't just smile he would be like [making a big smile with his lips and opening his eyes as wide as possible]. It's difficult. I know some

[35] One of ballet poses where the dancer stands on one leg and extends the other at the back. Hands can be in various positions.

> people who are gay who are great [dancers]. They wouldn't walk on stage and see that that they are gay there because they are men on stage but I think it is important for people no matter what their sexual orientation is when they are on stage to be a man [emphasises the words 'a man']. If you wanted to see a girl you would use a girl. I think also he had very high legs and he had a more feminine physique in the fact that he had skinny legs and arched feet and he was flexible, which are more female attributes but lots of men have them. (Alan, straight, 18-21)

Alan referred to this dancer's high skinny legs, flexibility and petit physique as attributes that are less appropriate for male dancers and more appropriate for female dancers. His physique, very high legs and arched feet, are elements which cannot be amended; these are attributes which signify 'anatomical effeminacy' (Hennen, 2008:51). Other attributes, however, are socially learned and influenced by this dancer's dancing background or his 'dancing habitus'; nevertheless, Alan claimed that this dancer might not be able to change or alter his dancing because of his physique. His dancing style and movement are, therefore, seen as 'natural' and thus not amendable.

Wainwright et al. (2006), in their effort to reinterpret Bourdieu's theory of habitus, argued that dancers have an 'individual', an 'institutional' and a 'choreographic' habitus, each of which influences their trajectories in the field of ballet. According to them, 'individual habitus' refers to the physical capital or physical capacities of dancers' bodies. This is then developed through the training they receive, which shapes dancers' movement, dance style and so on; dancers' training results in the acquisition of an 'institutional habitus'. Dancers' individual and institutional habitus influence their 'choreographic habitus', or the roles dancers are assigned to. Their theorisation of these three distinctive, but interrelated, elements can be useful to understand, in this case, how dancers' bodily capacities and institutional training impact their overall presence onstage and ways of coming across when they dance. However, Wainwright et al.'s division of habitus into three types can be read as a misinterpretation of Bourdieu's initial definition of habitus.

According to Bourdieu (1984; 1990) habitus derives from an individual's overall engagement with the world and is conditioned by the individual's social background. Habitus, as Layder argued, is 'a cognitive and motivating mechanism which incorporates the influence of a person's social context and

provides a conduit or medium through which information and resources are transmitted to the activities that they perform' (2006:195). As such, it cannot be divided into categories or seen as distinctive elements that can be separately studied. It rather reflects an individual's history, background, knowledge and so on, which are communicated through an individual's presentation, movement, thoughts and whole being. Hence, what can be suggested here is that this dancer's corporeal body, training and his embodied performances of gender influence what might be approached as his 'dancing habitus'. His 'dancing habitus' signifies his overall engagement with this practice and it is influenced by his social background and history. His background thus, both in regards to gender and his dance practice, is communicated through the way he stands, dances, talks, and so on.

Whilst Alan talked about this dancer as being unable to change these elements, other informants' accounts suggested greater creativity, self-reflexivity and self-monitoring (Giddens, 1991), which enable them to alter their performances of self as they move between different social contexts and encounters. This is discussed later.

Alan's claim suggests continuity between this dancer's offstage self and frontstage presence. Likewise, Steven mentioned a piece a colleague of his choreographed and produced with Scottish Ballet dancers a few years ago. He then explained that the same choreographic piece was performed by a group of young male community dancers to illustrate that the ways in which a dance piece will come across depends on the dancers who perform it.

> [Referring to his colleague] He'd been commissioned to choreograph a piece with Scottish Ballet […]. The first section was all men, the second section was all women, the third section a duet and the fourth section was the whole company. When he came back […] he was a bit disappointed with the male dancers in Scottish Ballet.
>
> *Why is that?*
>
> He described them as mincing. It was a dance piece about fishermen, young fishermen. Really tough and hard life, that was about being away fishing and I think he felt that all of it there was pretty and a bit feminine. It wasn't masculine enough so when he finished choreographing with the ballet company he said I am going to

> choreograph it on the boys of […] [referring to the community company] and he did the exact same piece. He didn't change anything at all and I thought he was crazy but it was true the boys [of the community company] had just more masculine aesthetic about just the material. (Steven, straight, 40+)

Steven, like Alan, suggested that dancers' backstage performances and the way they move in everyday life are reflected onstage when they embody a character for a show. This suggests that some parts of people's identity are not wholly amendable; rather, they are embodied and thus visible as they move between encounters, contexts and spaces. These claims reinforce Bourdieu's theory of habitus which suggests that individuals' history is embodied and thus evident in their actions, body handling and so on (1990). Individuals' 'bodily hexis' (Bourdieu, 1990), or their embodied knowledge and history, remains apparent as individuals move between contexts.

Steven's commentary suggests that the dancers of the community dance company were able to perform the same movements as the ballet dancers but did so in a more masculine manner. He argued that the movement style and comportment of Scottish Ballet's male dancers made the piece seem 'pretty' and 'feminine'. The balletic discipline and movement became embodied and, as such, manifested through their daily stylisation of movement, their dance movement and practice. In this sense, dancers' backstage, frontstage and various onstage bodily practices and actions, whilst discontinuous and distinctive, are still seen as integrated. Steven's argument suggests that parts of dancers' offstage identity intersect with, and are reflected during, their frontstage and onstage performances. As such, participants' balletic practice, which is very distinctive because of the movements ballet entails, becomes more visible than perhaps other types of physical training participants have had.

Ballet training also strengthens some muscles more than others and influences dancers' overall posture, movement style, shape and body handling which make them distinctive from non-dancers or dancers that practice other genres. This embodied knowledge –their bodily hexis- is then seen as signifying certain genders and sexualities. David, a ballet dancer said

> Perhaps we [male dancers] look different, a little more elegant than other people. Maybe people can perceive that as feminine. Because of

> everything. The way you walk around, the way you hold your head. If I see a dancer, I can see a dancer from miles away and it doesn't take much [to understand he is a dancer]. It's not a rugby player! He is obviously a dancer. Is that more feminine? Perhaps, is it? […] we are definitely more elegant. (straight, 31-40)

David's commentary describes what Bourdieu conceptualised as habitus and bodily hexis. Dancers' long periods of training and practice of ballet influences their whole image and presentation of self. Their 'dance habitus' is reflected in their dance practice, onstage performances and their backstage presentation of self. Their embodied knowledge of ballet is well imprinted on their bodies and their dance background is communicated and reflected to others. Dancers' bodies, and more specifically ballet dancers' bodies, become more elevated, airy or 'elegant', as David argued. Their elevated posture and straight back, long neck and flexibility, which after many years of training feel 'natural', are in fact instructed and acquired from their involvement in dance. Hence, dancers' training shapes their overall presentation of self from the onstage to the backstage. Considering though that dancers are skilled performers and are expected to be able to transform themselves onstage and embody a variety of different roles, this is an issue that needs further exploration.

From Backstage to Onstage Performances

It is well established that gender intersects with sexuality; heterosexuality is maintained through the reproduction of gender binaries, whilst the binary of femininity/masculinity is reinforced through heterosexuality (Butler, 1999; Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002). As has been argued in the previous chapter many informants equated gay men with effeminacy and suggested that for one to be seen as masculine one must be straight (see also chapter 6). This section discusses this issue in relation to informants' dance practice and the ways that their gender and sexuality performances -the impressions they give and give off- influence their 'suitability' for certain roles in onstage performances.

The roles dancers enact onstage *are* roles that are created and rehearsed multiple times in the studio before a show. As such, they are discontinuous from

their backstage selves. However, it was suggested by some informants that their gender, sexuality, and ways of coming across in the backstage will be reflected in their dance practice. There was agreement that not everybody can successfully embody every role and for many dancers this was related to their gender and sexuality. George, for instance, said, 'I think everyone has, everyone gets stereotyped in the company you know. Everyone gets certain characters that the staff feels that suits them more' (George, gay, 22-30).

Whether dancers will be seen as suitable for certain roles is influenced by their corporeal bodies, and the overall impressions they give and give off in the frontstage *and* backstage spaces of dance institutions. Frontstage characters and the selves that are performed in the backstage are, therefore, seen as continuous and as influencing each other. If these are aligned with the gendered character which is aimed to be performed onstage, dancers are assigned the relevant role(s). Hence, backstage interactions are not completely free from norms; backstage spaces may enable more transgressive performances, but dancers in these are still seen and judged with a view to casting.

Simon, for example, said 'I think you watch some choreographers and you get that they don't work with homosexual males, not that they can't tap into a masculine role or that side of their masculinity' (gay, 22-30). Simon in this extract referred to a dance piece he auditioned during the time of the research. This was to be performed by a group of only male dancers and Simon suggested that the choreographer was looking for people who could embody very specific representations of masculinity. As he explained, this choreographer was aiming for an 'aggressive style of choreography where you have to throw yourself around'. Whilst referring to that he said that some choreographers do not work with gay dancers because they would prefer to cast people who appear in this manner in their daily lives. Simon however challenged the validity of this by saying 'not that they can't tap into a masculine role'. Billy, who works as a company director, also said:

> I think it depends on how much the performer identifies with their sexuality. If they really play it up, playing up being gays or straights or whatever, and they make that pretty much part of who they are so that everyone can tell, then I think it does affect whether they are casted or not because as a director, I might want somebody who can

> shift their identity more effectively and if somebody is really stuck in their thing that might affect it. It's probably also true that out personal relationships affect who do we work with. (straight, 31-40)

Billy in this extract suggested that dancers' performances of gender and sexuality are possible to affect the roles they will be casted for. Despite dancers being trained performers such claims suggest continuity between their everyday and onstage selves; this suggests that their ability to transform and shift between different roles is seen as limited. Hence, as Alan suggested:

> If you can dance like a man you will be given like a manly role, if you can't then you will not be given that role. In all companies there are some people who are like manly and they do the men's roles. […]. Also people that I think they are really good but you couldn't have like Tim [who he previously described as feminine] for example do a main role […]. I think it's not so much about sexuality but what you look like and how you come across on stage. That affects your casting almost more than your dancing does in some ways because if you just look the part they [staff members] will probably give it to you. (Alan, straight, 18-21)

Tim is perceived as effeminate because of the way he moves –kinesthetic effeminacy (Hennen, 2008:51)-, but also because of the way he looks – anatomical effeminacy (Hennen, 2008:51). Tim's way of movement and appearance, which make him come across as feminine, influence his casting. Whilst all dancers have very good acting skills and should be able to transform themselves, embody and successfully communicate the various roles they enact on stage, participants –Alan, Andy, David and George were amongst those- suggested that their appearance, embodied performances of gender and ways they come across are of great importance. David, for example, said:

> If you are a good dancer you shouldn't see if you are gay when you are dancing. Some people do and it really annoys me because […] it shouldn't be that obvious when you dance. I mean some roles are obviously more [pauses]. You can't be very feminine when you dance those so it's obviously easier for me to be chosen for those but there are other roles that are for a bit more butterfly like. (straight, 31-40)

David's commentary is slightly contradictory as at the beginning it suggests that a good dancer should be able to transform, embark upon different performances onstage and, for example, conceal his gender and sexuality when necessary. However, he later on suggested that because he comes across as conventionally

masculine it will be 'easier for him to be chosen' to embody masculine roles onstage. This suggests that sexuality and gender identities are tightly interwoven. It also suggests that sexuality and gender are perceived to be continuous in the sense that dancers' backstage identities are seen to shape their onstage performances.

Likewise, Craig, who was a student at the time of the research, also seemed to be suggesting continuity between the ways he acts in the backstage and ways he dances. As he said:

> people might say you look a bit feminine or camp or gay or something but for me that's ok because this is what I am and that's kind of the way I dance so I am not offended by that because it's what I do. […] If [dancing in a feminine way] is something that is required in the piece I enjoy it, I think it's great. I find it sometimes difficult when maybe it's not required. If it's something that maybe somebody else thinks that is feminine that I bring naturally it's harder to separate because you know, it's something that you bring of yourself and it's harder to undo because *it is* you. (gay, 18-21)

Craig's comment that he 'finds it sometimes difficult when [dancing in a feminine way] is not required' suggests that parts of his identity are not directly or easily amendable by choice. All of the above commentaries can be discussed through Bourdieu's concept of 'bodily hexis' which refers to the embodiment of habitus as 'a *durable* way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking' (1990:69-70). Habitus, as Bourdieu suggested, is not amendable but rather follows the person and shapes the person's actions, performances and so on. Craig claimed that 'this is what I am'. Since femininity is something which he feels is part of himself, he finds it hard to amend his performances, ways of dancing and handling his body. Participants in their majority suggested that the roles they are assigned are roles that suit their bodies, appearance, manners and demeanour, but also their gender and sexuality, which feel as rooted in them.

Onstage performances are created to be consumed as staged *performances*; both the viewer and the performer know that this is all these are. Yet, performers are still expected to be convincing and perform the characters they claim to be as if these were 'natural'. The accounts that were previously discussed suggest that gender and sexuality are felt to derive from within the person and it is thus

assumed that they will be 'given off' during onstage performances in ways that are seen as unavoidable. Goffman defined the impressions that are 'given off' as the 'more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind' (1959:16). Considering that most dance performances, though not all, still revolve around gender binaries and heterosexual narratives it is perhaps unsurprising that informants suggested that 'it's easier for straight men in dance' (Colin, gay, 18-21). As Colin said 'you can't act feminine when you are on stage. You can't really act like gay, you know one of those stereotypical kind of gay'. As some informants suggested their sexuality and gender performances will affect their casting precisely because of this reason.

> I think I will probably not gonna get more masculine parts. […] I think I could [act in conventional masculine ways] but I think they [referring to staff] wouldn't choose me to do it. (gay, 22-30)

Frank characterised himself as being 'kind of between masculinity and femininity'. Frank argued that the roles he is, and will be, assigned are limited in the sense that he is 'not gonna get the more masculine parts'. Whilst he thinks that he can act in a conventionally masculine manner, he argued that the staff would not choose him. Instead, they will choose somebody who appears to be conventionally masculine in his everyday life. Casting directors have preconceived ideas about how they want their lead dancers to appear onstage; because of this reason, they might not be convinced that somebody who in his everyday life, and backstage interactions, does not appear to be conventionally masculine could transform himself onstage, embody or enact masculine characters onstage effortlessly.

In a converse manner heterosexual dancers also suggested that they might not even be asked to play flamboyant or non-conventionally masculine characters. For example Matt who works as a choreographer, dancer and producer referred specifically to his sexuality and the roles he usually plays to suggest that his sexuality influences the works he will be approached to create and perform.

> There have been some duets I've done which have been male-female duets that very much relied on the fact that I would have the ability to [perform] a romantic heterosexual relationship. That has required that sort of intensity to it. […] I've never been invited to do a role that would be drag or would be quite clearly in a setting of a

> homosexual arena. […] I think one of the reasons I might not been asked to do such role is because it's not something that I publicly identify with. So people go to people they know so that they don't have to do that work in the studio of getting that person to understand how to do it. (Matt, straight, 22-30)

Just as dancers who in their everyday life and backstage interactions come across as effeminate might seem limited in relation to the roles they can embody onstage, heterosexual dancers who are assumed to be 'naturally' masculine, also suggested that they have not been asked, or will probably not be asked, to enact flamboyant or effeminate characters onstage. It seems therefore important for onstage performances to appear as 'natural' as possible in order to conceal the fact that they are performances. Because of this, casters choose performers who they believe can convincingly embody onstage roles and communicate them as if they were natural.

> If you look at the men dancing the prince they are all straight men […]. But I mean also I think it's certainly a reflection. I think I understand that the audience wants to see, let's say if you watch a couple in love they want to see the assigned gender roles. The women be soft and beautiful and the men be strong and hard and big jumps and lifts. I agree, I kind of like that too but I think that on stage people want to see men look like men. They don't want someone's performance on stage to be a statement of their sexuality. It's just get up there and dance, I don't want to know, I don't want to see your sexuality, especially effeminate men.
>
> *But can't a gay man perform the role of a 'man'?*
>
> Absolutely. They are many famous gay men that are ballet dancers. You know, many [says in ironic manner implying that there are not many]. But I think that some men or gay men are just effeminate or they dance in an effeminate way because that's how, it's sort of like a sexual feeling. I think some gay men struggle. […] To be a leading man it requires a sense of masculinity. (Andy, bisexual, 22-30)

Andy argued that dancers' sexuality influences dancers' ability to move in a conventionally masculine manner. He seemed to suggest two key points. Firstly, that there are observable differences between the ways female and male dancers dance which arguably recreates gender binaries, gender difference as natural and gender as deriving from sex (Goffman, 1977). As Butler argued, individuals are assumed to have a (female or male) sex based on which their 'gender operates as an act of cultural inscription' (1999:186).

Secondly, he seemed to be suggesting that dancers' sexuality would influence how they would move onstage or how they would perform a character during a dance performance. Andy seemed to be suggesting that whilst some gay men do move in a conventionally masculine manner, straight men would naturally achieve that with no effort. This suggests that since they identify as heterosexual their movement style and performances will be perceived as 'naturally' and effortlessly masculine. This conceals gender's performative and constructed nature and makes it appear as stable, natural and fixed. There is, therefore, an interconnection between dancers' sexuality, their performances of gender and assumptions in relation to their ability to perform certain characters. This reinforces the validity of Butler's 'heterosexual matrix' (1999) and makes heterosexuality seem as both natural and normal; Berlant and Warner referred to this as 'heteronormativity' (1998).

According to Butler's theorisation of the heterosexual matrix, 'a stable sex should be expressed through a stable gender […] that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality' (1999:194). Tredway, who modified Butler's (1999) theory of the heterosexual matrix to explain why lesbian athletes are assumed to be masculine, argued that 'when people are out, when their sexuality is known, their sex and sexuality are the known components' (2014:174); knowing these components, she suggested, leads 'the viewer [to] assume a particular gender in an effort to make the person intelligible within a sex/sexuality/gender system' (2014:174).

Likewise, when dancers' sex and sexuality are known they might be assumed to 'have' a particular gender. When they identify as gay they might then be automatically assumed to be effeminate. Whilst this is not to suggest that gay men *cannot* embody and perform what might be read as conventional masculinity, their heterosexual colleagues are assumed to be 'naturally' masculine. The same was argued by Rumens and Broomfield who suggested that theatre casters might construct gay male performers 'as more limited than heterosexual male performers in their capacity to perform different male parts requiring specific gender performances' (2014:370). Risner also suggested that 'heterosexual male dancers are privileged' in dance (2014:2) because of the themes of onstage performances which, in ballet at least, revolve predominantly

around heterosexuality (see for example Scottish Ballet's productions of Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet and the Crucible).

Further, there was also an overarching consensus that there is no space for effeminate performances on stage, or if there is, this is only limited to flamboyant roles, which do not appear very often in ballet productions. However, it should be noted here that most male roles, in ballet at least, do not signify conventional masculinity as this is understood in the outside-of-dance society and culture (see also chapter 8).

> I was sitting in the studio observing one of the company's rehearsals. Andy was not dancing because of an injury. He came in a bit later and sat in the right corner of the studio. During the rehearsal he came up to me [I was sitting in a corner in the front side of the studio, in front of the large mirror wall] and we started chatting quietly. He sat next to me. Whilst we were talking about his evening the day before he started talking about the piece they were rehearsing. […] Reflecting on the interview we had a few days earlier he told me 'you see James? He will be the next principal. He is masculine, he can play masculine parts. […] It's because of the dancer's ability to convince the audience about the story and the romance. So it [my sexuality] affects it [my progress/ the roles I will be assigned] in these terms. You see those who have been the principles for so long they are like the Alpha males, very masculine, very convincing'. (Field Diary Notes, Scottish Ballet, 17/7/2014)

Andy seemed to be suggesting that how dancers look and how they perform gender in their everyday encounters, affects whether they will be able to transform themselves and convincingly perform masculinity onstage. This is in line with Goffman's suggestion that 'performers can stop giving expressions but cannot stop giving them off' (1959:111). The ways dancers come across during backstage interactions, the impressions they give and give off are seen as influencing their abilities to successfully transform themselves and embody certain roles onstage. Their ability to appear, and be perceived, as masculine is, therefore, a process that relies on audition times –frontstage- and their overall performance in the studio during informal interactions and encounters. The boundaries between the backstage and frontstage are in these instances blurry; encounters which are seen as informal can still influence the roles that dancers will be assigned and, therefore, their career trajectories. This results in many

dancers being conscious of their interactions in the backstage and the ways that these might influence their progress.

In addition to those dancers who believed that their backstage selves will be evident in their frontstage sessions and onstage performances, there were some dancers' accounts that suggested greater 'self-reflexivity' (Cooper, 2013; Giddens, 1991). These dancers talked about their ability to 'manage' the impressions they give and ways they come across. These informants perceived dance as just an act, a performance saying that when they are onstage they just perform a role which might or might not reflect their gender and sexuality.

Self-monitoring and self-reflexivity

> I played the Lord Capulet in Romeo and Juliet. So if I need to I like to think that I can play a straight, powerful, very masculine man. I like to think that I can. I mean, I was casted for it so I hope I did a good job. But at the same time I think I could probably fairly easily do a flamboyant character as well so yeah. I mean perhaps there are some people who are maybe more suited to certain castings. There are a couple of straight guys in the company that would not feel comfortable with the flamboyant characters and the other way around, some of the very flamboyant characters might not be so good for the straight, very masculine roles, but I think everyone has, everyone gets stereotyped in the company you know. Everyone gets certain characters that the staff feels that suits them more. (George, gay, 22-30)

George who described himself several times during the interview as 'flamboyant' argued that he could *act* in a conventionally masculine manner and perform a conventionally masculine character as easily as he could play a flamboyant character, suggesting that when he dances he plays roles that are not necessarily aligned with his everyday performances of self. Likewise Tim, another ballet dancer said:

> I consider myself quite a good theatrical actor and I would say I can play men quite well. We did a production recently which was set in Glasgow and we were supposed to be rough Glasgow people and I was casted as one of them and I think that I did a good job. (gay, 22-30)

George and Tim, as well as some other participants, suggested that they can embody both conventionally masculine roles and distance their performances from such imageries. This allows a discussion around 'self-reflexivity' (Giddens, 1991), 'creative self-invention' (Cooper, 2013), and the consideration of gender and sexuality as performances that can be fluid and managed by people according to the impression they wish to give others (Robinson and Hockey, 2011). Adkins suggested that 'in the context of a "social" characterised by both increasing mobility and increasing reflexivity' processes of gender and sexuality reconfigurations can occur (2002:2). The context of dance can be seen as such context precisely because of the reflection it invites and the questioning it often involves.

Cooper's work (2013), which draws on Giddens's theory of late modernity (1991), suggested that social actors have agency and the capacity to challenge and renegotiate conventional gender and sexuality performances. As Cooper wrote, social agents have some opportunities for 'creative self-invention' where they can reflect on the ways they (want to) come across before others and accordingly alter their performances. Giddens suggested that this is possible because of late modernity, which led 'to the emergence of new mechanisms of self-identity' (1991:2). Self-identity though, he argued, 'is something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual' (p.52). The extract below reinforces such theories.

> Me being a gay guy I feel like I still act, I still try to act straight not because I want to be straight but because I feel like sometimes gay people put into people's faces too much how girly they can be and how sassy they can be and that's not me. I love people who are like that and I have best friends who are like that but for me just because I am gay doesn't mean I am girly. I am still a guy, I am still a man. I am not gonna act like a girl. Obviously if I am drunk and I am like with a lot of gay people I would probably, and I will be screaming my head off but I would say that in everyday life I won't present myself as a gay guy not because I am embarrassed or ashamed of who I am. I am very proud of my sexuality, I just don't like putting it in people's faces because I feel that this causes problems and people turn against gay people and that's when the conflict starts and maybe because I had to hide it for so long it made me realise more why I hid it, because people don't like it. And that's the same when I go for a guy as well. I would never go for a feminine guy who's very girly and in your face. I would go for a very straight acting guy who is muscly

> because I like that. I don't find being girly attractive either. (Chris, gay, 18-21)

Chris's account, whilst contradictory to his earlier statement where he suggested that 'gay guys, me being one, have feminine traits in how we say things', suggested that he is conscious of the ways he *wants* to present himself and he consciously makes decisions about the ways he acts in this and other contexts. He manages his performances to come across in ways which will be perceived positively by his audience; this is in line with Goffman's theory which suggests that 'the performance of an individual in a front region may be seen as an effort to give the appearance that his activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards' (1959:110). Chris's argument also emphasises the importance of the context and the role of other social actors he is involved in interaction with, as these are factors which influence his performances of sexuality and accordingly gender. As Cooper (2013) argued, possibilities for self-invention are not endless but rather are mediated by the socio-cultural norms that construct each context (see also Jackson, 1999). This is reinforced through this extract, which suggests that Chris manages his performances according to the contexts he acts in and therefore the 'rules' that characterise these. Likewise, Richard suggested that he can control the impressions he gives.

> I know that I have a degree of campness and it comes across and when I think of it myself I instantly go 'oh my god I am so camp' but I also know that I can give the impression of maybe not being gay sometimes. It has happened in the past that people thought that I had a girlfriend. Or that they didn't think that I was gay. (Richard, gay, 31-40)

Richard argued that he can manage his image and that he is aware of the impression that others will get from him. This positions him as an active agent (Goffman, 1959) and one 'who can reflexively monitor his actions' (Giddens, 1991:36). Richard, in this case, seems to be aware of the image he presents to others. As he said when I asked him what makes him come across as camp:

> there's the hand gesturing, the pitch of the voice definitely. I go 'hi I am Richard' and I guess just been outrageous. That sort of thing. Lots of smiling and lots of body gestures, being very expansive and that sort of thing. (gay, 31-40)

This commentary suggests that Richard is aware of that which makes him come across as camp and gay. He also said, 'I know I can give the impression of not being gay sometimes' meaning that he can control his performances and manage the impressions he gives before others. In the case of Richard, and some other informants, gender is seen as the outcome of conscious performances, the result of reflexive actions and processes. Paul, who was cited in the previous chapter also said, 'I am conscious of the image that I project […]. I think I am very conscious because I also work very visually and spatially and I am very attuned' (straight, 31-40). In a similar manner, George suggested that 'being flamboyant and camp is all a performance really so the fact that I am in a performing world people will probably be good at it' (gay, 22-30). In these cases, the gendered self can be perceived as 'a reflexive project' (Giddens, 1991).

Such commentaries reinforce gender and sexuality as something which can be rehearsed and performed rather than identities which derive from an inner self and are subconsciously given off like Bourdieu's notion of habitus would, for example, suggest (1984; 1990). These commentaries also strengthen symbolic interactionists' arguments that social actors 'guide themselves in their actions toward others' (Blumer, 1969:12) in ways that are in accord with the contexts they act in and the norms that characterise these (Jackson and Scott, 2002). It could be, however, added that the performing nature of these men's profession and the possibilities it creates for them to reflect on their image and presentation of self, makes them more conscious and reflexively-aware of the ways they come across before others and, thus, more able to control their self-image.

Lastly, sexuality can be seen as another factor which influences informants' reflexive awareness. Gay informants such as Chris, for example, said 'I just don't like putting it [my sexuality] in people's faces because I feel that this causes problems and people turn against gay people' (gay, 18-21). Like in Cooper's (2013) study where gay men appeared to be more conscious of the ways they came across because of the aggressive attitudes they often encountered, Chris appeared to be more conscious because of 'conflicts' and behaviours he encountered.

Overall, it can be suggested that the degree of reflexivity varied amongst different participants with some arguing that they are more conscious of their performances than others and more able to transform themselves according to the needs of each role (see also chapter 6). It should be though noted that opportunities for reflection and creative self-invention are not infinite (Jackson, 1999) and there are limits with regards to how much social actors can manage the impressions they give. As has been argued in the previous chapter, participants' performances are influenced by the written and unwritten norms of the context(s) they act in; during informal daily encounters in the backstage, male dancers can 'undo' gender and challenge 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). Yet, as has been argued in this chapter, this is complex and there are underlying consequences. The ways dancers appear in the backstage, which often coexists with the frontstage, might influence their casting and perceived suitability for certain roles.

This study's participants seemed to have different levels of reflexive-awareness. Considering that dance, as well as gender, is performed and communicated through the same medium -dancers' bodies-, their appearance, demeanour and comportment remains unaltered as they move between different contexts. Yet, data suggested that there is at least some degree of conscious reflexivity, self-awareness and 'creative self-invention' (Cooper, 2013; Giddens, 1991) for at least some informants.

The contrasting accounts and multiplicity of responses demonstrate the complexities that exist when it comes to think about, and reflect on, parts of our identity such as gender and sexuality. For many informants these felt deeply rooted in them and were thus seen as not amendable; for others these were perceived as aspects of themselves which they could manage and control. In either case, male dancers are able or encouraged to reflect on their performances because of the context they are involved in and their practice of dance, which invites them to rehearse different roles and be consciously aware of the ways they come across when they perform these.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter engaged with bodies, the embodiment and performance of gender and sexuality, and participants' dance habitus. As has been demonstrated, bodies and appearance seem to matter in ballet more than other genres, such as contemporary dance and dance theatre, for example. This relies on the ideals that classical ballet culture and choreographies keep reproducing. Ballet narratives more often than not display heterosexual romantic love stories and very specific gendered characters (see also chapter 6). The balletic tradition, therefore, reproduces that which is seen as ideal in terms of corporeal bodies and appearance but also gender and sexualities.

Further, it has been argued that despite the multiplicity of selves that dancers perform as they move between temporal and spatial contexts (Goffman, 1959; Spector-Mersel, 2006), these are always communicated through the same bodies, which are shaped by both biological and social conditions. Dancers' backstage performances of gender and sexuality were often, though not always, perceived as influencing their ability to embody certain roles onstage. Despite the fact that they are skilled actors and trained performers who can shift between roles, for some informants gender and sexuality were seen as inherent, embodied and thus not amendable, or at least not as easily amendable as other parts of their identities.

Others though talked about their performances of gender and sexuality as managed and controlled precisely because of the acting skills dancers acquire through their training. Bourdieu discussed people as 'creative beings' who 'have to "improvise" on background resources (of the habitus) in order to be able to deal with the unpredictable situations that are a constant feature of everyday life' (Layder, 2006:195). For Bourdieu, Mouzelis explained, adaptability occurs 'in a taken-for-granted, non-reflexive manner' (2007:9). Yet, in the case of this study, and due to the fact that dancers act in contexts which invite heightened self-reflexivity, at least some informants appeared to be consciously aware of the ways they came across. They also seemed to be able to adjust their performances of gender and sexuality depending on the social norms that describe each context and interaction.

Dancers practise in front of the mirror and are invited to reflect on the ways they come across before others. These aspects of their profession enable them to be conscious of themselves and manage their performances more than other social agents. However, as has been demonstrated, some aspects of our identities are not amendable by choice, but are rather unintentionally communicated through our bodies, ways of moving, standing and so on; these are unintentionally 'given off' (Goffman, 1959). As has been argued in both this and the previous chapter, this leads to some bodies and bodily performances to be read as more suitable than others and this has consequences on dancers' practice of dance.

Chapter 8
‘Dance is Masculine But it’s not the Butchest Thing in the World’: Negotiating Dance

Introduction

As has been argued in previous chapters, dance is a practice which has become mutually constitutive with women and femininity. As such, it often signifies male effeminacy and homosexuality. Existing studies on men who work in feminised work cultures suggest that these men tend to emphasise aspects of their profession which can be perceived as conventionally masculine. Robinson, Hall and Hockey, for example, while referring to interviews they conducted with male hairdressers, argued that during the interview interaction those men emphasised aspects of hairdressing which were felt to be mostly ‘manly’; examples of these were ‘manual dexterity and skill’ (2011:43). Likewise, Pullen and Simpson suggested that male nurses in their study emphasised the physical tasks they were expected to perform and the management of abusive patients (2009). These practices can be seen as aiming to ‘masculinise’ aspects of their professions, which were otherwise perceived as feminine. As Pullen and Simpson argued, even though these men were involved in feminised contexts, they still ‘did’ or were expected to do conventional masculinity and, thus, reinforce the prevailing gender order (2009).

Considering these studies’ findings, as well as the cultural attachments that dance as a practice and a context has, the discussion that unfolds in this chapter is concerned with the ways male dancers negotiate their dance practice with regards to gender, but also sexuality. As such, this chapter develops in three main parts. The first part, *Negotiating Dance,* draws on interview data and discusses the ways male dancers negotiated their dance practice -and the associations this has with women, femininity and male homosexuality- at the time they were young and recreationally involved in dance, and the present time that they are professionally involved in this world. The second part, *Strong Bodies, Soft Representations: Dance and Masculinity*, discusses the strategies these men employed to ‘masculinise’ their profession. Further, this part

uncovers the tensions which characterise the practice of dance with regards to gender and sexuality. The final section, *The Official Dance World, discusses* professional dance bodies and the strategies these employ to attract more men in this sphere by, however, contributing to the reproduction of the prevailing gender order.

Negotiating Dance

As has been argued in chapter 5, informants in their majority began dancing when they were still young. Because of the associations dance, and particularly ballet, has with femininity and women, informants kept their dancing a secret or tried to de-emphasise their involvement in dance during the time they were younger. As Gary, for example, said:

> when I was about seven, eight years old I was very open [about my dancing] because it didn't really cross my mind that boys and girls you know [are different]. Then when I was about thirteen and was at high school I didn't hide that I was dancing but I didn't necessarily say it, it wasn't like 'hi I am Gary, I do ballet'. (straight, 18-21)

Dancing became problematic for participants during the time they were transitioning from primary to middle school. During this time informants like Gary, Alan (straight, 18-21), Luke (straight, 18-21) and Chris (gay, 18-21) hided or de-emphasised the dancing side of themselves; Goffman (1961) referred to this process as 'role distance' and argued that social actors have many sides to themselves which they may emphasise in greater or lesser extend depending on the encounter they find themselves. Informants' accounts suggest that when they were younger they employed this strategy to protect themselves from discriminatory attitudes, but also to be perceived by others in a favourable manner. Such accounts position informants as active agents who 'manipulated' the information they gave before others in order to control others' impressions of themselves. This is aligned with Goffman's theorisation of social encounters (1959; 1961) and reinforces claims which position social actors as active agents (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959; Jackson, 1999).

In addition to deemphasising their involvement in dance, some informants actively concealed the dancing side of their identity. For example, Alan said that 'I remember definitely not wanting to tell them [my classmates] that I danced' (straight, 18-21). Alan went to an all-boys school and during the interview he said that the other boys were 'name-calling' him because he danced. This occurred because of the associations dance has with femininity. He therefore decided to lie to his classmates by telling them that he stopped dancing.

Another mechanism informants employed involved becoming engaged in more conventionally masculine activities such as sport, and particularly football. This action aimed in reinforcing themselves as conventionally masculine. This is evident in Chris's following commentary:

> I think I went through a phase half way through high school of thinking I should stop this [dance], […] I thought it's not worth of being picked on, have fights. So I thought I should start football. (Chris, gay, 18-21)

Some informants used alternative ways to establish themselves amongst the boys. Chris, as well as a few others, started playing football and other kind of sports which, however, did not necessarily enjoy. Messner argued that 'playing sports is just the thing [for boys] to do' (1990: 423), whilst Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argued that 'sport is an important index of masculinity' (2003:68). This is reinforced by, amongst other theorists, Swain (2000), Renold (2005) and Anderson (2011).

Football and other forms of team sport prevail in physical education and are thus perceived as something which boys would normally do. Such practices, though, contribute to the maintenance of views that support that boys and girls are different and in the reinforcement of this difference as 'natural'. Such practices also contribute to the formation of social bonds amongst male students and the division of male students into different peer groups (Renold, 2005). This contributes to the structural reproduction of binary categories such as male/female or masculine/feminine, which also reflects the hierarchical divisions that exist both within and between gender categories (Connell, 2005; Jackson and Scott, 2002). Hence, perhaps unsurprisingly, informants felt the need to begin or to continue playing sports to reaffirm their masculinity.

In addition, informants such as Matt 'normalised' their involvement in dance by emphasising their heterosexuality. As he said:

> there was always this sense of [other young men at the college] laughing at our face. [Dancing felt like] something that we did and was kind of quirky. No one really went like 'oh I really love dance'. And then I guess as I grew a bit older […] I started to identify with it [dance] a bit more and I felt like at that time being clearly identified as heterosexual became more important to me because of the stigma of homosexuality around it [dance]. It was *really* important that somehow I would be in a relationship with a woman at that time. […]. And reflecting on it I think it created this space that I went down the route of kind of serial monogamy. It was one relationship and within a month I was in the next one and it was almost that kind of fair side of like yeah I am a dancer *but*. And by doing that I perpetuated that stereotype, I was aware of that. There was no one having that conversation then so I didn't realise it at that time.
>
> *Did you do anything else?*
>
> I continued to play sports for a long time. (Matt, straight, 22-30)

Matt consciously tried to emphasise that he identified as a heterosexual man. He did this by forming relationships with women. The intended aim of this action was to distance himself from widely held views that associate dance with male homosexuality and to ensure that he will not be assumed to be gay. Anderson referred to the 'fear of being homosexualised' as 'homohysteria' (2009:7). Matt normalised his involvement in dance by challenging the 'stigma' that characterises dance, and male dancers more specifically, by however dismissing homosexuality and reinforcing heterosexuality as the dominant form of sexuality; this reinforced 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993) and notions which set heterosexuality as a prerequisite of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Accounts such as this one prove how strongly interlinked gender and sexuality are (Butler, 1999; Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002) and the validity of Butler's theorisation of the 'heterosexual matrix' (1999). In relation to this, Robert also said:

> I tell people at the gym that I do dance and I don't know what they think. It doesn't bother me I suppose. Maybe if you are straight you are more concerned that people are thinking you are not so masculine if you are dancing, but as a gay man, I suppose, it doesn't bother me at all if someone else might think that I am not masculine because I dance. (gay, 40+)

Robert identifies as a gay man and Matt as a straight man. For Matt it was important to employ certain mechanisms to ensure that he would not be assumed to be gay because he danced. For Robert on the other hand, this was not an issue which concerned him. Such commentaries suggest that it is important for, at least some, straight men to not have their heterosexuality, and hence masculinity, questioned. This, however, does not describe all men. George, for example, said:

> [some of] the people that I know [who] are most comfortable in themselves, and also in their sexuality as being straight masculine men, can often be quite very open to kind of gay guys flirting with them. And you know if there was a come-in-a-dress-party and someone decided that it would be a funny thing for them to put on a dress they would have no problems with that. They are just very open because they are so kind of comfortable with themselves. And other [straight] guys that I know they wouldn't be up for that. (gay, 22-30)

George's account suggests that it is the case that at least some men would not feel uncomfortable with wearing a dress, an item which signifies femininity, or if 'gay guys flirted with them'. Both of these practices could be perceived as distanced from conventional masculinity as this is widely understood; George's suggestion that some men would be open to these practices suggests 'declined homohysteria' (Anderson, 2009). This though is not to be generalised; it might be the case that George has met such men because of the sphere he is involved in and the people he interacts with, who, as he said, are in their majority 'involved in the arts industry'. These men, and especially because of the associations this sphere has, might be more 'inclusive' (Anderson, 2009).

Further, as Bradley also said:

> people that I don't know might think 'oh he is a ballet dancer, he must be gay' but I don't find that particularly offensive […] and if people are like 'oh you are gay' I am just like well it's not true but if you think that, it's fine, whatever. […] I think in general people are much less judging, people wouldn't think that homosexuality is so much a bad thing, people in my age, but they would probably assume that you are gay because you are a male ballet dancer. (straight, 18-21)

Bradley's response to those who assume that he might be gay because he dances 'illustrates one way he resists heterosexism' (Bridges, 2014:67). Like Bridges's

informants, Bradley resisted heterosexism by claiming that being thought of as gay is not offensive or does not have any negative implications; his attitude and response, thus, contribute to challenging heterosexism. Similar claims were made by Carl (straight, 18-21) and Luke (straight, 18-21). Stereotypical assumptions that associate male dancing with homosexuality have not disappeared; however, in contrast to the early 1990s when Kimmel (1994) argued that masculinity is highly related to homophobia, we are now going through a period of *declining* homophobia (see for example: Anderson, 2009; Anderson and McCormack, 2015; Bridges, 2014; Weeks, 2007).

Nevertheless, it should be noted here that homophobia is perhaps declining at different paces in different social settings and geographical locations (see also Bell and Valentine, 1994; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Brown, Browne and Lin, 2007). The performing arts sphere is one which has long been perceived as accepting of non-heterosexual and gender queer people (Bernstein, 2006; Burt, 2007; Dolan, 2010; Rumens and Broomfield, 2014). Hence, perhaps unsurprisingly, male dancers and the people they interact with, who are likely to be involved in the creative arts industry themselves, tend to be more 'inclusive' (Anderson, 2009). For many heterosexual men it might still be important that they come across as conventionally masculine and heterosexual by disassociating themselves from femininity and homosexuality; yet, for others, this is not as important. This was the case for most of this study's young informants.

Lastly, whilst most informants suggested that they feel 'proud' of their profession (Chris, gay, 18-21; Alan, straight, 18-21) and that they 'value' what they do (David, straight, 31-40), there were a few who suggested that they still hide or downplay the dancing side of themselves at present time. Gregory, for example, hides his involvement in dance because of the place he lives and the social norms that prevail there. As he said:

> Growing up there [East End, Glasgow] I was always thinking that ballet is either for girls or people that were gay. […] It just doesn't seem like a man's thing so that's kind the obvious reason I wouldn't [say that I dance]. It's just that stereotype that comes with ballet. That's the reason why [I currently lie]. […] So I am kind of living two lives at the moment. (Gregory, straight, 18-21)

Gregory's case is a very interesting one, because despite the fact that he was studying for a professional qualification in dance at the time of the research, he deliberately lied to people about his studies. Gregory's commentary suggests that, at least in certain parts of Glasgow, there are high levels of homophobia. Since dancing is still associated with effeminacy and male homosexuality and since it is important for him to be perceived as conventionally masculine and heterosexual, he hides his involvement in dance. Gregory's view was reinforced by Matt who said that:

> so there is kind of tension, friction to non-arts communities which is why when I get into a taxi and people ask what do you do I say I am performer or an actor. Very rarely do I say I am a dancer. And that has to do with me like not wanting to have to explain what that is to them, or [having] to add a more masculine tone in order for them to understand that it's ok that I am in their taxi. […] A friend of mine was down at Brighton pride and he was in a taxi and the taxi driver was shouting off really homophobic things and he was like as long as none of them are getting into my taxi. And you know, my friend's gay and he was like you need to stop the taxi, I can't fucking believe we are going through this right now. So I guess the reason I am not saying those things is actually because I actually just don't want to face those things. (Matt, straight, 22-30)

Like Gregory, Matt also suggested that at least in some cases, he downplays the dancing side of himself or avoids saying that he is a dancer because of the associations dance has and the attitudes which prevail in certain areas. Likewise, Billy said that when he is asked about what he does he says 'I am a director' (straight, 31-40). This, he said, 'causes less trouble than [saying that] I am a performance maker or something'. Whilst the previous commentaries were related to gender and sexuality, Billy's response had to do with the status, and the lack of status thereof, that accompanies these professional identities. A similar response was given by Paul (straight, 31-40) and Daniel (straight, 31-40).

As has been demonstrated thus far, the majority of informants downplayed or deemphasised their involvement in dance while they were younger because they perceived dancing as an unconventionally masculine activity for boys and young men. Turning towards the present, most informants seemed to value their professional identity and be proud for being dancers. There were, however, some informants who actively manipulated the information they gave to others by hiding their professional involvement in dance or by downplaying that side of

themselves in order to be seen as conventionally masculine and heterosexual. Another technique they used involved emphasising dance's conventionally masculine elements. This is the focus of the following section.

Strong Bodies, Soft Representations: Dance and Masculinity

Like Robinson and Hockey's (2011) study on male hairdressers, this study's participants tried to masculinise their otherwise feminised practice of dance. Gregory, for instance, suggested that 'being a dancer is like you need to feel like an athlete. There is no difference between someone playing football and someone dancing' (straight, 18-21). Gregory compared dance to sports, mainly because of the physicality, training and technique both dance and sport require. The comparison of the practice of dance with that of football, for example, can be seen as a strategy which allows dancers to lay claim to the masculine status that football has. As Anderson and McCormack argued, male athletes have been 'labelled the arbiters of esteemed forms of masculinity' (2015:215). However, discourses that define dance as sport 'colonialise it in traditionally masculinist ways' (Risner, 2009:67); such discourses aim to give dance a masculine status by, however, relating it to sports, which is a practice that, as Anderson argued, in its majority is still associated with classed notions of masculinity, male-dominance, heterosexuality and conservativism (2011). A similar claim was made by David, who said that:

> well, it [dance] is [masculine]. The technique, the classes it challenges you a lot. It's brutal. That's hard stuff that we do. But at the same time is elegant, it's soft. [pauses] It's really really hard and tough. It's brutal and really demanding. From that point of view, I do believe it's a really butch thing to do because it's so challenging and hard. Physically challenging. […] but I think it's not the butchest thing in the world [laughs], I am lost. (David, straight, 31-40)

David stressed some of the physical qualities of dance; he referred to the technical difficulties and the demanding classes that dancers have. These are elements which might be read as conventionally masculine. However, David's commentary captures the tensions that characterise dance overall and ballet

more specifically. Whilst he said that dance is masculine, at the same time he said that 'it's not the butchest thing in the world'. The practice of dance is seen by David, and other dancers, as both masculine and non-masculine at the same time.

Male dancers, regardless of their sexuality, seemed to be 'validating' their professional choice and practice by 'masculinising' it. They did this by emphasising the strength they need to develop in order to be able to perform the demanding choreographies, the training they receive and the physical as well as psychological challenges this profession entails. As many theorists have argued, strong, muscular, shaped and controlled bodies are seen as signifying masculinity (see for example, Buchbinder, 2013; Connell, 1993, 2005; Forth, 2008). However, as Risner argued, such strategies contribute to the recreation of prevailing gender discourses and to the preservation of their assumed legitimacy and hegemonic status (2009).

Furthermore, David's commentary, like the ones which were discussed in chapter 6, demonstrates how limiting it can be trying to understand and analyse the social world with prevailing binary categories. The continuous association of certain behaviours, practices and notions as *either* feminine *or* masculine limit our understanding of, and our analytical capacities for explaining, the complexities and tensions that characterise real life experiences and encounters. David felt 'lost' precisely because of this reason. Such dichotomies fail to gauge the complexities, tensions, and practices which often result in the blurring of boundaries and the 'undoing of gender' (Deutsch, 2007); yet, these were widely used, and reproduced, by participants.

Another element that was discussed as signifying masculinity was related to the dance narratives that are performed onstage. Colin, for instance, said:

> I think dance [referring to ballet] can be really masculine. You are supposed to be in love with the girl. All big ballets are about a prince so that's sort of very masculine. Especially if you are an evil character, I think it's always kind of masculine. (gay, 18-21)

For Colin, ballet is masculine precisely because ballet narratives revolve around heterosexual love stories and strong male characters. These signify masculinity,

though not conventional masculinity. The representations that ballet plots project onstage rely on gender binaries, conservative gender relations and representations. These also reinforce 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993) and 'heteronormativity' (Berlant and Warner, 1998). Such representations locate dance within a matrix, where gender binaries are regulated through heterosexuality and heterosexuality is reproduced through the reproduction of oppositional, relational and hierarchical positioning of genders as either masculine or feminine; such representations recreate the 'heterosexual matrix' as this was defined by Butler (1999).

Carl also suggested that 'all or most of the male roles have a strong presence and feeling to them' (straight, 18-21). This strong presence is influenced by the plot or narrative and is communicated through dancers' bodies and their posture, movements, comportment and gestures during onstage performances. These, according to informants, signify masculinity. Physicality, muscularity, athleticism and strength are qualities long associated with that which Connell conceptualised as 'hegemonic masculinity' (2005), and Anderson (2009) as 'orthodox masculinity'. These are also qualities which, as has been argued in chapter 6, are associated with 'imagined masculinity'.

Reeser (2010:1) suggested that 'muscular', 'strong', 'hard' and 'in control' are apparently 'natural' characteristics that are ascribed to that which is assumed to be masculinity. In contrast, he argued, 'weak', 'soft' and 'emotional' do not describe masculinity but rather its opposite, femininity. Such notions are recreated onstage during most dance performances and narratives. As William also said:

> you spend all your time with girls, you lift them, you throw them around, it's the perfect environment for most of my [male] friends; [they] would have loved that. But you know […] they think of ballet and they think that you dance on point and you do all that with the tutu and stuff. (William, gay, 22-30)

William said at an earlier stage of the interview that when he dances he feels like an 'ogre, quite butch and masculine' because, as he said, 'sometimes you can easily hurt a girl [when dancing]'. William's accounts suggest that male dancing complies with qualities associated with imagined masculinity and

masculine practices (dancing with and handling the female dancers, presenting strength and so on). However, as William said, male dancers are being imagined as if they 'dance on point […] in tutu and stuff', which are practices and clothing that are used by female dancers and as such signify femininity. The devaluation of dance, and mainly ballet, might be thus attributed to its continuous association with femininity and women. As Robert also said:

> maybe ballet is seen as more effeminate or something, maybe because of the tights, the costumes rather than what they are doing. I think tights look gay to straight men. […] I think for men who don't know what ballet is, it [ballet] can be seen as mmm. (gay, 40+)

From the above commentaries it appears that there is a disjuncture between the physicality and physical demands dance entails -which are conventionally masculine-, and the imagery of male dancers. Matt for example said

> I feel like anytime I say that I am a dancer there is all these cultural stereotypes that are sitting on the side of it as well. The first of which is often people going like I am too tall to be a dancer and the second one is so you are gay. And these kind of paint this picture that a male dancer will be this short feminine man essentially and this is what they expect. (Matt, straight, 22-30)

As Fisher argued, male dancers 'wear tights, play princes, and point their toes in a careful fashion. […] ballet *isn't* conventionally macho and never will be' (2009:43). Ballet has certain qualities and representations that are distanced from conventional masculinity. More than any other dance genre, ballet is associated with pink, tights, tutus, glitter and point shoes. All of these signify femininity (Fisher and Shay, 2009:8). Tom also said:

> I remember once I used to have this girlfriend who thought that it was really peculiar and really queer that guys would dress up, put make-up on. So I sort of started thinking we [male ballet dancers] are sort of different aren't we, doing all these stuff. Actually now, eventually at some stage, I do regret having to do all that artificial dressing and stuff. (Mostly straight, 40+)

The actual practice of dance, which requires dancers to be athletic, strong and in good-shape is perceived as conventionally masculine. Yet, the symbolic representations of masculinity during onstage performances, and male dancers' engagement with practices which are seen as feminine, are distanced from that

which would be read as conventional masculinity in the outside-of-dance society. Female and male dancers are thus seen as the Other of heterosexual, conventionally masculine men. Thus, the devaluation of ballet might rely, at least partially, on its continuous association with women and femininity and the their lower position in hierarchical gender relations.

Ballet productions that companies reproduce, the costumes, the 'elegance' (David, straight, 31-40) and 'softness' (Frank, gay, 22-30) male ballet dancers must display onstage, signify effeminacy and contribute to the perception of male dancers as effeminate. As Fisher argued 'men in ballet not only have to appear as mild-mannered as Clark Kent but also have to overcome the dicey image of a man in tights' (2009:39). Frank, for example, said:

> I think [people think] ballet is very soft although it's not really. We know it's not. You need to be very strong to do it but you still need to be very pretty doing it I think. (Frank, gay, 22-30)

Ballet according to Frank is interpreted as being 'soft'. Whilst dancers portray softness through their seemingly effortless movements onstage, they still need to be extremely strong. However, this strength is hidden behind the expression of emotion and flowing movements, which are elements that are distanced from conventional masculinity. As Alan characteristically said:

> I feel that even the princes in older ballets they are not men [showing strength with face/hands] they are men [uses lower tone voice and shows calmer with hands and face]. (Alan, straight, 18-21)

Male dancers' posture is elevated and their comportment is light. As has been argued in chapter 6, notions of conventional masculinity refer to, amongst other qualities, physical strength and aggression. The images that male dancers project onstage are not aligned with these qualities. Especially ballet dancers need to appear noble, soft and calm; these are qualities which, as has been discussed in chapter 4, were aligned with representations of aristocratic masculinity rather than, for example, working-class masculinity which became synonymous to prowess, physicality and athleticism through time (Buchbinder, 2013; Forth, 2008).

The characters male dancers perform onstage, and the long periods of intense ballet training they receive, influence the ways they come across during onstage performances, but also during encounters in their everyday lives (see also chapter 7). Their demeanour and comportment signify kinesthetic effeminacy (Hennen, 2008); this condition influences the ways they are perceived by others. This is evident in the following commentary:

> I have got some really nice guy friends but I am not like a manly man. […] My brother is quite a lad. He plays rugby and he is a funny guy. […] As I would say I am more like, I know what I am. I am camp. It's like everyone in the company. Even the straightest of the straight guys here is like they wouldn't be that straight outside the company. They wouldn't be considered that manly outside the company because everyone here is a bit like feminine. (Alan, straight, 18-21)

Alan's commentary discusses male dancers in relation to men in the outside-of-dance society. Alan suggested that if we compared men in dance with men in other, perhaps more conventionally masculine, contexts male dancers would be perceived as 'a bit like feminine'. Whilst a man can be read as the 'manliest' within this context, outside of it the same man might be read as unmanly or effeminate. Male dancers' bodies, their comportment, demeanour, posture and so on signifies effeminacy. As has been argued in chapter 7, these are aspects of dancers' bodies which are conditioned by their intense engagement in dance. This results in, to use Goffman's term, dancers 'giving off' non-verbal expressions which are read as effeminate (1959). This, in combination to the symbolic representations of gender that are presented during onstage dance performances, result in dance being recreated as an unconventionally masculine practice. As Fisher argued, despite all of the efforts to overcome the associations ballet has with effeminacy and homosexuality, it will be extremely difficult if not impossible to make ballet be perceived as macho (2009).

Even though dance is becoming more popular amongst men, widely held notions that assume male ballet dancers, and to a lesser degree contemporary dancers, as being effeminate still seem to exist. It should however be noted here that while femininity is more often than not less valued than masculinity in the wider society, in a sphere such as dance, which has become mutually constitutive with women and femininity, women who comply with conventional femininity are

benefited more. As George said, ‘it’s OK to be a feminine man in ballet, but not a masculine woman’ (gay, 22-30).

Overall, this section discussed the ways male dancers negotiate their practice of dance by presenting it as conventionally masculine. Some common ways of doing this were by comparing dance to sport; by stressing the physicality and strength dancers should have to be able to perform demanding choreographies and characters onstage; and by discussing dance narratives which revolve around heterosexuality and gender binaries. However, as has been demonstrated, there are tensions between the actual practice of dance, which has conventionally masculine elements, and the symbolic representations of gender that are displayed during onstage performances. These representations, as has been suggested, do not correspond to images of conventional masculinity in the outside-of-dance society.

The Official Dance World

As has been argued, informants tended to emphasise the conventionally masculine aspects of their dance practice whilst, however, acknowledging that some aspects of dance are distanced from conventional masculinity. In addition to dancers, official dance bodies and dance teachers also tend to make dance seem conventionally masculine. Risner, for example, argued that dance teachers aim to make boys and young men feel more comfortable in dance by emphasising the pleasure they can get from overcoming the physical challenges of ‘jumping higher, shifting weight faster, moving bigger, and balancing longer’ (2009:60). Thus, emphasis is placed on physicality and the physical challenges that dance entails as well as the pleasure that can be acquired from overcoming these challenges. Dance teachers, official dance bodies and dance institutions in general try to masculinise dance and redefine it as a suitable activity for boys and young men in their effort to attract more men in this sphere. As Ben, who used to work as a dance teacher, said:

> when I taught in schools I saw that is hard to get the boys on board but once you have them on board they are fearless and incredible […] boys are hesitant because this is called dance but once you got them

> […] they are just moving and throwing each other and it's much more physical and fearless and it's really exciting to see that kind of stuff. [...] [You can increase male participation in dance] certainly just [by making boys] see it [dance] and giving them more workshops from maybe a more physical side. (Ben, gay, 31-40)

Ben's commentary reinforces Risner's argument (2009). Ben suggested that a way to attract boys in dance could be by 'giving them workshops from maybe a more physical side'. This aims to emphasise physicality and movement instead of other qualities, such as expressivity and emotions, for example, that would signify femininity (Weeks, 2007). This though suggests that masculinity is more valued than femininity and such practices contribute in the recreation of hierarchies between, and within, gender categories. Despite that the intention of these practices is to invite more boys and young men in dance, such actions recreate dominant discourses; they recreate masculinity as mutually constitutive with physicality, strength and fearlessness and contribute to the reproduction of the prevailing gender order.

Fisher suggested that the official ballet world (teachers, directors, educational bodies and so on) try to make ballet 'seem athletically masculine and resolutely heterosexual' (2009:33). She referred to this as 'making it [ballet] macho' strategy. Likewise, Risner referred to the same practice as the 'Baryshnikov complex' (2014). As Risner argued:

> the dance profession in many ways reinforces the value system found throughout the rest of society: this is evident in choreography, performance and training, where heterosexual themes, content, and sensibilities, as well as heterosexual male dancers, are privileged (2014:2).

Indeed, most ballet choreographies, and many contemporary dance choreographies, revolve around heterosexual relationships. This condition makes heterosexuality seem both 'natural' and privileged. Such conditions, therefore, contribute to the reproduction of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999). This is though paradoxical; heterosexual hegemony is reinforced during onstage performances, but condensed during backstage interactions and actions (see also chapter 6). Dance consists of equal numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual men and, as has been argued in earlier chapters, gay and bisexual male dancers are in the backstage as valued as heterosexual male dancers are.

Hence, whilst onstage ballet performances display rigid representations of archaic images of femininity and masculinity, in the backstage spaces there is a greater variety of gendered performances and actions which lead to the 'normalising' of non-binary performances of gender and non-heterosexual sexualities.

Further, according to Fisher (2009) and Risner (2014), official bodies try to increase male participation in dance by disassociating dance from male homosexuality and effeminacy. They do this through displaying and emphasising conventionally masculine, heterosexual male dancers in advertisements and public images. Informants such as Bradley and Simon reiterated this. Bradley, for example, said:

> I think in recent years there has been an active promotion from the media to portray, not just men, men are just involved, ballet as something really physical and hard. There was a documentary on English National Ballet maybe four years ago or so and it was all about the men in the company and they deliberately focused on really straight men to kind of get that across people. […] there has been a push to make people understand that not all male ballet dancers are gay but some are and that's ok as well. (Bradley, straight, 18-21)

Bradley's commentary that documentaries focus primarily on straight male dancers reaffirms arguments made by Fisher (2009) and Risner (2014). The intended focus on males aims to portray ballet as a practice which can be masculine, whilst the focus on straight male dancers aims to challenge the quotidian assumptions that associate male dancers with homosexuality and to emphasise the fact that straight men do also dance. Films like *Billy Elliot* and a recent documentary series by BBC[36], for example, can also be seen as efforts that aim in promoting dance, and more specifically ballet, as an appropriate activity for heterosexual men. However, despite the good intentions such initiatives have, they result in the reproduction of homosexuality as the Other to heterosexuality and contribute in the reproduction of the traditional 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999); heterosexuality thus remains 'unmarked' or the norm (Reeser, 2010). Such actions also reinforce the existing gender order, binaries and the qualities which are traditionally associated with these. As can be seen in the following extract, Simon problematised these practices.

[36] Darcey's ballet heroes; Dance Rebels: A History of Modern Dance

> Until the choreographer arrived I was chatting with Simon, a gay contemporary dancer. We started talking about men in dance and how dancing is not normal for boys. He initiated the discussion. Whilst talking about another company he works for he said: 'the artistic director [in that other company] uses all sorts of men, masculine and not and she's doing work not only in very masculine themes but also in fragility and vulnerability'. He said 'people are creating works with very strong, masculine images which is not the solution to the problem' [referring to dance being associated with gay men and women]. (Field diary notes, Kinesis, 8/4/2014)

Practices such as the ones discussed by Bradley and Simon tend to contribute to the reproduction of gender binaries and the preservation of hierarchies between male and female dancers. However, this is not to suggest that *all* companies and dance artists do this. Some contemporary dance companies, and in some cases companies which employ the balletic technique but produce modern works, provide an arena for dancers to challenge the heterosexual matrix and problematise the prevailing gender order in backstage spaces, but also during onstage performances.

As has been suggested in chapter 4, since the 1970s there have been dancers and dance companies which have explicitly approached issues around gender and sexualities. Some have managed to problematise the binaries and mess about with gender and sexuality during onstage performances. Such works display agendered movement and choreographies, different combinations of male and female dancers onstage and themes which explicitly aim in problematising 'heteronormativity' (Berlant and Warner, 1998) and the traditional gender order. This, it may be suggested, is partially enabled because of 'the increasing reflexivity in regard to the rules and norms of "social" life' that characterise postmodern societies, and have led to processes of 'reconfiguration of gender and sexuality' (Adkins, 2002:3). It might be also enabled because dance is a creative context, which often embraces, and sets to problematise inequalities and social problems (see also Prickett, 2013). Hence, unlike ballet performances where male dancers are expected to perform masculinity and female dancers femininity, contemporary dance performances do *sometimes* problematise the prevailing gender order (See also chapters 4 and 6).

Yet, considering the majority of dance performances that are produced, as well as official dance bodies' approaches to this issue, it might be suggested that

despite the few instances where dance challenges the matrix, it predominantly contributes in its prevalence. Dance is still influenced by prevailing structures; opportunities for gender undoing, at least during onstage performances, are therefore, fairly constrained by dominant norms. Even a creative context such as dance, which has proved to be an open and accepting environment for men to experiment with their sexuality and a space where they can 'undo' gender (see also Dolan, 2010; Rumens and Bromfield, 2014), still constrains the available possibilities for challenging normative gender binaries and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). Such strategies challenge the conventional gendering of dance, by, however, recoding it in terms of the same conventions. This results in the maintenance of gender binaries and sexuality categories as hierarchically stratified.

Overall, the dance culture, and especially ballet culture, mainly reproduces the heterosexual matrix through its official practices. It promotes dance as a conventionally masculine activity for heterosexual men, which whilst aiming in increasing dance's status and male participation in dance, it contributes in the devaluation of certain genders and sexualities. Hence, the dance world is characterised by two coexisting layers: one of which benefits the coherence of gender, sex and desire -during onstage shows and formal practices-, and another which enables the suppression and challenge of the matrix. The latter refers to everyday interactions, actions and practices in the backstage spaces of dance institutions (see chapter 6), which are spaces that are isolated within this world. The former, on the other hand, refers to frontstage practices and onstage performances, which is the space that is in direct contact with the public and, hence, the wider society. However, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters, backstage spaces often coexist with frontstage spaces. Thus, informal actions, performances and interactions in the backstage might still influence the perceived capacities of performers and, therefore, their casting opportunities.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, informants in their majority presented dance as a masculine activity by stressing its conventionally masculine

elements (strength, discipline, determination, training, muscularity and so on). This study's findings reinforce arguments made by Robinson et al. (2011), and Pullen and Simpson (2009) who suggested that men in feminised professions do gender by emphasising the masculine aspects of their professions. The emphasis of the (seemingly) masculine aspects of dance suggests a need to masculinise their dance practice, which is widely associated with women and femininity. This recreates and maintains certain attributes as normatively masculine and contributes to the division of gender into binary categories. It also reproduces the power relations between and within gender categories as well as between heterosexuality and other sexualities.

Nevertheless, as has been demonstrated, despite their efforts to masculinise dance, male dancers also realise that dance 'is not the butchest thing' (David, straight, 31-40). The roles dancers embody onstage, narratives they perform, costumes they wear, practices such as wearing make-up and so on, do not signify conventional masculinity. Since gender binaries prevail, such practices come to signify women and femininity. Hence, while comparing themselves to men in the outside-of-dance society, they perceived themselves as less manly. This, as has been suggested, relies on that their dance practice conditions their bodies, comportment, demeanour and overall presentation of self which signify effeminacy. Hence, although they tried to masculinise dance, informants suggested that there are constraints.

Overall, informants' efforts to normalise dance as a profession for men, alongside the formal practices that are initiated by dance bodies contribute in the reproduction of the traditional gender order and 'heteronormativity' (Berlant and Warner, 1998). It can thus be concluded that the culture of dance is characterised by tensions; as an independent sphere, a world on its own, it provides a safe space for male dancers to undo gender and 'mess about' with dominant sexuality norms. However, when this world comes in interaction with the outside-of-dance society it complies to dominant norms and normative behaviours. The findings of this study, therefore, demonstrate that dance institutions, regardless of how liberating they are assumed to be, function, at least partially, within the matrix (Butler, 1999).

Chapter 9
Conclusion

Dance. A utopia of possibilities or a sphere of constraints? This thesis analysed the paradox that characterises dance and the complex practices which occur within dance institutions with regards to gender and sexuality. It argued that the dance environment consists of three coexisting and interrelated spaces - backstage, frontstage, onstage- and that possibilities for gender and sexuality renegotiations vary as we move between these.

The onstage is distinctive from the other two and refers to dance performances which are staged to be consumed by an audience. As this thesis has demonstrated, these performances vary as we move between ballet and contemporary dance. Ballet performances often date back to the romantic period and the imageries which were seen as ideal then. Ballet performances almost always display rigid gender binaries, conservative gender relations and treat heterosexual desire as normative. The 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999) is in these instances sustained. On the other hand, contemporary dance productions are more complex and variations can be identified as we move between different companies and traditions. Onstage contemporary dance performances often, or at least more often than ballet ones, problematise gender and sexuality norms and scrutinise social realities. Such performances act as instances where the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999) is challenged.

Onstage displays, however, capture only one part of this world. There are interesting tensions as we turn our attention away from onstage performances and towards backstage interactions, encounters and practices. The latter was the main concern of this thesis. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, in the backstage spaces male dancers can dismantle gender binaries or 'undo gender' as this was defined by Deutsch (2007). They can also engage with that which might be conventionally perceived as femininity, and they can challenge 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). Backstage spaces of dance institutions provide a safe space for male dancers to question that which they previously took for granted, problematise prevailing gender and sexuality norms,

and experiment with their sexuality. The world of dance as a micro-context enables 'reflexivity' (Giddens, 1991) and affords men opportunities to reflect on themselves in a critical and conscious manner.

Further variations exist as we turn our attention towards the frontstage. Contemporary dance and the process of creating contemporary dance performances -the 'creative journey' (Richard, gay, 31-40)-, which often deal with social and cultural issues, invite dancers to stand back and reflexively scrutinise aspects of themselves, their social identities and social realities. This often results in 'discoveries', as Matt (straight, 22-30), one of the contemporary dancers, said. Thus, contemporary dance as a context and a practice encourages heightened reflexivity and invites dancers to problematise previous knowledge, understandings and beliefs they might have. Ballet on the other hand, because of the themes it often displays onstage, does not allow as much space for critical reflection and self-questioning in the frontstage and during onstage performances. The backstage is experienced as 'a very gay world', as George (gay, 22-30) said, and male dancers can challenge prevailing gender and sexuality norms; yet, onstage performances and practices in frontstage spaces still contribute to the reproduction of the prevailing sex/gender/sexuality system, which Butler usefully theorised as 'heterosexual matrix' (1999).

As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, frontstage spaces often coexist with backstage spaces. Dancers, in this sense, never stop 'performing' or go 'out-of-character' (Goffman, 1959). Dancers' gender and sexuality were often experienced as essential parts of their identities; for most informants, gender and sexuality were seen as deriving from *within* themselves rather than being the outcome of their actions and stylisation of bodies. This often led to backstage interactions and performances influencing whether dancers would be seen as suitable for certain (gendered) roles and whether they would be able to convincingly transform onstage. This condition led, at least some informants, to continue managing the impressions they gave in the backstage. Thus, backstage interactions were at least partially regulated by prevailing norms. Even though dance institutions were generally experienced as spaces with increased opportunities for dancers to 'undo gender' (Deutsch, 2007) and problematise 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993), these were still partially influenced by

the norms that prevail in the dominant sex/gender/sexuality system because onstage shows shape frontstage expectations and thus, indirectly, backstage performances and interactions.

The division of the context of dance into onstage, frontstage and backstage spaces enabled the analysis of the actions, interactions and processes which occur in dance institutions' different spaces, and the ways that companies' expectations influence male dancers' performances of gender and sexuality in each of these. This thesis also demonstrated the tensions which characterise different dance institutions and the variations that exist between dance genres.

Thesis Overview

The early chapters of this thesis discussed the theories and concepts that influenced this project (see chapter 2) and the methodology which was employed in this study (see chapter 3). Following from these, chapter 4 provided an original discussion of the historical conditions that led to the development of ballet and modern dance. It employed sociological theories and feminist texts to analyse historical narratives that cover the gendering of dance from the time of its emergence until the present. These chapters contextualised this study.

Ensuing data-analysis chapters followed an inductive approach and generated knowledge from the collected data. Chapter 5 provided novel insights into the conditions that influenced participants' involvement in an unconventionally masculine practice such as dance. The remaining data analysis chapters shed light into the world of professional dance in Scotland, and dance institutions as particular contexts, with three spaces that are characterised by tensions and complexities.

Chapter 6 analysed onstage performances and the ways these relate to the prevailing gender and sexuality order. It also analysed backstage spaces of dance institutions by providing significant insights into the experiences dancers had from being involved in this sphere. Lastly, it conveyed the actions, processes and

interactions that occur in these settings, which contribute to the challenge, but also reinforcement, of dominant gender and sexuality norms.

Chapter 7 analysed dancers' bodies and their embodied actions as elements which influence their dance practice, onstage presence and overall presentation of self with regards to gender and sexuality. This chapter stressed the fact that dancers are trained actors and skilled performers. Considering this, it discussed dancers as social agents who are able to control and actively manage the impressions of gender and sexuality they 'give' before others (Goffman, 1959). However, it also argued that some aspects of gender and sexuality were seen by participants as embodied and essential parts of themselves. As such, they were perceived as being unconsciously 'given off' (Goffman, 1959) when they danced and interacted with others.

Lastly, chapter 8 analysed the conditions that make dance being perceived as a supposedly masculine, yet at the same time an unmasculine practice. It also discussed the ways that male dancers, and official dance bodies, promote dance by emphasising its conventionally 'masculine' qualities and by presenting it as an activity appropriate for heterosexual men. Chapter 8 argued that such practices reinforce the prevailing gender order and recreate oppressive structures.

The data-analysis chapters discussed dance as a sphere which is widely seen as liberating because of the qualities it has historically acquired, and as a safe environment to undo gender and challenge heterosexual hegemony. However, this thesis demonstrated that there exist underlying complexities and tensions, which actually restrict available possibilities for transgression. This thesis argued that dance, as a micro-context, enables opportunities for transgression. However, when this sphere is in direct contact with the wider, out-of-dance society –during onstage performances, which also influence frontstage expectations, practices, and formal actions-, possibilities are restricted and regulated by dominant norms and understandings.

Aim and Research Questions

Previous studies suggested that feminised work contexts enable men to challenge dominant gender norms and reconsider prevailing assumptions they have with regards to gender (Anderson, 2005, 2009; Pullen and Simpsons, 2009; Robinson et al., 2011). These studies focus mainly on gender, and specifically masculinity. Aiming to contribute to these discussions, this thesis investigated the processes which occur in dance institutions with regards to both gender *and* sexualities, and the various ways these intersect with each other on the one hand, and with dance as a practice on the other.

Since the 19th century, dance in Britain has been associated with femininity, male effeminacy and homosexuality. While these associations might have begun to decline, they still exist. Considering the attachments the sphere and practice of dance have, this thesis explored the conditions that initiated informants' involvement in this activity. Further, dance is one of those rare social spheres where being non-heterosexual is perceived as normal, and as demonstrated at some cases expected; hence, this project investigated the ways male dancers construct, perform and (re)negotiate their gender *and* sexuality within the sphere of dance. Lastly, considering that dance is a sphere with certain cultural attachments, this research examined the ways male dancers negotiate their involvement in dance and the ways they negotiate their professional identity.

Three main research questions guided the data collection and analysis.

a. Considering that dance is an unconventional activity for men, what are the conditions that influenced male dancers' involvement in dance?

b. How do different spaces, processes and relations within dance institutions in Scotland influence the negotiations of gender and sexuality?

c. How do male dancers in Scotland negotiate their dance practice with regard to their gender and sexuality?

These questions provided insights into informants' life histories. They discovered that informants' social location and familial background influenced their

involvement in dance and overall dance trajectory. These questions also enabled the study of the processes which occur within dance institutions' different spaces, and the unveiling of the tensions that characterise this sphere as an entity in itself and as part of the wider society. Lastly, these questions enabled the investigation of the ways these men negotiated their involvement in a non-conventionally masculine sphere. These findings are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Empirical Findings

1st Research Question: Considering that dance is an unconventional activity for men, what are the conditions that influenced male dancers' involvement in dance?

Dance is still seen as an unconventional activity for boys and young men; only a minority of boys become involved in dance (Burt, 2007; Risner, 2002a, 2009; Sanderson, 2001). This relies on mainly two reasons. Firstly, there exists the belief that dance is an activity which, as informants also argued, 'is for girls and gay boys'. This results in most boys not developing, or being encouraged to develop, an interest in this practice. Secondly, dance is not widely taught at most schools; hence, for boys to become involved in this practice, they need to discover it in their leisure time. However, parents often do not even consider this activity as one which their sons might enjoy because of the gendered connotations it has (Sanderson, 2001). Considering these issues, chapter 5 discussed the conditions that initiated informants' involvement in dance based on the age they started dancing. Chapter 5 argued that informants' social location, familial background and age they became introduced to dance, were factors that influenced their routes into dancing and career trajectories.

The majority of early beginners came from a middle class family, with parents who were interested, and in many cases recreationally involved, in the arts. It is perhaps no surprise that most informants who ended up pursuing a career in ballet were members of the middle classes. Ballet, is one of the most elitist dance genres because of its onstage representations (fantasy worlds, princes and princesses, kings, queens and palaces) and the resources which are necessary to

become involved in it. To be able to pursue a career in ballet, one needs to have strong technique, which implies years of ballet training. This presupposes the availability of financial and cultural resources, which will also enable one to develop the 'right' habitus to be able to engage with this genre, learn to appreciate it and believe that it is something which is worth doing. The latter is especially important as most boys encounter discriminatory attitudes because they are involved in a feminised practice such as dance. To continue to dance, therefore, they need to learn to appreciate and enjoy this practice.

Further, cultural resources affect *whether,* but also *when,* one will become involved in dance. Early beginners' parents, and in most cases their mothers, were either professionally or recreationally involved in the arts. Since they were familiar with this world, they were able to introduce their children to it and see dance as an activity that their children might enjoy. In contrast, late beginners' parents had no artistic hobbies. Since they were not immersed in the arts, they could not have developed their children's interest in the arts either. It is therefore foreseeable that late beginners developed an interest in dance after they became accidentally introduced to this practice. Again, their late introduction to dance can be linked back to dominant notions which recreate dance as a unconventionally masculine activity.

Overall, it has been demonstrated that there are differences between early and late beginners with regards to the time and ways they became introduced to dance. Early beginners' interest in dance was most often initiated by their parents, who themselves had artistic interests or were professionally involved in the arts. Late beginners, on the other hand, lacked familiarity with dance and their interest in this practice was initiated when they became introduced to dance through mandatory or optional classes at their colleges or universities. These conditions suggest that whether boys and young men will become introduced to dance, the time they will do so and the genre they will practise, are influenced by their social location (Bottero, 2005), and the ways their classed backgrounds influence notions of gender. The latter influences which activities will be seen as 'appropriate' for boys and whether dance will be one of these.

2nd Research Question: How do different spaces, processes and relations within dance institutions in Scotland influence the negotiations of gender and sexuality?

A straightforward answer to this question is that experimentation with regards to gender and sexuality is possible, but is restricted by the continuous reproduction of formal structures which maintain the prevalence of conventional gender norms. A more complex answer includes distinguishing between the backstage, frontstage and onstage and the processes which occur in each of these spaces.

In the backstage of dance institutions gender subversion, experimentation and the reduction of gender difference are possible. 'Undoing gender' (Deutsch, 2007) and engaging with femininity are in this space seen as normal. Further, the high numbers of non-heterosexual men that can be found in this sphere, the conceptualisation of dance as 'a very gay world' (George, gay, 22-30), and the equal valuing of heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality in the backstage spaces contribute to the challenge of 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999). They also contribute to the challenge of discourses which position heterosexuality as 'compulsory' (Rich, 1980) and 'hegemonic' (Butler, 1993). Dance institutions' backstage spaces are therefore environments which encourage 'reflexivity' (Giddens, 1991) in relation to both gender and sexuality. These are environments which encourage male dancers to reflect on, problematise and scrutinise the prevailing gender and sexuality order.

In some cases, gender bending expressions and queer performances are also accepted and even encouraged in the frontstage, and accordingly during onstage dance performances[37]; this refers to dance companies and dance works which actively aim to problematise gender norms, the existing gender order and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). However, with the exception of instances where gender subversion is the intended aim, in most cases dance companies reproduce dominant gender and sexuality norms by expecting dancers to be able to convincingly perform masculinity and heterosexuality during frontstage and onstage performances. This is especially the case with ballet and the continuing reproduction of classical works, gendered narratives and displays of heterosexual love and desire. Frontstage and onstage practices, imageries and

[37] See for example Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake.

narratives, thus, condense possibilities for gender transgression and the challenge of heterosexual hegemony. Indirectly, they contribute to the maintenance of the prevailing gender and sexuality system (Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002).

Further, informants' dance practice and training often encourage them to reflect on their presentation of self. This process makes them conscious of the ways they come across before others. Throughout their dance training, they learn how to rehearse and embody different roles for different performances; transforming, therefore, becomes part of their everyday life realities. However, when it came to aspects of social identity such as gender and sexuality, which were often perceived as 'natural' parts of themselves, informants saw their own or others' ability to transform as restricted; this described the view of many participants. This is important because frontstage spaces often coexist with backstage spaces. Dancers' performances in the backstage often affect whether they will be perceived as able to transform in the frontstage, and accordingly during onstage performances without 'giving off' (Goffman, 1959) parts of their gender identity and sexuality. Many argued that they were conscious of how their 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1959) influenced their assigned roles. The (often) blurry boundaries between frontstage and backstage led many dancers to never really stop performing, even when they were acting as their everyday 'selves'.

Some informants suggested that they can embody flamboyant roles as well as conventionally masculine ones. Others suggested that they can embody roles which are closer to their offstage selves better than the ones which are not. Interestingly though, heterosexual and non-heterosexual informants thought that heterosexual dancers would be able to come across as *effortlessly* masculine whilst they questioned gay dancers' ability to do so. This reinforces arguments which suggest that gender and sexuality are interlinked (Butler, 1999; Jackson, 1999; Jackson and Scott, 2002). This also suggests that even in a profession which relies on acting and performing, parts of dancers' identities were seen more often than not as hard to amend; as discussed in chapter 7, these were seen as at least partially embodied, as essential parts of themselves, which they cannot easily transform.

Dance is thought of and celebrated as an accepting environment, which encourages reflection, experimentation and questioning; however, dancers who might in their everyday life come across as effeminate are often assumed to be less able than their conventionally masculine colleagues to convincingly perform 'masculine' roles onstage. There is thus a paradox. Dance in its backstage is welcoming and accepting towards non-heterosexual and gender queer people. Yet, the backstage often coexists with the frontstage. The expectations that are set in the frontstage often contribute to the maintenance of dominant notions of gender as binary and heterosexuality as the dominant form of sexuality. Hence, dance affords, but at the same time restricts, possibilities for 'undoing' gender and challenging 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). Formal expectations, practices and performances in the frontstage and onstage contribute to the reproduction of the same structures which dance is thought to be suppressing.

3rd Research Question: How do male dancers in Scotland negotiate their dance practice with regard to their gender and sexuality?

This final question was mainly discussed in the final data-analysis chapter. This chapter demonstrated that most male dancers, especially while they were younger, did not emphasise the dancing aspect of their identity, or they actively tried to hide it, in order to avoid other people's judgment; they became involved in 'role distance' (Goffman, 1961). This technique was employed by most informants during the time they were young, and a few dancers during the time of the research.

In their majority, informants often tried to 'masculinise' dance by associating it with conventionally masculine elements, practices and qualities. Some informants stressed the physical aspect of their job, the strength they need, the discipline they must have and the difficult movements they perform onstage. These are qualities that have been associated with conventional masculinity since the 18th century at least (see also chapter 4). This data reinforces the claims made by Robinson and Hockey (2011) and Pullen and Simpson (2009), who reported that during interviews their informants emphasised aspects of their job

such as bodily skills, strength and so on. This acted as a technique to make an otherwise feminised profession seem appropriate for men. The implementation of such strategies also suggest that qualities which are associated with each gender still exist; it is, therefore, important for men who are involved in dance to 'normalise' their profession by making it seem more conventionally masculine.

Another technique that was employed, mainly by heterosexual informants, was the approximation of dance to sports. This is perhaps unsurprising if we consider that both dance and sport are physical activities, which require a certain lifestyle, body conditioning, strength, stamina, discipline and so on. Yet, this can also be explained if we consider that most sports have been traditionally associated with men and dominant notions of masculinity (Anderson 2011; Renold, 2005). Once again, such practices suggest the prevalence of gender norms and the need for people to adhere to these. It was important for informants to make dance, a sphere which is widely regarded as feminised, seem appropriate for men. They did this by de-emphasising its feminine characteristics and by emphasising its conventionally masculine ones. This study's findings, therefore, suggest that gender binaries are still prevalent and hierarchically related.

Original Contribution

This study makes an original contribution to three main bodies of literature: to the body of knowledge that is concerned with the social study of gender and sexuality in dance; to the sociology of gender and sexualities more widely, and to its subfield which is concerned with men in feminised work environments more specifically. Further, this study can be useful to official dance bodies and dance institutions as it provides insights into male dancers' experiences of being involved in this sphere, the pleasures they get from dancing and the challenges they face from being involved in this practice.

Social Analysis of Gender and Sexuality in Dance

This study is one of the few studies to have investigated gender and sexuality in professional dance from a sociological perspective. It is also the first one to have focused on the social study of gender and sexuality in dance in Scotland. Existing studies on gender and sexuality in dance are mainly situated in the academic fields of dance studies and dance education (see for example: Edwards, 2014; Gard, 2001; Risner, 2002a, 2002b, 2007; Roebuck, 2001). Burt (2007) and Thomas (1993; 1995) are amongst the few sociologists of dance to have discussed gender in this sphere; yet, Burt's approach is mainly historical and investigates the biographies and narratives of key male dancers. Thomas on the hand, focuses mainly on the intersections of dance, culture, bodies and gender. The approach of this study is thus original both in terms of its methodology and scope.

This study's findings rely on primary data, which was collected through observation at four different dance companies and semi-structured interviews with males professionally involved in the dance scene in Scotland. The selection of dancers and dance institutions situated broadly in ballet and contemporary dance provided detailed insights into these different genres and contributed to the analysis of the tensions, but also similarities, which characterise them. This study was not presented as a comparative one; however, certain parts of this thesis provided comparative discussions, which contributed to the unveiling of the tensions and similarities, which characterise these genres on the one hand, and the different spaces in dance institutions on the other. Such comparisons proved to be significant in conveying the underlying factors that influence the construction, negotiation and performance of gender and sexuality in dance.

By referring to the histories and philosophies of these genres, and by analysing the factors which influenced, and still influence, the development and gendering of ballet and contemporary dance, this thesis demonstrated how onstage performances, and thus frontstage expectations, are shaped. These in their turn influence the available opportunities that exist for dancers to reflect on themselves, their lives, and aspects of their identities such as gender and sexuality. The unveiling of the tensions was also significant in understanding dance as a social sphere which provides a space for dancers to scrutinise

prevailing gender and sexuality norms, mainly in the backstage, but also as a social sphere which contributes to the reproduction of the dominant sex/gender/sexuality system, mainly through onstage performances and frontstage expectations.

Dance exists as part of the creative arts industry. As such, it is often used as a medium to communicate social problems and raise awareness of certain issues; gender and sexuality are often amongst these. Yet, more often than not, dance choreographies and formal dance practices display prevailing gender binaries and heteronormativity. This study provided novel insights into these processes and discussed aspects of these which construct dance as a liberating, yet at the same time as another oppressive, sphere that reproduces the norms that prevail in the mainstream culture and society.

Further, this study's sociological focus and its emphasis on the micro-interactions that occur it the backstage and frontstage spaces of dance institutions revealed that gender and sexuality are contextual, situational and relational. The discussions that unfolded in preceding chapters raised awareness of the ways that gender and sexuality are negotiated in the different spaces of dance institutions and of non-heterosexual, as well as heterosexual, male dancers' experiences of being involved in this sphere. Dance teachers and official dance bodies can use these findings to make dance an even more inclusive sphere and practice, and an even stronger resource to challenge dominant social attitudes, inequalities and oppressive practices.

Likewise, this thesis can be useful to dance researchers and official dance bodies as it analysed informants' routes into dancing and the conditions which enabled, or restricted, their early introduction to dance. It also analysed the troubles they faced while growing up because of their involvement in dance. Considering the current efforts that are made to increase male participation in dance, this study can be a valuable resource which can be used to develop action that can make younger generations' access and routes into dancing easier, without however, devaluing gay dancers or dancers whose performances of gender do not comply to prevailing norms. This study encourages us to be conscious of the negative consequences that the promotion of straight, conventionally masculine male dancers can have.

Lastly, the analysis of the historical conditions that led to the gendering of dance, and the emphasis placed on the socio-cultural conditions that influenced this, can be of use to dance historians and dance teachers. Most historical accounts of dance, which pay attention to gender, focus on female dancers and key female dance figures (Banes, 1998; Kelly, 2012; Thomas, 1993). Burt's (2007) historical narrative is one of the few that has focused specifically on male dancers and masculinity in dance; however, I would argue that the analysis employed in this thesis is different from that of Burt's in that it focuses on the wider socio-cultural conditions that led to the gendering of dance instead of focusing on key dance figures.

Sociology of Gender and Sexualities

The study of a population which is trained to perform and encouraged to reflect on its performances sheds light to gender and sexuality as aspects of social identities that can be rehearsed and consciously managed, but also as aspects of social identities which are embodied and thus hard to amend. Male and female dancers, as has been demonstrated, are more conscious than other people about the ways they come across; they practise in front of a mirror, they learn to shift between roles and are trained to embody different characters for different shows. This proves to be important, as men in this sphere are actively encouraged to reflect on their image, demeanour, bodies and appearance. Performing before others, and themselves, is part of their daily reality. This aspect of their profession influences their ability to manage their presentation of self in their work environment and during their everyday life encounters.

This study's findings revealed that male dancers are aware of how they come across and are conscious of the ways they adapt their performances as they move between contexts and encounters. However, this is not to suggest that all aspects of their identities were seen as amendable and consciously managed. Parts of their social identities were seen as embodied and as such hard to transform. Gender and sexuality were for most informants experienced as such. For those informants, gender was seen as something which they bring naturally and, as such, as something which they could not control. For those informants,

gender and sexuality were seen as essential parts of their identities, as deriving from within them and, as such, as 'given off' during backstage interactions, frontstage rehearsals and onstage performances. Despite the fact that they are trained performers who learn to shift between roles and embody an array of characters for onstage performances, impressions of gender were seen by many as something which they could not control. This is significant as it demonstrates that gender, even for people who are trained to perform, is often experienced as an *essential* part of their identities and an essential part of who they are. For others, however, performances of gender could be managed precisely because of the acting skills they acquire through their training and the encouragement they get to be reflexively-aware of their presentation of self.

Further, the findings of this study demonstrate that gender and sexuality are, at least for some people, fluid, incomplete and highly impacted by the contexts they act in. These findings reinforce arguments made by Brickell (2005), Robinson and Hockey (2011), and Spector-Mersel (2006). In a sphere such as dance, which enables opportunities for questioning and experimentation, it is likely that people will reflect on their gender and sexuality (see also Adkins, 2000, 2002; Robinson and Hockey, 2011). This mostly happens in the backstage spaces of dance institutions and in some cases during the creative process in the frontstage. It was the case that many informants felt invited to experiment, or at least question, the 'naturalness' of their sexuality, which they previously took for granted. This reinforces theoretical arguments which suggest that people's understandings, beliefs and performances are impacted by the contexts they act in, and the lay knowledge, written and unwritten rules that govern these (Branaman, 1997; Goffman, 1959; Robinson and Hockey, 2011).

Relatedly, informants reported instances where they found themselves questioning their sexuality. However, most informants discussed their experiences and identities through the employment of prevalent labels which reproduced gender as feminine or masculine, and sexuality as either heterosexual or homosexual. Even though their experiences could be located within a wider spectrum of non-binary genders and sexualities, the labels they used reinforced the well-established categories of femininity/masculinity, heterosexuality/homosexuality, men/women and straight/gay. References to

queer identities and bisexuality, for instance, were mainly absent from participants' accounts. Some participants suggested that they actively reflected on their sexualities and questioned whether it was possible that they were attracted to men while they identified as straight. However, none of them used the term 'bisexuality' to refer to these experiences. The way these informants discussed their identities suggests that even within a sphere where transgressive behaviours are enabled and the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1999) can be challenged (at least in the backstage), bisexuality is still 'rendered invisible' (Monro, 2015) and it is hard, if not impossible, to go beyond, or escape from, dominant gender notions and understandings.

Lastly, this study's findings are important for one additional reason. This study stresses that dance, as a context where heterosexuality is not compulsory and one that consists of a proportionally high number of gay and bisexual men, still contributes to the reproduction of dominant gender and sexualities norms. Even though backstage spaces largely enable the transgression of gender and sexuality norms, frontstage practices and onstage performances still reproduce prevailing gender binaries and 'heterosexual hegemony' (Butler, 1993). Such processes restrict the transgression of prevailing understandings and contribute to the reproduction of the dominant sex/gender/sexuality system.

Men in Feminised Professions

The final sphere this thesis contributes to is the one which is concerned with men in feminised professions. There have been some great studies on gender and sexualities in work organisations (for example, Adkins, 1995; Witz et al., 2003). There has also been research on males specifically employed in female-concentrated professional contexts (for example, Lupton, 2000, 2006; Williams et al., 2009); Robinson et al. (2011) studied male hairdressers, Anderson (2005) studied male cheerleaders whilst Pullen and Simpson (2009) studied male nurses and teachers. However, this is a small body of work and this is a topic which warrants further exploration. This study contributes to this body of literature by investigating a professional environment and a population that have not been widely subjected to sociological research.

Many studies on men in feminised professions provide insights into employment settings widely located in the care sector and beauty industry. The focus of this project is novel as it studies the sphere of professional dance, which has very specific cultural attachments, gender and sexuality dynamics. This is a professional environment which has been widely associated with women and femininity and one which consists of similar numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual men. The sexuality dynamics that characterise this environment, which are quite different from the outside-of-dance society and most other work environments, make it a unique context to study. As has been demonstrated, the sexuality dynamics enable men in this sphere to question their sexuality, and problematise that which they previously took for granted.

By explicitly looking at sexuality, as an additional factor to gender, this study added another layer to these discussions and usefully demonstrated that like gender, sexualities can be also fluid and context dependent. This project demonstrated that sexualities, as well as gender, are constructed and negotiated differently in different spaces. The sample of this study, and its focus on organisations which employ, perhaps unintentionally, equal or similar numbers of heterosexual and non-heterosexual men, enabled the observation of how sexualities are performed and negotiated within different spaces in this sphere, and the ways sexuality interplays with gender.

The fact that dance institutions are contexts where ‘heterosexual hegemony’ is not in play, and the queering of the prevailing gender order is often celebrated, creates more possibilities for informants to partially question that which they previously considered as ‘natural’ elements of their identities and enables them to perform aspects of themselves which might have otherwise or elsewhere been contested. However, it should not be assumed that dance institutions are utopias with endless possibilities for people. There are limits which regulate performances and interactions. Thus even a space which is considered creative and free from norms actually contributes to their reproduction. Thus the investigation and analysis of the processes which occur in the backstage, which often coexists with the frontstage, demonstrated the tensions and complexities which characterise the context of dance.

Concluding Remarks

This project has investigated an under-studied context and has contributed to a relatively small body of knowledge. It provided an insight into processes which occur behind dance institutions' curtains and demonstrated what happens with regards to gender *and* sexuality in a context which is not only female-concentrated and feminised but one that is also widely considered to be gay-friendly. It has provided a detailed analysis of processes which contribute to the 'undoing' of gender and the challenge of 'heterosexual hegemony', mainly in the backstage, but also processes and formal practices which reproduce dominant gender and sexuality norms in the frontstage spaces and during onstage performances.

Certainly, there have been improvements in social attitudes and legislative matters with regards to LGBT people. As Anderson argued, today's society is more accepting of non-heterosexual people (2009). Yet, as a recent report suggests 'LGBT people are still often subjected to discrimination and unequal opportunities in areas like social life, *work*, provision of services, care and health (Scottish LGBT Equality Report, 2015:78). Dance, is amongst the potentially few workplaces that are seen as open and accepting of non-heterosexual men; as has been demonstrated, in the backstage spaces homosexuality is as valued as heterosexuality is. Yet, as has been previously argued, it should not be assumed that dance is a utopia of possibilities.

To conclude, I would like to restate this thesis title; *Men in Dance: Undoing Gender, Challenging Heterosexual Hegemony and the Limits of Transgression*. As we have seen gender subversion and the challenge of heterosexual hegemony are enabled by the unwritten rules and lay knowledge that govern dance as a professional context. However, since dance is still part of the wider society and in direct interaction with it, there are regulatory schemas which limit such opportunities for transgression. Male dancers, as social actors, act and interact within social spaces which set some options as viable and others as not.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviewees' Information

Name	Age	Self-Identified Sexuality	Nationality	Specialisation
Alan	18-21	Straight	Rest of UK	Ballet/ Dancer
Andy	22-30	Bisexual	Non-UK	Ballet/ Dancer
Chris	18-21	Gay	Rest of UK	Ballet/ Dancer
Colin	22-30	Gay	Non-UK	Ballet/ Dancer
David	31-40	Heterosexual	Non-UK	Ballet/ Dancer
Gary	18-21	Straight	Non-UK	Ballet/ Dancer
Tim	22-30	Gay	Scotland	Ballet/ Dancer
Bradley	18-21	Straight	Rest of UK	Ballet/ Student
Carl	18-21	Straight	Non-UK	Ballet/ Student
Elliot	18-21	Gay	Non-UK	Ballet/ Student
Gregory	18-21	Straight	Scotland	Ballet/ Student
Jason	18-21	Gay	Scotland	Ballet/ Student
Frank	22-30	Gay	Non-UK	Ballet/ Dancer
George	22-30	Gay	Rest of UK	Ballet/ Dancer
Luke	18-21	Heterosexual	Scotland	Contemporary/Student
William	22-30	Gay	Scotland	Contemporary/Student
Craig	18-21	Gay	Scotland	Contemporary/Student
Tom	40+	Mostly Straight	Non-UK	Contemporary/Director
Paul	31-40	Heterosexual	Rest of UK	Contemporary/Dancer
Richard	31-40	Gay	Non-UK	Contemporary/ Choreographer
Matt	22-30	Heterosexual	Rest of UK	Contemporary/Dancer
John	18-21	Straight	Scotland	Contemporary/Student
Billy	31-40	Straight	Scotland	Contemporary/Director
Steven	40+	Heterosexual	Scotland	Contemporary/Director
Simon	22-30	Gay	Rest of UK	Contemporary/Dancer
Daniel	31-40	Heterosexual	Non-UK	Contemporary/Dancer
Robert	40+	Gay	Scotland	Contemporary/Director
Ben	31-40	Gay	Rest of UK	Contemporary/Dancer

Appendix 2

Pseudonym	**Age of involvement**	**Social Class**	**Parents' Interests**
Alan	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother and Father: Interested in ballet and opera
Andy	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother: recreational dancer while younger; amateur photographer
Chris	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother: recreational dancer while younger
Colin	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother: paints and makes crafts semi-professionally
David	3-12 years old	Working class	Mother: recreational social dancer
Gary	3-12 years old	middle class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Tim	3-12 years old	working class	Mother: recreational dancer while younger
Bradley	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother: professional musician
Carl	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother: holds a degree in art; paints recreationally
Elliot	3-12 years old	middle class	Father: plays music
Gregory	3-12 years old	working class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Jason	3-12 years old	middle class	Mother: paints recreationally
Frank	13-16 years old	middle class	Mother: paints recreationally
George	13-16 years old	middle class	Mother: professional artist, crafts, painting; Father: professional musician
Luke	3-12 years old	middle class	Father: plays music/sings in a choir; mother: draws and paints
William	3-12 years old	working class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Craig	13-16 years old	working class	Mother: recreational dancer while younger; interested in art and crafts making
Tom	13-16 years old	middle class	Mother, Father: Interest in Classical Music; Mother: recreational dancer
Paul	13-16 years old	working class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Richard	13-16 years old	working class	Father: interested in literature; mother: interested in musicals, theatre, crafts and painting
Matt	13-16 years old	middle class	No artistic hobbies/interests
John	Over 17 years old	middle class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Billy	Over 17 years old	middle class	Mother: interested in the arts
Steven	Over 17 years old	middle class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Simon	Over 17 years old	Working class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Daniel	Over 17 years old	Working class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Robert	Over 17 years old	Working class	No artistic hobbies/interests
Ben	Over 17 years old	Working class	No artistic hobbies/interests

Appendix 3: Overall Sample

Age:

18-21	22-30	31-40	40+
11	8	6	3

Sexuality Distribution:

Gay	Straight	Bisexual	Mostly Straight
13	13	1	1

Nationalities:

Scotland	Rest of UK	Non-UK
10	8	10

Professional Status:

Students	Ballet Dancers	Contemporary Dancers
9	9	10

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