

**THE HIDDEN DANCERS: A GOFFMANIAN ANALYSIS OF  
PARTICIPATORY DANCE ACTIVITY AND PRACTICE IN  
GLASGOW, SCOTLAND**

**Bethany Whiteside**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
&  
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# **The Hidden Dancers: A Goffmanian Analysis of Participatory Dance Activity and Practice in Glasgow, Scotland**

Bethany Whiteside

PhD in Dance

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017

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'Sociology is something you do, not something you read about'.

(Erving Goffman)

'The dark, empty theatre; the brown Holland over the seats; the shrouded chandeliers – all could not take away the tense atmosphere of a real performance. The fascination was complete; and in a way, undisrupted by costumes and surroundings, one's vision retained the beauty of line better than in the full blaze of an evening spectacle'.

(Tamara Kasarvina)

'An honest, sincere performance is less firmly connected with the solid world than one might first assume... All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not so easy to specify'.

(Erving Goffman)

'Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun'.

(Clifford Geertz)

## Abstract

Sociology of dance is an evolving discipline that takes as a central focus the social makeup of dance – the societal structures and individual agency that are inherent within dance activity and practice. Relevant ethnographic literature that adopts particular sociological concepts and models is generally narrow in focus, with attention centred on the frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault and the conformation of vocational and professional ballet and contemporary dancer minds and bodies, to particular practice-specific behaviours and beliefs.

Through drawing on Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, this interdisciplinary thesis uncovers and interrogates the two-way relationship between sociological micro relations (social interactions), and various types of dance activity and practice. Six case studies undertaken encompass a wide range of dance and social settings; the professional ballet class, inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class, salsa club, Highland dancing class, and dance in primary education.

Data was collected through undertaking participant observation (primary method) and qualitative interviews (secondary method): each specific combination was influenced by the reflexive approach followed, the nature and setting of each case study and as researcher, my own dance ability. The transcripts and field notes were analysed and situated within Goffman's (1959/1990) framework to interrogate the social and dance 'performances' given. The research aims to firstly, uncover and present the nature of the 'realities' (Goffman, 1959/1990) within each setting and secondly, to interrogate and demonstrate the applicability of the dramaturgical model to dance scholarship. The findings reflect the sociological binary of individual agency and societal structures as realities were shaped by the 'place' of each dance activity and practice in the field of dance, and challenged, maintained or supported existing dominant perceptions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Slim females with their hair in a bun walk up a set of nondescript stairs. One dancer supports the weight of his partner on his hip, lifting her and lowering her down in a graceful arc. Line dancers settle into performing 'Flobie Slide' and 'Wagon Wheel Rock' in unison. A young woman, dressed for a salsa night, hears the beat of Latin American music as she makes her way through a Glasgow nightclub. Highland dancers break in a new pair of ghillies before adjusting and fastening the laces. Children shout and laugh as they 'set to' during a Dashing White Sergeant. The reader will most likely be able to visualise at least one of these events, and it is these everyday dance scenes that this study is concerned with. '[D]ance finds us where we live. It not only absorbs and reflects daily life, but it can shape, inform, and influence social patterns and habits and cultural discourse' (Malnig, 2001, p.7). The current research project analyses, interrogates and presents patterns of social interaction that characterise a range of participatory dance activities and practices in the 'daily lives' of Glasgow's hidden dancers through the presentation of six case studies. They comprise the professional ballet class, inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class, salsa club, Highland dancing class; and dance in primary education.

This introductory chapter establishes the background of, and structure to, this thesis. I begin by exploring the ever-evolving nature of dance studies and the inherent interdisciplinary aspect in particular, situating the present study squarely at an intersection between dance and sociology. I then delineate the structure and discussion of the chapters, which reflects a social science stance, as we move in turn through the key literature, theoretical framework, methodology, analysis and discussion, to conclusions drawn from the research.

## 1. A Brief History of Dance Studies

Dance studies is defined as an academic discipline characterised by its inherent and primary focus on the aesthetics of movement (Giersdorf, 2009; Khudaverdian, 2006). Although the subject term has existed within the literature since the 1980s, 'there has yet to be a systematic scholarship in dance studies' (Khudaverdian, 2006, p.1). In addition, no recent attempt (as far as I can discern) has been made to trace and situate sociology of dance within the wider scholarship of dance studies.

Although dance studies is a relatively new field, it has made significant contributions across the disciplines and domains of anthropology, culture, gender studies, history and politics:

[S]cholars of dance... continue to challenge conventions, undermining entrenched dualisms (e.g. mind/body, thinking/feeling), critiquing evolutionary, colonial, and nationalist typologies (e.g. classical, folk, ethnic), exposing the limits of conceptual categories (e.g. dance, art), and revealing dimensions of dance experience (e.g. the sensual, the divine) that have often been neglected in scholarly inquiry (Reed, 1998, p.527).

Several contributions within a special issue of *Dance Research Journal* (2009) give a contextual account of the development of dance studies (Burt, 2009; Morris, 2009; Giersdorf, 2009). The focus within this issue is predominantly on the landmark decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, when several factors were significant, including the launch of major dance studies programmes in Britain, Europe and the United States, the evolution of dance studies from its predecessor dance history, the influence from cultural studies embracing a leftist curve and, most importantly, the growing use and embrace of interdisciplinarity (Franko, 2009). Taking each of these points in turn, three distinct trajectories of dance studies in the global academy emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century. Within Europe, the focus was on the classification and structures of folk dances, while in America, dance scholarship grew out of a concern with Boasian anthropology (Kaeppeler, 2000). Within Britain, seminal

dance scholar Janet Adshead-Lansdale pioneered dance as a subject of scholarly concern and a stand-alone discipline, through a focus on dance analysis (Giersdorf, 2009).

Manning (2006) has described the replacement of the term 'dance history' with 'dance studies' as the result of interdisciplinarity and increased conversation between dance and other areas of study and inquiry. This 'theoretical turn' (Manning, 2006 cited in Morris, 2009, p.84) was concurrent with a growing interest in dance within anthropology in the 1970s.

Dance history could not sufficiently meet such a change in interest and development. This 'theoretical turn' continued into the 1990s, heralded by Morris (1996) as a decade that saw unprecedented questioning of the study of dance, shaped by the growing influence of cultural studies:

[I]t opened the door to critical theory, gave the field a greater awareness of historical contingency and dance's connections to broader social and political issues, and gave dance scholars permission both to cross disciplinary boundaries and to work in the spaces between them. This is the legacy of early cultural studies, and it radically changed dance research (Morris, 2009, p.92).

Interdisciplinarity is conceptualised by Koritz (1996) within a dance context as a means to seek answers to a greater array of questions than the discipline alone can answer: this approach radically changed the nature of dance scholarship in the academy.

## **2. Dance Studies: A Challenging Climate**

There are a number of challenges facing the field of dance scholarship that relate to the discussion on interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approaches focused on subsequently, and all revolve around or can be linked to the perceived low status of dance studies, which in turn is linked to the focus that is fundamental to the identity of dance studies: the movement that people produce (Kaepler, 1991). At the prestigious 2013 Mellon Dance Studies Seminar, an event held annually in America, the cry was made that '[s]omebody's always

doing something to Dance Studies. For instance, defunding it, or denying it recognition as an important field of critical research and inquiry in the academy' (Clayton et al, 2013, p.18).

Mark Franko offers one reason for this stance within the US, arguing that the Ivy League did not found the study of dance, and thus, has limited interest in recognising and supporting the discipline (Clayton et al, 2013).

However, it is important to recognise that the above challenges are also shared by other disciplines outwith dance studies. Continuing with the American context, during the above seminar event, a report released by Harvard entitled *Mapping the Future* (2013) was cited, revealing that while 81% of Harvard students studying the social sciences remain on their course, only 43% of humanities students continue to major in this area, a situation dire enough to prompt Franko to akin the situation with a state of war within the academy (Clayton et al, 2013). Franko went on to argue that

dance studies should be the weapon to respond... What does it mean for dance studies to be accelerating as a discipline, taking off, with all of this great hope and promise, at a moment when higher education institutions are questioning what's pushing students away from the humanities and arts as majors... The humanities fail to provide preparation for careers. The "bookish" humanities have been rendered obsolete by technological change... the humanists are guilty of a research culture of excessive specialization that deters the formation of truly educated citizens (Clayton et al, 2013, pp.15-16).

Such a statement prompts investigation into how the study of dance is judged in such terms. The low status of dance studies in the academy is intrinsically tied to the notion that dance is an aesthetical and physical 'living blasphemy' (Dupuy, 2003, p.15 cited in Franko, 2006, p.6). More than any other art form (art history, fine arts, music and theatre), discourse in the dance field is fundamentally tied to the singular embodied dancing body (Giersdorf, 2009), which produces an instantaneous and a non-verbal experience (Burt, 2009). This challenge, one that is integral to the place and priority of the discipline within the field of academia, reflects another that is made to a cohesive dance studies: the segregation of practice from

theory within the discipline (Franko, 2009; Giersdorf, 2009) or the 'hierarchy between the manual labor of training and the intellectual labor of theorization/historization' (Giersdorf, 2009, p.27), reflecting the Cartesian division between mind and body. This disunion is most often apparent in university programmes and courses that tend to be either theory or practice based in nature. For example, within the teaching and learning of dance theory, dance history tends to be divided from cultural investigation, and tied to a Western based canon (Giersdorf, 2009). The solution proposed by Franko (2006) is to embed entwined bodily and ideological understanding, and a passion for the dancing itself, within a dance scholarship context. Providing a more succinct explanation, 'the methodological challenge [is] to bridge the study of the verbal, visual, and acoustic with the study of movement itself' (Franko, 2009, p.v). This leads us to consider the debate and discussion surrounding the interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary methods that are central to the discipline.

### **3. Interdisciplinarity and Intradisciplinarity within Dance Studies**

A commitment to interdisciplinarity is the crux of the current study and demonstrated in subsequent chapters and sections. Such an approach allows the relevant disciplines involved to be honoured, to advance their own and each other's respective fields, and for the complexities of a particular research focus to be investigated. Franko cites the point made in Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) that '[i]nterdisciplinarity implies the interdisciplinary team... interdisciplinarity is an attempt to speak to one another' (Clayton et al, 2013, p.13). The approach is also a way to focus on the intricacy of dance as an object and dancing as a process (Clayton et al, 2013) through considering the aesthetic, historical, political and social context within which it is situated; interdisciplinarity allows one to understand 'how dance works address the beholder' (Burt, 2009, p.19). Buckland (1999) makes the point that vibrant sub-disciplines are a sign of the strength and legitimacy of a particular discipline. Within dance studies, many of these 'subdisciplines' are interdisciplinary in nature (i.e. dance history,

dance anthropology) and the potential of a mutually beneficial relationship is illustrated through understanding the power of dance study to challenge and unsettle the accepted canon and historical representation (Franko, 2006). Within the current study, I draw upon interdisciplinary means and ethnographic approaches, to (re)present aesthetic and social understanding of a range of dance types primarily through the people who dance them.

Yet an interdisciplinary approach necessitates a certain responsibility, embraced in the current study: to initiate and interrogate knowledge gained from the secondary discipline 'borrowed' from. Such an obligation is necessary since

[w]hen assimilating key concepts from other disciplines, without full understanding of the history and range of their use, there is often a tendency, amongst non-specialists of the contributory discipline, to collapse the particular into a supposed general of shared routes and destinations (Buckland, 1999a, pp.3-4).

However, while the interdisciplinary approach is embraced both within the current study and dance studies, there exists the key concern that the heart of the inquiry, the dance and dancing, is lost and ignored, with severe repercussions. 'Interdisciplinarity is in danger of becoming a specter [sic] haunting dance scholarship' (Burt, 2009, p.3), through, firstly, a lack of understanding of the issues and problems central to 'outside' theoretical models and frameworks used and secondly, a concern that the dancing is not being fully integrated and 'honoured': this is discussed further below. Morris (2009) cites Frederic Jameson's (1993) argument that the interdisciplinary approach reflects an existing inadequacy within the discipline under discussion, through suppressing or omitting crucial aspects of study, and therefore cannot succeed; in the case of dance studies this judgement intrinsically relates to the non-verbal dancing body.

In addition to having an interdisciplinary element, dance studies also has an integral intradisciplinary component that sees theory and practice being brought closer together

(Morris, 2009). Dance-specific methods and theories are crucial for a number of reasons. Firstly, and as noted above, a key concern that has consistently arisen is that anthropologists, sociologists and cultural theorists consider the roles and functions of dance in a variety of contexts, but not the dancing itself; agency is taken away from the movement. Secondly, developing and using dance-specific methods and theories cements and promotes a distinct identity. Many dance scholars are either based outwith dance departments or in dance departments that continue to struggle for academic resources. There exists a need to protect and preserve the identity of dance as a specific academic subject (Burt, 2009). Dance scholars maintain that it is necessary to make 'dance something other than the repository of culture—to see dancing as leading rather than reflecting cultural change' (Dils and Flanders, 2001, p.66). Nearly thirty years ago, Adshead (1988) claimed that 'a deep and informed response to *the dance itself*' (p.6, original emphasis) is a necessary consideration in a dance studies worthy of that name, and more recently, Banes and Eliot (2013) have argued that through adopting the theoretical language of other disciplines, dance scholars have lost an ability to speak in the language of their primary discipline: 'Dance, perhaps more than any other body-centered endeavor, cultivates a body that initiates as well as responds' (Foster, 1995, p.15). This brings us back to the preservation of a distinct academic identity as a key means of developing and sustaining a position within the academy. An intradisciplinary focus ensures that the 'dance' within studies of dance remains the central focus as scholarship in this field develops.

Examples of studies that have adopted dance-specific methods (as cited by Reed, 1998) include Ness's (1992) ethnography of the Philippine dance form of sinulog, through drawing upon what the author calls 'choreographic phenomena' to study patterned body movement that would not ordinarily fall into the category of dance, and Lewis's (1992) study of Brazilian capoeira that draws upon in-depth movement analysis to study the dance form's cultural and social significance. A third example of a dance-specific methodology is Browning's (1995) employment of vivid language and 'bodily writing' to explore the role of the Brazilian samba,

candomblé and capoeira, in Bahia and New York City.

Morris (2009) highlights the focus of dance studies on the embodied, living, moving body.

She acknowledges that while

[d]ance's theories and methods are no more stable than any others; they are open to critique and they change... they nonetheless constitute a fluid body of ideas, analytical techniques, and vocabularies that focus on questions that scholars in other fields do not ask—questions such as how bodies consume space, how they relate to each other, how their actions both represent and constitute meaning, and what the relationship is of observing bodies to acting bodies, including the scholar's body (p.93).

Such a quote is worth recounting in full due to the innate importance that such a focus has in counteracting a dominance of dance scholarship by textuality, a concern that is explored further in the next chapter in relation to postmodern works. Indeed,

Textual descriptions of dance, especially lengthy ones, sometimes do a double disservice: not only can they sap the life out of the dance described, but they also have a way of injecting strange lethargies into the progression of a critical argument (Williams, 2013, p.159).

However, an obvious criticism of the intradisciplinary approach revolves around the potential repercussions of not situating research within a wider cultural, historical and social context. There exists a sense of discomfort with an intradisciplinary approach which excludes certain lines of inquiry (Koritz, 1996). In practical terms, the rather obvious conclusion to draw here is that a blend of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary methods is necessary, as determined by the particular research question or project.

[T]o be able to focus on the singularity of dance movement while not only being aware of the broader context in which such singularity is situated but also having some theoretical means for understanding the relation between singularity and context. This is to recognize that dance is art and thus aesthetic, while at the same time to acknowledge that dance performance is socially and culturally specific and exists within a public realm (Burt, 2009, p.4).

The latter point is a central one within other related disciplines such as musicology and art history, yet it is worth reiterating the existence of this central dichotomy. The second half of the twentieth century, which Morris (2009) refers to as 'the golden age of theory' (p.94), cemented dance studies as an interdisciplinary area of study and the wider benefits of such an approach include greater contextual understanding and the means to challenge an accepted dance canon, to reconsider the function, nature and purpose of dance and dance research. The current study both reflects this purpose through a sociological approach and, crucially, responds to the call made by Morris (2009) to draw and expand upon the theories and methods of dance studies, thus contributing to a cementation of the identity and standing of the subject within the academy.

Two factors will impact upon the continued evolution and survival of dance studies and the ongoing aim of maintaining a balance of disciplinarity. Firstly, how the discipline negotiates its place within institutional politics and power and subject categorisation (Giersdorf, 2009; Clayton et al, 2013; Morris, 2009), and secondly, the role played by dance scholarship in addressing key social issues (Morris, 2009). The latter point, and one particularly pertinent to the present study, is concerned with the need for dance studies to demonstrate, both within and outwith the academy, how moving bodies relate to social issues. Both the subject of dance studies and the action of dancing have been viewed as narrow and elitist in their action and focus; drawing on an interdisciplinary approach better provides a path to promote understanding of the role of dance and dancing in academia and in society.

#### **4. Synopsis of Thesis**

Before laying out the narrative of the thesis, it is helpful to examine some of the concepts and terms embedded within the thesis title; concrete themes which run throughout the study. Firstly, the term 'hidden' shapes the research in a number of ways, most obviously through

working with groups of dance participants who are dancing behind closed doors, whether in a professional or vocational studio, a centre of recreation, a nightclub or a primary school. This focus on everyday spaces and the involvement of certain physical settings, ensures the inclusion of the 'voices' of groups of people considered to be marginalised in society and in dance research, namely children and people with disabilities. Secondly, Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, the theoretical framework drawn upon, can be described as one 'hidden' to dance scholarship, a line of inquiry explored further in Chapter Two and subsequently somewhat mitigated through its centrality in the current research. Goffman's dramaturgical framework is also characterised as hidden through its focus on structures of unnoticed and unconscious interaction and the role played by back stage spaces used in everyday life, guiding an approach that is micro sociological in nature.

Reflecting the groups of dance participants worked with, the second term considered is 'participatory' with a focus on how this study expands upon traditional notions. Within the literature, 'participatory' dance has connotations of a social or community-building function and the focus tends to be on aerobic and creative dance and the link between dance activity and health, (for example, Aşci et al, 1998; Hui et al, 2009; Keinänen et al, 2000; Lobo, 2006; Shigematsu et al, 2002) or to provide pedagogical advice (for example, Amans, 2008; Blumenfeld-Jones and Liang, 2007; Fortin and Siedentop, 1995; Kassing, 2003; Leijen et al, 2008; Smith-Autard, 2002; Williamson, 2009). Within the current study, the line dancing class case study could most obviously be fitted to this tradition, yet the present research does not limit the concept of 'participatory dance' by equating it with 'social dance'. Rather, the term 'participatory' encompasses all dance settings where both social and dance interaction takes place between groups of individuals and the one shaped the nature of the other: argument is made that all dance is participatory in this sense. This consideration of the use of the term 'participatory' necessitates a brief exploration of the rationale behind including both 'activities' and 'practices' in the title and recognising their different readings in shaping the current study. The research considers both social activity and performance

practice to be inherent to dance 'events'. This stance reflects the wider aim, essential to the approach and design of the overall study, of 'honouring' both dance scholarship and sociological theory, and adhering to a greater aim of producing meaningful research that shapes our understanding of a cross-section of individuals and groups dancing within society.

The foregrounding above of certain key terms evidences the thesis as the product of an interdisciplinary project and, as demonstrated by its focus on the 'lived' social and dancing body, the research is situated within, and descends from, the trajectory of sociology of dance as a sub-discipline of dance studies. Although the chapters are structured along the lines of a traditional social science study, the approach taken deliberately reflects the agency and heritage of the dancing within sociology of dance. Following the Introduction, the thesis is presented in five sections. Firstly, the history and evolution of sociology of dance is explored in relation to its more established 'sibling', dance anthropology, before I examine the earliest works and those studies that have adopted specific sociological frameworks (notably the concepts and models of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu), paying particular attention to ethnographic works. I argue that this latter body of work, while pioneering in expanding the sociology of dance sub-discipline, is generally limited in focus, concentrating largely as it does on the vocational and professional ballet and contemporary dance spheres, and 'negative' themes of pain and suffering. There is limited mention of the movement performed or of dance as a positive shaping force that gives meaning to people's lives. Thus, the study is contextualised and the stage set for an examination of Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy and its applicability and usefulness for investigating micro sociological encounters in participatory dance settings. In the third chapter, I present the research methodology, moving from the epistemological and ontological approaches taken, to the selection of the six case studies, the case study approach adopted and the types of interviews and observations drawn upon for each setting. Embedding the theoretical framework within the methodology, I draw on Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy to

reflexively illustrate examples of the behaviours and presentations committed as part of the data collection across the six case studies. The chapter moves on to discuss the creation of a grounded coding frame for analysis of data and considers the ethical issues inherent to working with vulnerable groups (three of the case studies involved adults with disabilities and children). The following chapter constitutes the ethnographic heart of the thesis. Each case study is introduced through a brief review of the relevant literature, the specific setting being encountered and the ethnographic role taken, before framing the data collected within Goffman's (1959/1990) model to illustrate the 'realities' within. The succeeding chapter brings the six case studies together and interrogates the very Goffmanian terms drawn upon in framing the findings through a conceptual investigation, and the final chapter links the myriad of 'realities' that exist, to more macro constructs and themes including kinaesthesia and humour and the central sociological binary of structure and agency. The thesis concludes by returning to the fundamental concepts, topics and places embedded in the title of the project, some of which are explored above, in light of the full process undertaken to explore the distinctive and original contribution made to dance scholarship.

## **2. ESTABLISHING SOCIOLOGY OF DANCE**

### **1. Introduction**

Sociology of dance is an evolving discipline that takes as a key focus the social makeup of dance – the ever-changing relationship between societal structures and individual agency inherent within dance activity and practice. Sociology of dance explores ‘the political and social value which goes beyond [dance’s] aesthetic appeal as an art’ (Brinson, 1983b, p.61). As discussed in the preceding chapter, since the 1970s, interdisciplinary dance studies, linked to the social sciences and humanities, have taken place and the study of dance from an anthropological, historical, philosophical and social science approach, is traditionally synonymous with that more ambiguous term and discipline ‘dance studies’. The coinage ‘sociology of dance’ underlines the belief that sociological theories and methods can be useful for dance research and reflects that there is a particular set of sociological considerations relating to the action of dancing itself. The following review draws together key studies located in the space between the overlapping fields of dance studies and sociology, and trace the trajectory of development from the early works produced in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, to the current trend in the twenty-first century of adopting particular sociological models and ethnographic research methods in response to the postmodern era. Although a dearth of sociology of dance research has been lamented by both dance scholars and sociologists (Khudaverdian, 2006; Turner and Wainwright, 2003), I argue that coherent bodies of work do exist.

Following on from the previous chapter, particular attention is paid here to the potential and limitations of interdisciplinary study, through considering how sociological concepts and models have been utilised, and how the agency of the dancing has been recognised. Such an approach respects a need to understand the key debates and nuances of the contributory discipline (Buckland, 1999a). As highlighted in the introductory chapter, it is significant to

note that no in-depth interrogation of the trajectory of, and works produced within, the sub-field sociology of dance has taken place since the mid-1990s, making the present study a timely contribution to the existing body of work.

## **2. Relationship with Dance Anthropology**

Sociology of dance within a dance studies context may be described as the ‘nascent’ (Buckland, 1999a, p.6) sibling of dance anthropology. As explored in the previous chapter, the latter has flourished within dance studies, taking a founding and pivotal role in the ‘theoretical turn’ previously cited as occurring in the 1980s, while the former is still cementing its place and status. Any discussion of sociology of dance needs to consider the impact of the traditionally more influential sub-discipline, anthropology of dance, since both focus on the cultural and social worlds of dance. Dance anthropology (also known as ‘dance ethnology’ in the United States (see Kaeppler, (2000) for an explanation of the differing trajectories reflected in this terminology)) in the United Kingdom focuses

on system: the importance of intention, meaning, and cultural evaluation. Anthropologists are interested in socially-constructed movement systems, the activities that generate them, how and by whom they are judged, and how they can assist in understanding society. The aim of the anthropologist is not simply to understand dance in its cultural context, but rather to understand society through analyzing movement systems (Grau, 1993, p.21).

Dance anthropology as a distinct area of study has existed since the 1960s (Reed, 1998), yet in contrast to sociological approaches, dance has a long history within anthropology owing to the longstanding pre post-colonial thinking that ‘dance is a primary expression of the “non-rational” world of primitive people’ (Thomas, 1986, p.10). Basic assumptions underlying anthropological study include:

1. human beings bring meaning to their experience;
2. human beings transform the world around them through practical action rather than through passive

reaction, and 3. 'nothing is "natural", in the sense that everything is socially constructed' (Grau, 1993, p.24).

Since the early twentieth century, the first proponents of anthropology, including Franz Boas, Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Browne, all considered dance as a social function (if not as an aesthetic practice) (Reed, 1998). Dance as a consideration of anthropological investigation flourished into the stand-alone sub-discipline 'dance anthropology' through a series of rapid achievements and developments from the 1960s onwards. Pioneering landmarks include Joann Keali'inohomoku's (1970) paper *An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance* and the instigation of dance anthropology courses headed by John Blacking at the University of Belfast in the 1970s and 1980s as part of an MA in Ethnomusicology. Across both the UK and the US, a core group of scholars, including Theresa Buckland, Andrée Grau, Judith Hanna, Adrienne Kaeppler, Joann Keali'inohomoku, Susan Reed, Anya Peterson Royce and Drid Williams, are known as the pioneers that shaped dance anthropology as a stand-alone sub-discipline. Within Britain currently, a masters course dedicated to dance anthropology is run by Roehampton University, and the existence of numerous anthropology modules within undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the international academy ensure that subsequent generations of dance anthropologists will come to the fore. In contrast to sociology of dance, dance anthropology is both supported by a cohesive past heritage and current educational initiatives.

The value of this sub-discipline broadly lies in its contribution to the understanding of ethnic, gender and national identities, and has had a particular focus on colonial cultures and notions of exoticisation (Reed, 1998). Here is a story that began decades earlier, with the embracing of dance by the earliest proponents of anthropology and subsequent developments in both anthropology and dance departments in Britain, Europe and the United States in particular, which saw research approaches and disciplinary terminology

cemented. It is interesting to note that while 'anthropology of dance' has morphed into 'dance anthropology', no such linguistic change has occurred with 'sociology of dance': the implication is given that the dance is beholden to the sociology. Dance anthropology has a determined focus: to interrogate and record dance as a power both shaping and being shaped by cultural value-systems, as viewed by those doing the dancing, predominantly through ethnographic means. Such a succinct and integrated approach has facilitated the study of dance in society (Thomas, 1986). Sociology of dance, as we shall see, has been far less cohesive, to the detriment of the sub-discipline.

### **3. Significance of Sociology of Dance**

A coherent history of sociology of dance study begins in the early 1980s. Dance scholars Peter Brinson and Helen Thomas were the first to frame and explore the sub-discipline, arguing for its significance and laying the groundwork for practical research. Over thirty years ago, Brinson (1983a) argued that

we need to be aware that dance can be as much a *social* response to human experience as it can be psychological or aesthetic, and we need to study the nature of that social response for which no discipline exists at the moment (p.104, original emphasis).

Mapping out the identity and boundaries of sociology of dance is an opportunity to both identify a niche area of academic study and a central one in the lived experience of society. The purpose of Brinson's (1983b) sociology of dance is threefold: and questions firstly, the two-way relationship between dance and society and how each influences the other, secondly, asks who are the dancers and why do they dance and lastly, focuses on the non-verbal element of dance as a means of communication. We need

to describe dance in today's social system in all its detail, explaining continuity and discontinuity, function as against structure. It follows that a sociology of

dance has to be concerned with problems of class, ideology, industrial society, power structure and function (Brinson, 1983b, p.65).

In the first doctoral sociology of dance study, Helen Thomas (1986) unites the aesthetic dance with the functional dance (dance as playing a specific role in society), to argue that it is the 'primacy of movement' that

offers the basis for a model for sociological research into the ambiguous relation between dance art [sic] and society that is at the core of a sociology of dance: that is, the ambiguity of the social relevance of an art form which is marginalised twice-fold in large-scale industrial rationalised societies as art, and as a mode of communication which celebrates the body as its means of expression (p.347).

This call to address social issues through dance research and advocacy resonates with the conclusion given in the preceding chapter. Scholars should promote the discipline within, and utilise dance for, the needs of society, as well as contribute to the sociological academy through sharing dance-specific methods and tools (Brinson, 1983a; b; Thomas, 1995).

Thomas (1995) emphasises the ability of dance scholarship to encompass everyday movement and dance movement as well as high art and popular culture, and to reflect varying socio-economic contexts: dance studies has a cemented place in the cultural superstructure of society (Brinson, 1983b). Dance does not exist on the periphery of society but is

seen to be politically, socially and academically significant as part of the history of human movement, part of the history of human culture and part of the history of human communication (Brinson, 1983b, p.63).

Dance scholars continue to acknowledge the importance of sub-disciplinary study. More recently, Morris (2001) cited the importance of Foster's (1995) notion of body theorising which unites sociological enquiry with dance practice, to look at the significance of:

[W]ho sponsors the dance or views it, or what kinds of narrative themes dance embraces, or how dance might serve a broader social function... to see the social as imbedded in the *practice* of dance, in the dancers' comportment and the steps they do, how the dance movement is assembled and how the dancers are arranged on the stage, in how dancers are trained and developed (Morris, 2001, p.58, original emphasis).

The growth of the sociology of dance sub-discipline faces challenges similar to those faced by dance studies; '[o]ne society's dance may be another's movement... we do not *really* know what "dance" is' (Blacking cited in Brinson, 1983b, p.61, original emphasis). As explored in Chapter One, the Cartesian mind/body split continues to shape judgement relating to sociology of dance study: 'The perceived nearness of the body to nature rather than culture has consequences for dance' (Thomas, 1995, pp.6-8).

However, it is difficult to understand how dance, a cultural product, has been so neglected by sociological study:

Dance, as either performance art or as leisure activity, is a site with a viable potential to flourish and inspire new and innovative scholarly writing... One would expect the fact that physical behavior is a socio-cultural phenomenon, that an individual's first experience of his or her social surroundings is via bodily manipulation... would be enough encouragement to catapult a discipline like sociology into a site such as dance (Khudaverdian, 2006, pp.18-19).

It is interesting to note how in Khudaverdian's (2006) observations, sociology should be impacting upon dance scholarship, rather than the other way round, reflecting the placing of the dominant discipline as a shaping force, and a need for dance scholars to take the initiative in interdisciplinary study. Dance has its own discipline-specific methods such as labanotation and a willingness to dance, as a means to gather data to focus on the social world under investigation. As Brinson (1983a) realises, '[this approach] may be unorthodox in other forms of sociological investigation, but it is inseparable from a proper balance between theory and practice. It is the nature of the *pas de deux* between dance and

sociology' (p.105). Dance and sociology more comfortably co-exist as distinct identities, and given that the latter has a more established place in the academy, it is crucial to note that '[t]he sociology of dance obviously is not sociology alone' (Brinson, 1983b, p.61).

#### **4. Sociology of Dance Studies**

##### **4.1. The early works**

Helen Thomas, in the seminal full-length work *Dance, Modernity and Culture: Explorations in the Sociology of Dance* (1995), traces the lineage of the sub-discipline throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, citing works that looked at social structures and interactions in dance settings, and the link between dance and society. Among the few sociological studies then in existence includes Rust's (1969) structural functionalist exploration of the relationship between social dance and English society from the 5th century onwards, valued for its contribution, but noted as suffering from a functionalist approach (Buckland, 1999a; Williams, 1974). Two further sociological monographs which (according to Thomas, 1995) failed to have a significant impact at the time of publication, include Cope's (1976) interactionist account of a small dance company, looking at how face-to-face interaction shaped the social processes existing within a small dance company and Brinson's (1983a; b) discussion of the emerging sociology of dance scholarship in the United Kingdom, explored in the previous section.

Thomas (1995; 1997; 2003) has bridged the disciplines of dance and sociology to explore the development of a sociological framework with which to analyse modern dance in America (1995), the spatio-temporal place of dance in urban life (1997), and the artistic and social aspects of dance as practice and its place in the construction of identities (2003). Another monograph, Helena Wulff's (1998) *Ballet across Borders: Career and Culture in the World of Dancers* was one of the earliest empirical sociology of ballet studies and critiques

the cultural and social worlds of four ballet companies: The Royal Ballet (UK), American Ballet Theatre, Royal Swedish Ballet and Ballet Frankfurt. Criticised for lacking the depth generally associated with ethnographic study and for a lack of focus on the living body (Turner and Wainwright, 2003), the study has nevertheless been praised by Desmond (2000) for its focus on the practical training regimes, touring experiences, and relationship between dancers and administrative staff in the closed, elite world of ballet. The trajectory of a professional ballet dancer's life from vocational training, attending auditions, joining the company, classes, touring, performing, and finally, retirement, is considered, and a wide range of perceptions from dancers, teachers, choreographers, audience members and critics included. However, limited attention is paid to the relationship between the dancers, their perceptions of their bodies and their art, and the research focus on transnational working and the effects of globalisation takes attention away from the 'social dynamics at work in the *formation* of ballet dancers' career[s]' (Khudaverdian, 2006, p.34, original emphasis). Yet, Wulff's (1998) study is not only significant for its focus on the social rather than performance reality; the incidents recounted and the tone employed converge to assimilate the reader into the everyday world of professional ballet. Although Wulff's focus on narrative and adoption of a writing style that feels familiar to read is arguably to the detriment of providing a theoretically succinct account of this world, as an author who previously trained to be a dancer, Wulff situates the work as a link between the dancer on stage in a glittering tutu and the one behind the scenes nursing their injuries and collecting their pay check.

Other noteworthy studies have explored the link between dance activity and practice and social class. Sussman (1990) examines the social class origins of professional ballet and contemporary dancers, and Prickett (1990) analyses the relationship between 'dance for and by the workers' (p.47) and socialist politics in the period following World War One. Both studies are set within the United States. The former paper is noteworthy for identifying, acting upon and to some extent confirming, through a questionnaire survey, anecdotal speculation that professional modern dancers originate from more privileged backgrounds

than ballet dancers. The questionnaire requested details of the father's occupation and the mother's and father's educational background as well as the level of education reached by respondents at the beginning of their career. However, limitations of the study either receive little or no mention. For example, Sussman (1990) notes that as so few questionnaires were returned by retired male dancers, they were omitted altogether, without speculating why the return was so poor (an obvious thought being that male dancers were uncomfortable or less concerned with being associated with dance research). Secondly, the possibility that ballet dancers may also have performed as modern dancers and vice versa, is not taken into consideration. The latter study published in the same year (Prickett, 1990), considers dance for the working classes that erupted concurrently with the rise of Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution of 1917. Yet, although focus is on the social political forces shaping the evolution of participation and performance, the descriptive and narrative approach taken and reliance on primary sources make this study more akin to a work of history than sociology. Additionally, there is little consideration or interrogation of how 'working class' the 'workers' are or why they have attracted this label.

A final example of a study that seeks to explore the relationship between social background and pre-vocational training in the UK, is one conducted by Sanchez et al (2012). Aiming to have a practical application, analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted suggest that the economics at play impact upon students' opportunity to undertake dance training and the levels of social support available to them at home and in the training environment (Sanchez et al, 2012). In addition, cultural background (as a force shaping cultural values and the suitability of dance as a profession) was identified as a major factor affecting the attainment of a professional standard. However, again, notions of class and social background were not sociologically interrogated. In addition, the study only included a small sample of seven ethnically diverse students based in urban centres.

Although united by a sociological focus on the relationship between structure and agency,

the above studies nonetheless reflect the sporadic and disparate nature of sociology of dance study, differing as they do in their particular foci and approaches that span themes of employment, education and entertainment. The aim here was not to cite each work that *could* be described as a sociology of dance study, most obviously through viewing dance in its social context, but rather to draw together key studies that have either labelled themselves as such, or have been given this attribute in the wider literature, to illustrate the range in existence and the difficulty involved in delineating the boundaries of the sub-discipline. However, as I argue, a further systematic body of work, uniting particular sociological frameworks with an ethnographic approach, with a focus on vocational and professional ballet and contemporary dance practice, is in existence and was brought about by a reaction to the postmodern era.

#### **4.2. *Utilising sociological frameworks***

The sociologists Stephen Wainwright and Brian Turner point out that the previously dominant postmodern and poststructuralist discourse in dance studies viewed dance and the dancer's body as 'texts' (see works by Adshead-Lansdale, 1999; Desmond, 1997; Fraleigh and Hanstein, 1999; Goellner and Murphy, 1994 noted in Wainwright et al, 2007); they heavily criticise this approach in their own body of ethnographic work. For example, Foster's (2005) corporeal theory which focuses on dance as a capitalist entity draws upon the work of Gramsci and Barthes as well as Foucauldian notions of power as knowledge, and is aligned to what the author has called the 'meat-and-bones' of human bodies. Wainwright et al (2005) argue that postmodern approaches ignore an individual's embodied, practical and lived experience, leading to a restrictive and indistinct account of the social world. Wacquant (1995) accords, noting '[s]pecific social worlds invest, shape, and deploy human bodies... One of the paradoxical features of recent social studies of the body is how rarely one encounters in them actual living bodies of flesh and blood' (p.65 cited in Wainwright et al, 2005, p.50).

The most relevant body of literature to the current project are recent studies that utilise a specific sociological framework and ethnographic research methods. They can largely be divided into two bodies of work; those that employ Michel Foucault's theories of genealogy and surveillance, revolving around the concept of power, and those that draw on Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual model of social practice, interrogating the agency of individuals in a world governed by social systems. The dominant approaches taken either see dance focused on as a subject to explore these sociological models in new and innovative ways, or involve the 'borrowing' of sociological tools to explore a particular dance activity and practice. Arguably, it is these bodies of work that are most characteristic of the interdisciplinary nature of sociology of dance, set as they are within specific fields of dance and models of sociological enquiry, and drawing as they do on tools of ethnography in the collection and presentation of data. I first look at the concepts and theories of Michel Foucault, before reviewing key dance studies that have adopted them; the same approach is then replicated to explore the relationship between Pierre Bourdieu and sociology of dance. The sociological context is established before interrogation of the relevant literature takes place, hence reflecting the interdisciplinarity inherent to this body of literature and the present project. In addition, a substantial number of desk-based studies illustrate the applicability of these sociological frameworks to dance scholarship and also necessitate attention.

#### **4.2.1. *Michel Foucault's notion of power and knowledge***

The theories of French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault revolve around the concepts of disciplinary power, 'docile bodies', surveillance and genealogy in constituting specific social practices. Foucault (1977a; 1980) considers the relationship of knowledge to a power that is not inherently a repressive or negative force, through studying institutional and organisational power and the bodily implications. Foucault illustrates how bodily

behaviour is conditioned by certain institutions such as mental hospitals and prisons; the body is viewed as a site of political and social power, thus becoming 'docile'. It constitutes both flesh and mind and is neither fixed nor stable, its meaning is wholly generated through discourses and practices (Khudaverdian, 2006). The key feature of Foucault's concept of disciplinary power is that it is enforced directly on the body: the aim of disciplinary practices is to foster its docility and enhance its productivity:

What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act on the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977a, pp.138-139).

A second study that considers Foucauldian surveillance within the field of professional ballet (Dryburgh and Fortin, 2010) describes how constant societal surveillance disciplines both the mind and the body to generate a psychological state of permanent and constant visibility (Foucault, 1977a). Perpetual surveillance leads to self-awareness and surveillance on the part of the individual, these same individuals then invest in states, actions, knowledges and behaviours that have been normalised; thus, the individual conforms to the dominant social norm (Dryburgh and Fortin, 2010). Individuals are situated within macro regimes of power; they self-discipline and self-regulate and become 'docile bodies' within society.

A third study, Ritenburg's (2010) Foucauldian genealogy of the normalised female professional body, cites St Pierre (2000) to demonstrate how internal thought metamorphoses into external behaviour. Within Ritenburg's (2010) study, by looking at a breadth and depth of texts (for example, popular magazines and children's ballet books), it is possible to see how a particular concept or issue (the notion of the 'ideal' ballet body) is historically represented and supported in a multitude of disparate contexts ('professional dance, adult health, and children's recreation' (p.74)). Lineages and origins, cause and effect are not the focus (Ritenburg, 2010); history is explained not through individual action, but a

continuously shifting system of body, knowledge and power relations. An act of genealogy reveals concepts and traits that form against a myriad of dominant happening events (Foucault, 1977b). Genealogical analysis is:

[A] form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc. without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout history (Foucault, 1980, p.149).

#### **4.2.2. Foucauldian ethnographic dance studies**

Although Foucault wrote about art, literature, music and theatre, dance was not amongst his considerations (Ness, 2011); the only documented example of Foucault making a direct reference to dance relates to a radio broadcast entitled 'Le corps utopique' made in 1966, where he analysed 'the anti-utopian and pro-utopian aspects of embodiment [and]... appear[ed] to say that dance 'dilates' them, creating a body whose here is not here, and whose not-here is here' (Franko, 2011, pp.104-105). Franko interprets the medium of the dancer's 'dilated' body as able to transcend both empirical and transcendental study (Ness, 2011). We can only speculate on the reasons for Foucault's limited attention to dance as a source of interest; possibly it was not a part of his life experience, or the art form warranted low consideration and status in his view (Ness, 2011).

On the other hand, arguably, Foucault has played the greatest role in prefiguring and shaping discourses on gender, power and sexuality in dance studies: an assertion supported by the vast number of papers and studies that cite and are influenced by Foucault's theories (Ness, 2011). This situation reflects the central challenge faced in the task of drawing sociology of dance works together: how sociological does a work need to be to constitute a sociology of dance study? Equally, how much focus does the dancing need to receive? Of

course, this is not a conundrum unique to this sub-discipline but is reflected in related fields such as sociology of sport.

Ness (2011) cites a collection of non-ethnographic studies authored by a range of dance scholars, principally produced in the 1990s, that to varying extents draw upon or reference Foucauldian thinking and in particular the seminal texts *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977a) and *History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1984) (see for example, Burt, 2001; Cowan, 1990; Desmond, 1993; Foster, 1986, 1996; Hahn, 2007; Martin, 1990; Morris, 1996; Nayfack, 2010; O'Shea, 2007; Thomas, 1996). More recent non-ethnographic studies include Ritenburg's (2010) genealogy of the normalisation of the female ballet dancer's body shape mentioned previously, Giersdorf's (2009) study of the place of dance studies in the international academy cited in the introductory chapter, and Ness's (2011) own paper on the implications of Foucault's 'turn from phenomenology' for dance studies. Returning to Ritenburg's (2010) genealogical examination of the social construction of the 'ideal' body of the female ballet dancer in Anglo-American society, through exploring the role played by certain literature, she argues that the approach reveals the sites where a particular idea has promulgated. The ideal ballet body is a social construction rather than an abiding truth and thus can be counteracted through discourse and resistance (Ritenburg, 2010).

The writings of Foucault have also been adopted to a lesser extent to critique the 'lived' experience of dancers through interviews and observations. Studies that unite the theoretical concepts of Foucault with the classical ballet genre include Dryburgh and Fortin's (2010) research on positive and negative surveillance in the studio, cited in the preceding section, Heiland et al's (2008) study interrogating the body image and self-esteem of college dance students engaging in both jazz and ballet studies, and Green's work (1999; 2001; 2003) on disciplinary undergraduate university dance education in the United States. Dryburgh and Fortin (2010) draw on Foucault's writings on discipline, power and surveillance, and through

interviews and inductive analysis conclude that positive surveillance has a role to play in increasing a dancer's psychological strength but that negative surveillance, bound up in verbal criticism compounded by mirrors and ballet wear, has a detrimental impact. Informed by feminist and Foucauldian theories of the body, Heiland et al (2008) investigate body image and self-esteem among Los Angeles college dancers and emphasise the crucial relationship between dancers' self-esteem and the influence of their peers; they also examine the notion that the ideal commercial jazz body type and the ideal ballet body type are interrelated. Green (2001) explores the relations between body, pedagogy and power in undergraduate dance education through a post-positivist analysis of class discussion, document analysis, interviews and observation, and again, the Foucauldian notion of the body as disciplined through social and political power is drawn upon. Additional studies by the same author (1999; 2003) take a similar approach to consider how disciplinary power creates ideals for dance and bodily behaviour. The focus here continues to be on the topic of 'educating "the student body"' (Green, 2001, p.157) in dance by highlighting the role of somatic practice as a tool for body awareness and as a means to resist external authority. The existing overriding themes of power and authority are demonstrated through highlighting the nature of the disciplinary instruction and vocabulary adopted by teachers, the stopping and starting of class for criticism to be given, the wearing of institutionalised clothing, class rivalry and the resulting negative physical outcomes (for example, hyperextension of joints), and the psychological outcomes of low self-esteem, isolation and frustration (Green, 1999; 2001).

#### **4.2.3. Critique of Foucauldian dance studies**

Despite the central role that Foucauldian theory has in dance studies, those same concepts and positions garner limited critical attention in dance scholarship (Ness, 2011). Other fields have challenged and questioned the works of the social theorist, yet, the critiques provided within dance studies could hardly be described as 'heated' (Ness, 2011, p.20). A number of

dance scholars cited by Ness (2011) have critiqued Foucault's theories, including Burt (2004), Foster (1995), Franko (2010), Martin (1990) and Lepecki (2006) but in each case, 'differences with Foucault's theories are generally couched in muted terms' (Ness, 2011, p.29). The authors in most cases adopt and expand upon Foucault's thinking, and do not conclude their critical thinking with a solution. Such a situation is viewed as unusual given the negligible place of dance in Foucault's critical thinking (Ness, 2011) and provides an opportunity for further exploration and critique.

A key criticism of Foucault's approach centres on his view that the body's meaning is generated and imposed by the force of external discourse:

The body does not tend to exist as a real or concrete object for Foucault, rather it is constituted in a disembodied form. It has no tangible physical connection to the world around it nor does it seem to be responsive in any way, shape, or form to the discursive power relations that constructs, maintains and manages it... The Foucauldian body does not engage in a responsive or dialogical relationship with the very discourse that affects it, nor does it react back to affect discourse (Khudaverdian, 2006, p.16).

Foucault's attention to the body is frozen and locked up in linguistic terminology, as opposed to being viewed as a force of agency in an individual's lived, embodied and physical world.

Is every vocational and professional dance body then a 'docile body', operating with minimal individual agency? Heiland et al (2008) conclude that 'female LA dancers believe they must be their thinnest to be hired to perform' (p.272). Green (2001) explores how somatic practice facilitates 'a dialogue through which [the students] realised and expressed the pressures to meet an imposed bodily standard' (p.155). Dryburgh and Fortin (2010) reveal 'that body weight is perceived as the principal object of surveillance' (p.95). This emphasis on loss of agency and conformation to an ideal is certainly more relevant to certain groups of dancers and types of dance practices, limiting the applicability of Foucault's theories in dance scholarship. As Wellard et al (2007) state:

It is difficult to understand from a purely Foucauldian (for example, 1984, 1986) perspective the individual enjoyment experienced by an elderly woman or an elite athlete when taking part in physical exercise or, for that point, why an individual who is excluded from an activity at the normative social level would want to continue to take part on his or her own or with other excluded people. On a broader level, Foucault does not fully account for individual bodily experiences, which are socially defined and socially regulated but continued even in the face of social exclusion (pp.84-85).

The ethnographic dance literature explored squarely sets the data obtained within a Foucauldian framework (Dryburgh and Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999; 2001; 2003; Heiland et al, 2008). In comparison to some studies explored in the next section, authors cited here are dance scholars, the works cited published in dance journals. However, similar themes of coercion, discipline and pressure centring on the dancer's body reflect their limited focus. While I would propose that Foucauldian notions of surveillance and 'docile bodies' are readily applicable to professional and vocational dance training since they complement the approach taken within the environment being investigated, the dancing itself is neglected in these studies: a link is made to the practice under discussion, but not to the specific movements that the practice comprises of.

#### **4.2.4. *Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual model of social practice***

Sociology is concerned primarily with the interplay between individual autonomy (agency) and social laws (structure) (Archer, 1995). Crucially, Bourdieu's (1984) model of social practice aims to unite these traditionally contrasting influences through surmounting the polarising objectivism and subjectivism doctrines (Jenkins, 1992). Crossley (1998) explains that Bourdieu's generative model sees 'various habitual schemas and dispositions (habitus), combined with resources (capital), being activated by certain structured social conditions (field) which they, in turn belong to and variously reproduce and modify' (p.96). Bourdieu (1984) simplifies his general theoretical approach further to '[(Habitus) (Capital)] + Field =

Practice' (p.101). 'Field' signifies a setting populated by individual agents (each embodied with a dominant set of socially learned dispositions or 'habitus', including behaviour, dress and speech) with its own social system, and characterised by the different kinds of resources or 'capital' within it, which gives it its value.

Characterised by a particular set of rules and etiquette, fields exist autonomously within the wider social structure. The arts, education, politics, law and economic sectors can each be cited as a field; Bourdieu's concepts are characterised by an 'elasticity' that promotes their use in different domains (Wainwright et al, 2006, p.550). Indeed, it is important to note that the arts had a central role in Bourdieu's discussion on the social forces that determine 'taste' (Bourdieu, 1984); a work of artistry derives its value not from an innate sense of quality, but from a complex array of power struggles and internal negotiations: the product is a social product (Wainwright, 2004). The dance sector constitutes its own field but, since a field may vary in scope and scale, each organisation, venue, and type of dance activity and practice within dance may also be said to constitute a field in its own right.

Bourdieu stressed in an interview that:

The notion of field is extremely important because it reminds us that the true object of social science is not individuals, even though one cannot construct a field if not through individuals, since the information necessary for statistical analysis are generally attached to individuals (or institutions). It is the field which is primary and must be the focus of the research operations (Wacquant, 1989, p.6).

The concepts of 'field', 'habitus' and 'capital' need to be viewed in relation to one another as they operate in consort. Bourdieu (1977) makes explicit that habitus is structured by a field and that the field is constituted as a meaningful world through its engagement with habitus. Inspired by Marcel Mauss' notion of body technique, Bourdieu (1977) describes 'habitus' as the set of dispositions acquired by an individual through socially structured practice that

automatically forms both his or her personal behaviour and the feeling that such behaviour is natural. The word habitus may be an extension of the word 'habit' but goes beyond the meaning of the latter to represent an embodied state of normality evidenced through action, behaviour and manner. Yet, the concept is not equated and synonymous with a state of inertia: habitus is 'not deterministic, but determining' (Wainwright et al, 2006, p.552).

Bourdieu's (1977) attempt to reconcile the subjective (individual agency) and the objective (supra structures) with the concept of habitus is described as: 'a bridge building exercise across the explanatory gap between these two extremes' (Jenkins, 1992, p.74). Bourdieu (1977) theorises that it is the response of the individual agent to existing objective conditions that determines the habitual dispositions which he or she inculcates and portrays; the result of 'structured structuring structure[s]' (Wainwright, 2004, p.89).

Capital is termed as 'all goods, material and symbolic... that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.178). Capital has to be studied in relation to the field in which it is present as the forces that are active in that field define the specific capital that exists within it (Bourdieu, 1977). Capital can be cultural, economic, educational, physical, social, or symbolic in nature and its worth can be directly related to the social and cultural dispositions of habitus. The accumulation of capital significant to the field in which the individual operates gains them distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, an individual growing up in an area of socio-economic deprivation may make the most of educational opportunities and negotiate the field of university to gain a degree, an achievement imbued with symbolic capital. However, their habitus, the way that they speak and hold themselves, might still reflect their social background and cause them to make a conscious effort to become imbued by a new habitus (for example, dressing and speaking in a particular way) that reflects their potential rise in social status as a result of increased educational capital.

#### **4.2.5. Bourdieusian ethnographic dance studies**

Gay Morris has consistently drawn upon the tools of Pierre Bourdieu to interrogate the intersection between dance performance and social context within professional ballet and contemporary dance. Within the latter sphere, Morris (2001) has conducted a Bourdieusian study to explore Martha Graham's production of 'Night Journey' (1947) to suggest that although Graham's artistic choices were influenced by a desire to not conform to accepted notions of dance performance, her choreography embraced both a narrative format and a balletic style, constituting habitual action. A more recent study by the same author (Morris, 2006) interrogates the production of modern dance during the postwar era in the United States. Hailed as a 'vital contribution to the literature of the field' (Geduld, 2009, p.116), the monograph was the first serious attempt to question the increasingly institutionalised nature of modern dance in the context of modernity. Geraldine Morris (2003) uses the concept of habitus to illustrate that within the pre-professional and professional ballet worlds, technical proficiency is taking precedence over artistic style, due in part to an ever-growing belief in the supremacy of the codified lexicon within the practice, and a teacher-led approach which limits student creativity, discourse and experimentation. However, within the above studies, the tools of Pierre Bourdieu inform and shape, rather than lead, the discussion.

Moving on to ethnographic works, Stephen Wainwright, Bryan Turner and Clare Williams have been pivotal in conducting ethnographic research into the sociology of the professional ballet body, conducting several studies from a Bourdieusian perspective (Turner and Wainwright, 2003; 2004; Wainwright, 2004; Wainwright and Turner, 2003; Wainwright and Turner, 2006; Wainwright et al, 2005; Wainwright et al, 2006; Wainwright et al, 2007). The authors aim to critique the relationships between habitus (as a set of socially-learnt ballet dispositions), physical capital (the dancer's body) and cultural capital (professional knowledge and skill of the genre), to interrogate the life and career of the professional dancer through creating ethnographies of the social world of ballet. Data gained from

interviews and observations (overwhelmingly the former), carried out with dancers, ex-dancers and staff from The Royal Ballet form the basis of their explorations.

The first of these studies (Turner and Wainwright, 2003) adopts a phenomenological social constructionist approach, arguing that pain is socially structured rather than a spontaneous and natural state of affairs, and is both mediated and embodied through the social bonding of dancers. In arguing this, they take as their focus the injured and ageing dancer's body. Subsequent studies by Wainwright (2004), Wainwright et al (2005) and Wainwright et al (2006), explore the reciprocity between choreographic habitus, individual habitus and institutional habitus in the construction of an individual's career trajectory, with the latter two publications also focusing on themes of ageing and injury. This tripartite distinction of habitus was first developed and employed in Wainwright's 2004 doctoral study to interrogate the embodied ballet body. The final study (Wainwright et al, 2007) considers the homogenising effect of globalisation on ballet culture.

Additional ethnographic studies that employ the Bourdieusian concept of habitus to interrogate the sociology of the pre-professional and professional ballet body, and which consider these same themes of globalisation, identity, injury, pain, perfection, retirement and training, include studies produced by Alexias and Dimitropoulou (2011) and Pickard (2012; 2013; 2015). Alexias and Dimitropoulou (2011) unite the concept of embodiment with that of habitus in a professional ballet setting, to argue that the social behaviour of dancers towards their bodies is one that dispassionately views the latter as a tool, rather than as a vehicle for short-term pleasure (the prevailing attitude in Western society), drawing on a similar approach and conclusion to the studies conducted by Wainwright et al. Pickard (2012) explores the relationship between the aesthetic, embodied and physical vocational ballet dancer's body and the desire for a particular performing identity. The study discovered that young pre-professional dancers attach a positive meaning to their training, in order to 'learn to deny, re-frame or suppress negative emotions' (p.25) as they move towards attaining

professional status. A second study (Pickard, 2013), also using a data set collected from 12 young male and female ballet dancers based in a non-residential ballet school, investigates the nature of the 'ideal' ballet body as perceived by these students, and their quest to attain it. In contrast to other Bourdieusian studies cited, Pickard's studies (2012; 2013; 2015) are particularly significant for understanding habitus as a state of being that can be modified through recognising the vocational ballet students as active agents, for explicitly exploring the enjoyment, excitement and pleasure felt by her informants, and through including a focus on the home and social life of the young dancers to better understand choices made and experiences had within the school and studio.

Focusing explicitly on the link between ballet, body and educational culture and the existence of eating disorders and body dysmorphia, Benn and Walters's (2001) empirical study cites Goffman's (1982) concept of 'total institutions', Foucault's (1977a) notion of 'ascetic discipline', and Bourdieu's (1977) framework of physical, cultural and economic capital to offer an insight into the development of a dancer's body image. The existence of mirrors and ballet critics, the necessity of costume and the growing globalisation of ballet, are all highlighted as key themes contributing to the continued existence of negative body image. Benn and Walters (2001) argue that an unequal balance exists 'between the rhetoric of nutritional education and the reality of the ballet world's aesthetics and practices' (p.139) yet adopts a range of distinct yet complementary concepts to demonstrate that the ballet culture environment is in transition to a more enlightened state. However, the study cites the above sociologists as shaping influences rather than setting the ethnographic data obtained *within* their sociological models.

Tsitsou's (2014) study looks at the social origins of both professional ballet and contemporary dancers based in Glasgow through linking ethnographic data to varying kinds of capital (social, economic and cultural), while a second class-based study, Doane's (2006) analysis of swing dance in New York City, looks at the relationship between punk

subcultures and swing dance, considering the transposition of familial-based dispositions from one sphere to another. Further examples include Wade's (2011) study on the heteronormative nature of Lindy Hop dancing to argue that cooperation and negotiation are inherent to partner dance and that habitus not only plays a role in maintaining this balanced state but also has an emancipatory nature; the constant movement breaks down normative gender behaviours and the associated hierarchy of male/leader and female/follower. Urquía's (2005) research on London salsa clubs explores the competition between dancers to establish an interpretation of the aesthetics of the dancing that is de-ethnicised, through drawing upon the concept of cultural capital.

The latter studies explored here illustrate that a broader range of dance activities and practices can be, and have been, interrogated through the adoption of Bourdieusian concepts. However, in reference to all the studies explored, a central feature concerns the varying approaches that are drawn upon; the extent to which the dance or the theory is the leading shaping force.

#### **4.2.6. Critique of Bourdieusian dance studies**

Wainwright et al (2006) cite and defend three of the most common criticisms of Bourdieu's work; that it is 'vague, deterministic and ahistorical' (p.550). The first two points are particularly relevant to a critique of Bourdieusian dance works; the third point is to an extent counteracted through studies that engage in, and provide a greater context of, the dance practice under investigation. Concerning the first point, my concern is not so much that habitus is too *vague*, but rather that it is *tempting*: within the ballet world, in particular, ballet-specific behaviours can be readily 'explained' by habitus: the concept of habitus provides a succinct explanation for unconscious behaviours and beliefs. This leads onto the second criticism: in some Bourdieusian studies, dancers are awarded limited agency due to the encompassing, explanatory and deterministic nature of their habitus. Bourdieu's approach

has been criticised for being structurally over-determined through its paying limited attention to the significance of social interaction (Jenkins, 1982; King, 2000). Lee (1998) argues that, in reality, power is 'enacted at the macro-level through the institutions of the public sphere *and* at the micro-level in face to face interactions' (p.433, emphasis added). Habitus may relate to small scale and unconscious actions, behaviours and thoughts, but within a Bourdieusian study, all are situated within the macro structures of field and capital, limiting individual agency. Again, this point links to another: the strength of Bourdieu's framework in explaining social worlds lies in the individual concepts that make up the whole. However, when these concepts are utilised and segregated from the macro model they are undermined through being isolated from one another (Beasley-Murray, 2000). Dance studies that isolate and utilise, either Bourdieu's notion of habitus or the concept of capital, arguably result in the presentation of a limited picture (i.e. Wainwright et al, 2005).

There is no doubt that Wainwright et al have made a significant contribution to sociology of dance literature. However, as Khudaverdian (2006) argues, their commitment to Bourdieu's conceptual framework limits the direction of their research, and one could also apply this reasoning to additional studies conducted (for example, Alexias and Dimitropoulou, 2011). Although the very concept of habitus is characterised by its unconscious nature, it should not be assumed that those embodying this state are unaware of their actions, opinions and thoughts. Within Pickard's (2012) study, a vocational ballet dancer and interviewee explained: 'I want my body to look good so that I can show it off' (p.15). However, for example, Wainwright et al do not question whether or not dancers have an understanding of their own habitus; it is taken for granted that they are unaware of their actions until a negative event such as an injury forces them to confront it (Khudaverdian, 2006). As Jenkins (1992) states, 'behaviour has its causes, but actors are not allowed their reasons' (p.97).

Khudaverdian's (2006) own doctoral research, (which draws on the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, George Herbert Mead, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to interrogate the embodiment,

formation and transformation of former professional ballet dancers), also challenges the social constructionist approach taken by Wainwright et al. The author argues, firstly, that 'dancers are always in the process of formation and transformation' (Khudaverdian, 2006, p.39) and, secondly, points out that the dancers do not exist and operate in a cultural vacuum. Their very presence and existence in the world 'outside' (Goffman, 1959/1990) not only ensures ongoing opportunities for them to recognise themselves as ballet dancers, and their actions as ones that ballet dancers would commit: Khudaverdian's (2006) data also suggests that ballet dancers actually play up to their ballet identity, through for example, wearing their hair in a tight bun when not working. Wainwright et al both limit the space of their research to the ballet studio and company, and ignore the phenomenal or 'lived' body, resulting in the presentation of a narrow picture.

Further points should be added to the above critique. Returning to Brinson's (1983b) argument that dance-specific methodologies should be used and developed, and recent criticism that interdisciplinary dance studies do not consider the agency of the dancing in shaping and producing the social world under investigation (Bales and Eliot, 2013; Dodds, 2012), the above studies underline this concern. For example, there is very little description of the dancing that is taking place; interview data is prioritised to the detriment of observation data. One exception concerns Pickard's studies which draw on imagery and metaphors used by ballet teachers involved, and recounts movement performed. Similarly, however, criticism from a sociological quarter could be directed towards those dance studies that are content to cite or borrow Foucault's and Bourdieu's theories and concept(s) without subjecting them to rigorous critique, and before setting data or a research question within them.

As with the Foucauldian studies, the majority of the works cited here, whether the authors are sociologists or dance scholars, limit their interests to similar themes surrounding the ballet body: pain, injury, construction and loss of identity, retirement and suffering

(although as mentioned, Pickard interweaves the place and role of enjoyment and enthusiasm with some of the aforementioned themes). It may be that these foci are compounded by over-use of the same data set (Wainwright et al appear to use the same interview data drawn from 20 in-depth interviews with The Royal Ballet for the ethnographic studies cited here), and a possibly natural relationship between Bourdieu's conceptual model of social practice and, in particular, the classical ballet doctrine. The danger here, though, is that in the majority of studies, both the individual dancers and the greater dance practice are primarily defined by a set of dominant negative characteristics, with limited consideration given to pleasure, enjoyment or individual choice.

#### **4.2.7. Summary of Foucauldian and Bourdieusian Dance Studies**

The majority of ethnographic Bourdieusian and Foucauldian studies, while pioneering in their use of specific sociological frameworks to interrogate dance practice, are restricted in focus, with the majority focusing on the classical ballet and contemporary dance genres, and the associated themes just discussed. Nearly twenty years ago, Thomas (1995) pointed out that popular dance forms have dominated sociology of dance, and that 'high' dance forms have received limited attention. However, when it comes to this most recent body of literature, the opposite is true: classical ballet and contemporary dance reign supreme and, from the very nature of their practice and training, one can surmise that the lived experiences of vocational and professional dancers are viewed as highly appropriate for study through sociological frameworks that have been criticised as overly deterministic. As Khudaverdian (2006) highlights:

The ballet dancer spends almost all of their waken [sic] hours completely aware of their bodies. They are fully present in their embodied experience, fully conscious of the constructed bodily ideals, which emerge out of the ballet world, and fully consumed by their desire and passion for ballet. Their entire experience of their formation and transformation is... held within their bodies, and through it become masters of embodiment. *It is for this reason that I have chosen to study ballet dancers* (p.17, emphasis added).

However, this development raises a key question: are certain dance activities and practices more amenable for sociological exploration than others? In lieu of the well-publicised blood, sweat and tears of the professional ballet world, what can one focus on in a senior citizens' tea dance? Is there less of an appeal to the sociology of dance scholar?

The largely Bourdieusian and Foucauldian ethnographic studies discussed above counteract the previously dominant postmodern discourse that viewed dance and the dancer's body as texts (Wainwright et al, 2007). However, their focus on the mechanisation and conformation of dancer and public minds and bodies to particular behaviours and beliefs has resulted in limited attention being paid to the significance of autonomous individual and group actions; this approach has arguably also led to a wider range of participatory dance activities and practices being ignored by scholars. A review of the literature suggests that there is a dearth of original research that takes a micro sociological approach.

Naturally, the evolution of a sub-discipline results in fresh challenges; the need to broaden the ethnographic focus has already been discussed, and is reflected in the methodological approach taken in the current study. Although the sociology of dance may be rooted or influenced by sociological frameworks, models and thinking, and bearing in mind the typically interdisciplinary nature of dance studies, a key criticism of the majority of work considered in this survey is that the dancing is not 'honoured'. By this I mean that although dance is taken as the topic for exploration, not only are descriptions and analyses of the movement characterising the dance not considered, but the impact of the dancing itself on the social world under investigation is overlooked: the central focus is on how the dance reflects, rather than creates, particular social worlds.

However, despite this rather negative conclusion, the fuller literature review, tracing the early works through to the ethnographic reaction to the postmodern trend, serves to illustrate that a distinct trajectory of sociology of dance study, and coherent bodies of work are in existence; it is no longer possible to state unequivocally that there is a 'dearth' of sociology of dance studies. Rather the focus should be on the evolution, promotion and interrogation of the very nature of the sub-discipline. This study therefore contributes to, and expands upon, the current sociology of dance scholarship through the adoption of Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy to refocus attention both on the agency of individuals and on dance as a shaping force.

## **5. The Microsociology of Erving Goffman**

Erving Goffman is described as a sociological maverick, one who departed 'radically from the mainstream sociological tradition' and a scholar whose work is 'a protean sociology of the common man [sic] in mass society' (Williams, 2001 p.349). Goffman's main contribution to sociology, his model of dramaturgy, is most clearly stated in the seminal text *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959/1990) and utilises the metaphor of theatrical performance to explain the management of face to face social interaction. 'His debt to the theatre lies in his use of terms derived from it' (Clark and Mangham, 2004, p.40). The key work cited above introduced Goffman's pioneering, yet unorthodox focus on micro sociology as he aimed to 'promote the acceptance of [the] face-to-face domain as an analytically viable one... a domain whose preferred method of study is microanalysis' (Goffman, 1983, p.2). His model of dramaturgy has been influenced by Kenneth Burke (1945; 1969a; 1969b) and Hugh Duncan (1962), together with Gustav Ichheiser (1949) (Clark and Mangham, 2004). However, Goffman ensured the success of theatre metaphor as a means to critique social life: 'Shakespeare may have said it earlier and better, but Goffman gave it a form that sociologists could appreciate' (Clark and Mangham, 2004, p.40).

Goffman's (1959/1990) theoretical framework has had a limited impact on dance scholarship. Despite the centrality of the art form in everyday society, theory-based sociology of dance studies as previously noted, have tended to be guided by the concepts and models of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. Yet, as drawn together by Whiteside and Kelly (2016), Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model has been widely applied in a range of disciplines, including corporate management (Gardner and Martinko, 1988; Grove and Fisk, 1992; White and Hanson, 2002), the hotel industry (Dillard et al, 2000), the operating theatre (Tanner and Timmons, 2000; Riley and Manias, 2005), public relations (Johansson, 2007), and social movements (Benford and Hunt, 1992). Clark and Mangham (2004) cite Young's (1990) argument that 'the greater part of our so-called developed world constitutes a *dramaturgical society*' (original emphasis), where 'the technologies of social science, mass communication, theatre, and the arts are used to manage attitudes, behaviours and feelings of the population' (p.71, cited in Clark and Mangham, 2004, p.43).

Moving closer to the discipline of dance, dramaturgy has been used for analysing erotic performance (Enck and Preston, 1988; Wosick-Correa and Joseph, 2008), although the focal point thus far has been the deviant setting, rather than the relationship between the dance practice and social interaction. Enck and Preston (1988) use the notion of 'cynical performance' to understand how the dancer-waitress manipulates her dancing to seemingly fulfil the fantasies of the patrons. The study mentions the reasoning and format of different types of dance ('stage dance' and 'side dance') but does not describe or consider the movement itself as a shaping force. Wosick-Correa and Joseph (2008) focus on the particular type of 'front' that female dancers adopt when interacting with female customers attending a strip club. Two further studies use Goffman's (1963) concept of 'stigma' to explore how female exotic dancers negotiate the shame attached to their profession in their personal lives (Thompson and Harred, 1992; Bradley, 2007). Again, however, little attention is paid to the actual dancing performed.

Goffman's (1959/1990) model has also been adopted in the overlapping worlds of sport, leisure and outdoor education (see for example, Ingham, 1975; Birrell and Turowetz, 1979; Carroll, 1980; Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Schmitt, 1993; Birrell and Donnelly, 2004; Kelly, 2007a; 2007b; 2013a; 2013b; Beames and Pike, 2008).

Reflecting the centrality of Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical framework to the present study, this chapter now moves on to explain and critique the Goffmanian tradition and the various concepts and elements that comprise his dramaturgical framework, considering how the approach has attracted both criticism and praise.

## **6. Erving Goffman's Model of Dramaturgy**

Goffman's framework is principally concerned with 'face-to-face interaction' (Smith, 2006, p.1), which allows the researcher to examine the social micro elements in worlds that are not easily accessed. Dawe (1973) has praised Goffman for pioneering:

[T]he ritual significance of the seemingly insignificant styles and expressions of brief encounters... [no other sociologist] has so brilliantly generated ad hoc concepts, nor woven them so intricately into complex analytic constructions; has made such illuminating documentary use of everyday materials (p.247).

Goffman's (1959/1990) model is centered on social performance, described as 'all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his [sic] continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on observers' (p.32).

In our own Anglo-American culture there seems to be two common-sense models according to which we formulate our conceptions of behavior: the real, sincere, or honest performance; and the false one that thorough fabricators assemble for us, whether meant to be taken unseriously, as in the work of stage

actors, or seriously, as in the work of confidence men [sic] (Goffman, 1959/1990, pp.76-77).

Goffman (1959/1990) argued 'the very structure of the self can be seen in terms of how we arrange for such performances in our Anglo-American society' (p.244). The 'object of a performer is to sustain a particular definition of [a] situation' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.90). Projection of the 'reality' aimed for, resulting from an accumulation of social interactions, is fostered through 'impression management', the means by which the individual aims to influence the perceptions of others and the process guiding all face-to-face interaction (Whiteside and Kelly, 2016). This reality will be outwardly, at least, supported and believed in by those presenting it, and often by the 'audience' as well (Goffman, 1959/1990). The nature of its 'portrayal' is dependent on the assumptions and expectations characterising the social situation and the individual roles inhabited within them. As Molnar and Kelly (2013) explain, 'these roles enable individuals to maintain high degrees of *impression management* to avoid embarrassment or *faux pas* and to present themselves in the best possible light' (p.120, original emphasis).

A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well articulated. Performed with ease or clumsiness, awareness or not, guile or good faith, it is none the less something that must be realized (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.81).

As highlighted by Whiteside and Kelly (2016), 'roles are performed in conjunction with three interconnected elements: the physical environment ("setting"); the "appearance" and "manner" of the performer ("personal front"); and the collective, situational expectation ("front")' (n.p.) and it is to these three elements, we now turn.

## 6.1. 'Setting'

In Goffmanian terms, a 'setting' involves 'furniture, décor, physical layout and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the space of human action played out before, within or upon it' (Goffman, 1959/1990, pp.32-33). Settings are located within specific 'regions', defined by Goffman (1959/1990) as any space with physical boundaries, preserving the interaction taking place within. 'Front stage' constitutes the primary performance space, inhabited by both performers and audience members (for example, a studio) and 'back stage' is a space reserved for performers only (for example, a changing room). Front stage and back stage are normally partitioned from one another but within certain settings, for example a salsa club, where there are no doors or walls between the dance floor and the bar and seating areas, different roles are still adopted; performances can, therefore, be governed by less overt physical barriers. 'Fixed sign-equipment' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.110) (for example, a *barre* within a studio) within each region assists and can be necessary for a performance to take place. A third region, labelled as 'outside', relates to the region outwith the space where immediate performances are being conducted, inhabited by those persons who can be labelled as 'outsiders'; they have no direct interaction with the scenario being played out.

The back stage has a number of functions to fulfil and is strongly associated with being a hide-out. Examples of the relevant spaces across the case studies included changing rooms, green room, bar and seating areas, and staff room; within each context, they had a fixed back region identity (Goffman, 1959/1990). Backstage is where preparation for performance in the front stage space takes place. Items from another personal front (explored below), the props and costumes necessary for individuals to carry out their everyday 'non-performance' life, are stored here. 'It is here that the illusions and impressions are openly constructed. Here stage props and items of personal front can be stored in a kind of compact collapsing of whole repertoires of actions and characters' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.114). Audience

members are not allowed to enter and only performers on the same 'team' (as defined below) may feel welcome (Goffman, 1959/1990). Within the back stage areas, certain tensions can be displayed more openly and bonds can be reaffirmed: 'Here the performer can relax; he [sic] can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.115).

Within dance settings, Goffman's framework allows for a space to take multiple roles depending on the perspective of the observer. For example, in the context of the professional ballet class, the studio hosting the class, would to the outsider standing on the street, constitute a back stage region. However, to the researcher studying the professional ballet class, within the venue the changing room would be the most relevant back stage region, with the studio occupying the key front stage space.

## **6.2. 'Personal front'**

Goffman explains that two possibilities regarding an individual's performance exist: an individual may or may not be taken in by their own act: When the individual has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the belief of his [sic] audience, we may call him cynical, reserving the term 'sincere' for individuals who believe in the impression fostered by their own performance (p.28). While engaged in a sincere performance, the performer must practise 'dramaturgical discipline' (Goffman, 1959/1990). They must stay true to the part that they are playing and be able to react instantly and correctly to any instances that threaten the impression that they are aiming to give. Performers may consciously take an insincere approach to deceive the audience for their own amusement, or to protect themselves (for example, acting in self-defence), or unconsciously, as an insular reaction to contact with the audience (Goffman, 1959/1990).

We tend to see real performances as something not purposely put together at all, being an unintentional product of the individual's unselfconscious response to the facts in his [sic] situation. And contrived performances we tend to see as something painstakingly pasted together, one false item on another, since there is no reality to which the items of behavior could be a direct response (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.77).

We understand the social interaction being played out in a performance setting thanks to 'sign-vehicles', the manner and appearance of an individual, labelled as 'personal front', that convinces both performer and audience of the performance being given. 'Manner' (for example, body language, clothing, facial expressions and speech) is more susceptible to change than 'appearance', (for example, age, looks, race, sex and size) (Goffman, 1959/1990).

Personal front can fracture in a variety of ways: maintaining a certain impression can be emotionally and physically exhausting.

The expressive coherence that is required in performances points out a crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves. As human beings we are presumably creatures of variable impulse with moods and energies that change from one moment to the next. As characters put on for an audience, however, we must not be subject to ups and downs (Goffman, 1959/1990, pp.63-64).

In rather more poetical terms, 'a single note off key can disrupt the tone of an entire performance' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.60). Discrepant actions, 'unmeant gestures' and 'incidents' including the committing of a *faux pas* challenge the existence of the portrayed reality. This leads the performers involved to adopt certain techniques such as 'tact' to counteract these disturbances (Goffman, 1959/1990). In addition, '[t]he difference between actual and scripted becomes confused with the difference between personal identity and specialized function, or (on the stage) the difference between part and capacity' (Goffman,

1974, p.129). In other words, an individual's personal front can become conflicted with the larger 'team' and situational 'fronts' that a performer is simultaneously part of.

### **6.3. 'Front'**

Goffman (1959/1990) defines the concept of 'front' as 'that part of the individual's [or group's] performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance' (p.32). As Whiteside and Kelly (2016) explain, '[c]ollective expectations ('fronts') become institutionalised to the extent that performers and onlookers ('audience') are familiar with patterns and obligations' (n.p). Individual performers or audience members then

can place the situation in a broad category around which it is easy for him [sic] to mobilise his past experience and stereotypical thinking. Observers then need only be familiar with a small and hence manageable vocabulary of fronts, and know how to respond to them, in order to orient themselves in a wide variety of situations (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.36).

For example, a university lecturer joining a new institution and taking a class at the beginning of the academic year, will, despite not having met these individuals before, know *how* to stand and deliver a lecture: the preparation that is necessary, the content that should be included and the manner of its deliverance (with regards to personal dress and speech).

'Collective expectations' manifest themselves between groups of individual performers who are operating as part of a team. Goffman (1959/1990) defines a team as 'a set of individuals whose intimate cooperation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained' (p.108). For example, dancers within a studio will adhere to the teacher's demands in a disciplined fashion through adhering to a ballet front characterised by a lack of talking and minimal whispering. However, in the changing room afterwards, derogatory

comments may be made about the teacher that is at odds with the dancers' subservient behavior in the front stage area. What may be referred to as 'staging talk' or 'shop talk' relates to those conversations that bond team members together, allowing them all to share in the same dramaturgical experience (Goffman, 1959/1990). This concept is closely related to another Goffmanian term, the 'treatment of the absent', which sees the use of informal and slang language in these same back stage regions (Goffman, 1959/1990). Such verbal interactions serve to strengthen the 'dramaturgical loyalty' felt between team members, a loyalty that, according to Goffman (1959/1990), is more likely to occur between individuals who are closely related in age, class, ethnicity and gender.

Individuals joining the team may function effectively almost immediately due to Goffman's (1959/1990) notion of familiarity; 'a formal relationship that is automatically extended and received as soon as the individual takes a place on the team' (p.88), rather than a process that develops over time. Familiarity extends into 'team collusion' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.175): within a team setting, 'accomplices... are forced to define one another as persons "in the know"' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.88). However, a second scenario for new team members is also possible: they may be inconspicuously ignorant in the particular setting that they are attending.

It may be necessary for the members of the team to learn what the line is to be, and take it, without admitting to themselves and to one another the extent to which their position is not independently arrived at (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.93).

This explanation may help explain why certain individuals behave in ways they feel they are expected to: in order to fulfill the role of team member in a particular context. Those team members who are unable to recognise or perform the 'correct' behavior may unwittingly adopt a 'discrepant role' (Goffman, 1959/1990). For example, a woman entering a salsa club, may ask a man to dance, not realising that etiquette demands that she wait to be asked. Goffman (1959/1990) stresses:

One overall objective of any team is to sustain the definition of the situation that its performance fosters. This will involve the over-communication of some facts and the under-communication of others.... there are usually facts which, if attention is drawn to them during the performance, would discredit, disrupt, or make useless the impression that the performance fosters. These facts may be said to provide "destructive information" (p.141).

Within a team performance, one person often takes the role of controlling that performance; termed as the 'director', with the 'right to direct the progress of the dramatic action' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.101). That person, across all of the case study settings in the present study, with the exception of the salsa club, was the teacher or authority figure. Relating to the concept of 'collective expectations' mentioned above, when a performer adopts a particular role to be performed, that role is already normally imbued with a particular front.

It is apparent that if the director corrects for improper appearances and allocates major and minor prerogatives, then other members of the team (who are likely to be concerned with the show they can put on for one another as well as with the show they can collectively stage for the audience) will have an attitude toward the director that they do not have toward their other teammates (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.103).

The necessity of making dramaturgical demands on the rest of the team segregates and isolates this role further: 'A director, hence, starting as a member of the team, may find himself [sic] slowly edged into a marginal role between audience and performers, half in and half out of both camps' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.103).

Another role that can emerge within team scenarios concerns the star team player or performer. Dance settings are often characterised by an underlying or overt current of competitiveness, and in this context, key performers may either constitute a figurehead,

symbolically representing the reality fostered by the whole team, or feature more as a lead performer (Goffman, 1959/1990).

## **7. Critiquing Goffmanian Tradition**

Reading Goffman's key text *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is an act akin to stepping into a time machine. The social examples that he draws upon to illustrate his concepts appear out of place or even offensive in the present day; they are strongly inflected by the 1950s context within which he was writing. For example, the women who feature in his illustrative scenarios are depicted fretting over the amount of pressure in their car tyres (p.29) or concurrently playing the part of wife and mistress (p.77). Illustrating the burden of 'trials, worries, and secrets' between two individuals, Goffman (1959/1990) concludes that 'if a man wants to be served a restful dinner, he may seek the service of a waitress rather than a wife' (p.57) (the possibilities of serving himself or being served by a male waiter is not presented). However, gender equality and political correctness aside, it is Goffman's key dramaturgical concepts that are being utilised as tools in the current study, rather than the belief system of a bygone age illustrated through the contemporary examples that Goffman theorises. More substantive Goffmanian tradition as first theorised by key critics (Gouldner, 1971; Psathas, 1980) and supporters (Lofland, 1980; Manning, 1992) as brought together by Scheff (2001), rather than on the particular mechanisms of his (1959) dramaturgical framework, is the key focus here. Further discussion of the model's practical applicability takes place following the presentation of the findings of the current study. Key macro criticisms relating to Goffmanian tradition and approach emphasise the focus on micro interaction to the detriment and exclusion of the greater cultural, historical and social context, the lack of concern in instigating change within everyday working life, an overriding concern with the negative emotions that govern everyday encounters (the latter issue to be discussed in Chapter Six), and a sociological legacy that has been decried as chaotic and piecemeal (Psathas, 1996).

### **7.1.     *Macrocosm versus microcosm***

Gouldner (1970) argues that Goffman's work is ahistorical, culturally limited, and ideologically biased, resulting in a narrow and distorted perspective of social reality. Existence comes alive only in the 'fluid transient "encounter"' (Gouldner, 1972, p.379); a sentiment that could also read as an analogy of dance spectatorship as spectators experience, appreciate and assimilate dance through 'kinaesthetic osmosis' (Hamby, 1984, p.40), to varying degrees 'in the moment' before the dance performance unfolding before them 'disappears' (Bannon and Sanderson, 2000; Doughty et al, 2008). However, Goffman's approach of focusing on face-to-face interaction corresponds with a lack of interest in all other human activity (Blumer, 1972). In other words, 'the dramaturgical approach ignores the macrocosm within which its micro-level concerns are imbedded (Williams, 2001, p.350).

Clark and Mangham (2004) cite Wilshire's (1982) argument that Goffman's lack of understanding of the world of the theatre has resulted in an inadequate theory that focuses too exclusively on impression management and role playing. Yet Williams (2001) argues that the fault lies with the nature of symbolic interactionism, to which Goffman has been intrinsically, and perhaps unfairly, linked. The discipline of symbolic interactionism, which Goffman actively aimed to distance himself from (Manning, 1992),

lacks a proper appreciation of social organisation and social structure.... interactionism may have an astructural or microscopic bias and... a perspective with an astructural bias is one that by definition will tend to be non-economic, ahistorical and with reference to power and politics: apolitical (Williams, 2001, p.359).

The rather damning conclusion from Dawe (1973) (in his review of several key Goffmanian texts including *Encounters* and *Interaction Rituals*) is that Goffman's 'response is...

sociologically and morally shallow... he is utterly incapable of seeing beyond the mean human possibilities embodied in his sadly limited view of the world' (pp.52-53). However, Dawe (1973) nevertheless contends that

Goffman is not primarily concerned with developing a sub-area of sociology, or, indeed, with doing sociology at all in the narrow, professionalized sense.... He was and is all the time recording his total response to what he sees as the world around him. And that is doing sociology, in the best sense and tradition of the discipline (p.252).

## **7.2. System versus anti-system**

Inextricably linked to the point explored above, and one again purported by Gouldner (1971), is the criticism that Goffman's approach does not challenge the status quo, the structure of large-scale bureaucratic organisations on behalf of the people that work for them (Williams, 2001). Dawe (1973) accuses Goffman of being 'both system-oriented and anti-system' (p.250):

On the hand, he depicts the attempts of human beings to control their situation, in terms of their self-conceptions, in face of a dominating social system. But the pressure of that system is so great that their attempts can amount to nothing more than public performance and personal concealment. So, on the other hand, his sociology also provides continual witness to his acceptance of externally-imposed order (p.250).

Indeed, Goffman (1974) himself stated, 'I personally hold society to be first in every way and any individuals' current involvements to be second' (p.13). The framework of behaviour provided by Goffman (1959/1990) may explain how the sum of individual performances accord with the greater accepted expectations of society. However, expanding upon Dawe's first point, Goffman's work is potentially emancipatory as when 'social reality is a matter of scripts and performances created and sustained by human interaction, changes become

possible.... social actors can become disenchanted with their lot and seek to change it' (Clark and Mangham, 2004, p.41).

Although criticism has been levelled at Goffman for not advocating a particular cause, his work still inadvertently caused change to happen, most notably, through the publication of *Stigma* (1961). As Psathas (1996) points out, this latter study was likely instrumental in affecting positive change within state run mental health hospitals. Combatting another central criticism revolving around Goffman's negative focus on the immorality of individuals (through the constant aim to control the impression being given), it is important to note that '[t]here is no substitute for the research which shows how "awful" things really are. That is, description, not causal analysis... "up close and personal," in embarrassingly rich detail' (Psathas, 1996, p.389). Goffman may not have explicitly acted on the observations that he made, but he paved the way for others to do so.

### **7.3. Goffman's Legacy?**

Goffman's legacy is difficult to critique given its uneasy stance between structuralism and symbolic interactionism, and his attempts to 'bridge situations and structures' (Williams, 2001, p.351). Furthermore, Goffman failed to create a coherent research programme and his legacy has been difficult to duplicate owing to his idiosyncratic research methods, which combined observations and anecdotes (Sallaz, 2007) or as Psathas (1996) puts it: 'empirical exemplars, gathered from Lord knows what sources, here, there, and everywhere' (p.383). Psathas (1996) goes on to recount the following anecdote: 'I once accused him of not being consistent, and a reviewer of my paper commented that this was a wasted criticism since Goffman never intended to be consistent. Nevertheless, I argued, he should have *tried*' (p.383, original emphasis).

Goffman once said “I snipe at a target from many different positions” or something to that effect. Meaning that he moved as he wanted, trying to hit his target and staying focused on it rather than on the consistency of his shooting distance, his choice of weapon or perspective, that is, his theoretical assumptions (Psathas, 1996, pp.383-384).

Collins' (1980) view that Goffman is hyper-reflexive, avoiding straightforward popular and theoretical positions, inspires both admiration and frustration. Hence, Hallett (2007) has argued that, owing to the focus on exploring and unearthing conscious and unconscious social interaction within research settings, Goffman's (1959) approach involves 'strategy and creativity' (p.152) on the part of the researcher. This view is reflected in the present study with the adoption of varying observation roles (Gold, 1958) and types of semi-standardised interviews (Flick, 2002) to apply Goffman's dramaturgical framework to a range of case studies.

Birrell and Donnelly (2004) suggest 'most researchers see Goffman as a generator of sensitising concepts and insightful interactional principles rather than a social theorist' (p.50), and this is certainly the perspective adopted in the current study. Goffman's approach resonates with, and shares, the central sociological tension that exists between the binary of individual agency and societal structure, yet is criticised for not attempting to alter it through challenging the everyday systems and structures of large-scale organisations. All of the case studies in the present research are located within specific public and private institutions, organisations and venues, but the focus is more explicitly on the social interaction that takes place within the walls of specific regions. The dance activity may be denoted by the institution, organisation or venue involved, but interactional focus here is also on the under-explored primacy of movement, the dance practice, as a means of generating specific micro social worlds. Key dramaturgical concepts and mechanisms provide the means to explore the two-way relationship between dance practice and social interaction (how each reflects and produces the other). However, counteracting another key criticism presented above, this

relationship is situated within a wider context through a thorough literature review undertaken for each case study (see Appendix 1), and by conducting interviews to obtain data that cannot be easily observed.

## **8. Application to Dance Scholarship**

Four overarching factors contribute to the argument that Goffman's framework is suitable for adoption in dance research and, in particular, valuable when exploring the social workings of participatory dance settings (first discussed in Whiteside, 2013 and Whiteside and Kelly, 2016). Firstly, Goffman (1959/1990) is concerned with social establishments, defined as 'any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place' (p.231): this notion reflects the dancing, taking place behind closed doors, which this study examines. Many dance settings could be described as closed 'systemic programs of instruction' (Foster, 1997, p.238) and the studio in particular, the front stage space within a number of dance settings, is a space designed and reserved for the activity of dance. Other dance activities take place within institutions that are hallmarked as being reserved for a particular occupation, for example education within primary schools.

Secondly, Goffman (1959/1990) defines a performance as 'a pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance' (p.27) and this characteristic is particularly relevant to activities where the dance practice takes place in a particular format. For example, within the current study, the ballet class unfolded in the universal format of *barre*, centre practice, *adage* and *allegro*; the inclusive creative dance class often began and ended with an exercise carried out in a circle; the line dancing classes began with easier dances before moving through intermediate and advanced dances, and a mixture of new and familiar dances were performed; the Highland dancing class worked through individual dances, following basic exercises at the *barre* and stretching in the centre.

Thirdly, social performances are viewed as ‘the more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind’ (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.16); a statement which could also be used to describe the purpose and nature of dance as ‘a transient ever-shifting art’ (Smith-Autard, 2003, p.153) that can never be wholly recorded and replicated by both dancer and spectator. Moreover, Goffman’s proposal that the dominant models of what he terms ‘sincere’ performances (whereby an individual believes in their performance) and ‘false’ performances (whereby an individual knows that they are ‘pretending’) are simultaneously in existence, can translate to a dance setting. ‘Macro choreographed performance[s] (the dancing) merge with micro individual performances’ (Whiteside, 2013, p.53), providing a setting rich for sociological exploration.

Lastly, Goffman (1959/1990) discusses his dramaturgical framework in relation to other social science approaches that could be used to analyse interactions within social establishments – cultural, political, structural and technical – and concludes that we must be careful not to ‘characterise our own society as a whole with respect to dramaturgical practices’ (p.237). Goffman (1959/1990) preempts criticism that his focus on the immediate performance before him results in neglect of the greater cultural, historical and social context (Blumer, 1972; Dawe, 1973; Gouldner, 1971), by warning against the enticing appeal of generalising findings to other cases. Goffman’s (1959/1990) solution is to focus on smaller units ‘or classes of establishments... by means of the case-history method’ (p.238). In this regard, the present study replicates Goffman’s advice through undertaking a number of case studies involving a range of institutions, organisations and venues to explore the participatory dance activities and practices operating within. This approach is further explored in the next chapter.

## 9. Summary

The overarching purpose of this chapter was to set the sociological dance scene for the current study. Firstly, to explore the history, trajectory and meaning of the sub-discipline of sociology of dance; secondly, to interrogate the most recent and relative literature to date (those studies that set ethnographic findings within specific sociological models); and lastly, to introduce the theoretical approach, Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, adopted for the current research.

This study defines dance as 'an evolving discipline that takes as a key focus the social makeup of dance – the ever-changing relationship between societal structures and individual agency inherent within dance activity and practice.' The focus is on the aesthetic, political and social; an approach that is apparent through the literature traced from the 1970s to the most recent studies that have drawn upon Bourdieu's conceptual model of social practice and Foucault's notions of discipline, power and surveillance. Attention was paid to the theories themselves and to the contribution made by those works that draw on them, an action adopted in line with Buckland's (1999) argument that scholars should seek to understand theories from contributory disciplines. In-depth consideration was necessary owing to a) the particular insight those frameworks bring to understanding the role and place of dance in society and b) to understand the particular contribution that results from using a different approach with which to frame ethnographic data, Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy.

A key argument brought forward by the authors cited is that using such models, in conjunction with an ethnographic approach, emphasises and reveals the embodied and lived experience of dance participants. Studies adopting a Foucauldian standpoint are linked to an emancipatory approach, aiming to reveal and action concerns with certain methods of

training and aesthetics. Works drawing upon Bourdieusian concepts expand upon notions of habitus through generating new terminology (Wainwright et al) and through demonstrating how the concept allows for agency (Pickard, 2012; 2015). Key limitations include the role that the dancing plays as a shaping force, the question of whether theories that have been characterised as deterministic are best suited to dance activities and practice characterised by a certain level of structure and discipline, and lastly, a limited focus on individual and group interaction. A Goffmanian approach lends itself to counteracting these concerns. Social interaction takes place within all types of participatory dance practice and activity and the dramaturgical model is used in the current study to access hidden worlds, both conscious and unconscious behaviours, and to assist the researcher in adopting a reflexive approach (the latter point is explored further in Chapters Three, Five and Six). The framework laid out above (pp.63-65) also explores the specific applicability of Goffman's (1959/1990) model to dance scholarship through drawing together the sociologist's focus on bounded social establishments, and, more significantly, notions of performance that resonate both with social interaction and dance movement.

In contrast to Bourdieu and Foucault, Goffman has not enjoyed (or even necessarily sought) the same legacy in sociological thinking. Such a tradition accords a certain level of flexibility to the researcher that draws upon such a rich and extensive toolkit as Goffman's dramaturgical framework, to contribute to both sociology and sociology of dance scholarship.

### **3. A SOCIOLOGY OF DANCE METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter is divided into five main sections. First, I address the constructivist and realist ontological and epistemological philosophical assumptions that shape the methodology of the current project. Then I consider the case study model, in particular, the structure and value of such an approach, and the process by which the case studies in the research were selected. The methods of observations and interviews adopted are then discussed and linked to the six case studies and ethnographic tradition. A section situating myself as researcher within Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model heightens the reflexivity that was central to the processes of data collection and analysis; I consider some of the actions and behaviours that I made to, and with, my fellow dance participants. Following on from this examination of the research methods employed, I turn to some of the major ethical issues involved in the study as necessitated by two of the case studies in particular; the inclusive creative dance class and dance in primary education. Finally, I reflect on the tradition of grounded theory and the grounded coding frame created to analyse data.

Qualitative research is employed across various disciplines and domains and the use of qualitative methods is particularly suited to the discipline of dance given the subject's 'multivalent nature' (Fraleigh and Hanstein, 1999, p.viii). As Janeswick (1998) aptly states, 'the qualitative researcher is like the choreographer, who creates dance to make a statement' (p.53). Despite a tendency to define it as such, qualitative research is distinguished by more than just an absence of statistical data (Bryman, 2012) and numerous qualitative approaches may be taken and traditions followed. As noted by Wainwright (2004), five traditions are offered by Creswell (1997); case study, biography, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology. This study draws upon three of these approaches in particular

and to adapt Wainwright's (2004) phraseology, engages 'Goffmanian ethnographic engagement with grounded coding', through undertaking six case studies of participatory dance activity and practice.

## **2. Ontological and Epistemological Stance**

### **2.1. *Ontological approach***

Bryman (2012) notes that it is a concern with theory which gives meaning to sociological data gathered. These theoretical concerns are based on philosophical assumptions with regard to the ontological and epistemological stance of the study (Mason, 2002) and '[t]o ensure a strong research design, researchers must choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality' (Mills et al, 2006, p.26). In the context of the current study, ontology is concerned with what constitutes the nature of social reality; epistemology concerns the body of knowledge, the theory resulting in a particular social world view being taken.

The two key competing paradigms are the positivist and interpretivist traditions; the former being associated with the natural science tradition and deductive reasoning, and the latter with inductive reasoning and constructivist explanations (Kelly, 2007a). Inductive research aims to create and develop conceptual theory (Wainwright, 2004): an action taken in the current research through a sociology of dance approach. The approach taken in this study aims to respect the intimate experiences, interpretations, knowledge and opinions of participants involved and so reflects constructivist ontology. Ontology concerns '[w]hether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have an external reality to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors' (Bryman, 2012, p.32). The link establishing

ontology to the nature of reality as perceived by the researcher is particularly relevant to a study literally concerned with uncovering realities. Echoing the Goffmanian terminology, how do the participants in the study shape and view their particular dance realities? '[R]ealities are social constructions of the mind, and... there exist as many such constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.43). Through recognising the multitude of realities in existence, the current study is, crucially, presenting just one interpretation.

I adopted various observation roles in the course of the data collection, embodying the dual positions of researcher and dancer. My intimate knowledge and understanding of many of the behaviours and etiquettes that characterised the dance settings permitted Schütz's (1967) concept of 'bracketing' to be adopted in the research design. Drawing on the philosophical phenomenology of Husserl (1980; 1982; 1989) and linking it to sociology, Schütz (1967) argues that by setting aside one's ontological judgement and accepting the existence of subjectivity, one accepts that all persons experience the world in basically the same way; the researcher may then gain greater understanding about the social interactions which take place (Holstein and Gubrium, 1998). Through an existing 'stock of knowledge' (Schütz, 1967), which, crucially, is continually added to, certain attitudes, ideas and values can be applied to one's own experience and these resources are then drawn upon to interpret the actions, stories and words of others (Holstein and Gubrium, 1998). This approach complemented both the social and dance performances that I could give in the different settings and the impact that they would have on my assimilation into the various teams. Through recognising that I had an existing 'stock of knowledge', possible biases were acknowledged and counteracted. For example, prior to attending the line dancing classes, I understood the derision that the activity attracted as I had previously shared it to some degree.

## 2.2. *Epistemological approach*

Epistemology concerns the theory and process by which knowledge is gained and demonstrated (Mason, 2002). To cite a basic binary, epistemological thought within the academy is traditionally characterised by the mind-body duality that privileges the former over the latter (Risner, 2000). However, epistemological research in dance has predominantly been concerned with kinaesthesia: 'how do dancers develop knowing, and specifically, how do they come to know about their bodies, "in their bodies"?' (Wilson, 2009, p.4).

[W]e commonly speak of skill in dance as a form of knowledge and also speak of kinaesthetic intelligence as an aspect of skilful dancing. But dance involves more than just knowing how to do a movement. It also involves knowing how to express the aesthetic intent of the movement and how to create aesthetic movement imagery. All of these forms of *knowing how* are forms of bodily lived (experiential) knowledge. As such, they are avenues for self-knowledge (Fraleigh, 1987, p.26, original emphasis).

Key dance philosophers (Best, 1985; Carr, 1978; 1987; McFee, 1994) have presented the artistic practice of dance as constituting a rational and deliberate human action (Pakes, 2003), counteracting the traditional Western epistemology that views research undertaken as a quest for 'justified true belief' (Alcoff, 1998, p.viii cited in Pakes, 2003, p.139). As Parviainen (2002) notes, the intention behind dancing is not limited to a decision to move: 'We look at dance for its own sake, in terms of its intrinsic aims and values, not because it is the means to achieving an externally defined goal' (Pakes, 2003, p.142).

Unearthing, interrogating and presenting the realities within the case studies as brought about by micro performances is the focal point of the present study and dance epistemology had a vital role to play. Firstly, in considering the role of movement in constructing and reflecting social interaction, through my own kinaesthetic experience and those of the

participants, and, secondly, in explaining the significance of the experience and knowledge of the researcher-as-dancer for both observing and 'fitting in':

Learning dancing means becoming bodily sensitive in the respect of the kinaesthetic sense and one's own motility. Thus, bodily knowledge is not about correctly performing a movement skill, such as a pirouette, but the ability to find proper movements through bodily negotiation, variations of the pirouette (Parviainen, 2002, p.20).

Relevant to the current study, Risner (2000) questions whether one can understand the dance without doing the dance and if the act of dancing constitutes or justifies the claim of understanding knowledge gained. Through these questions, he argues that 'the dance is primary to the construction of knowing' (Risner, 2000, p.163).

Yet an epistemological approach that draws on kinaesthetic knowledge and experience was not the only one adopted in this study. Once again, labels have been employed to describe the most common approaches in the academy; positivism, interpretivism and realism (Bryman, 2012). The latter position is described as 'adhering to principles such as seeing the world as existing independently of our knowledge of it, but believing there to be deep structures which cannot be observed' (Kelly, 2007a, p.131); the stance shares attributes with both the positivist and interpretivist traditions but constitutes neither. The overlap of a kinaesthetic epistemology with a realist epistemology 'conjoins *knowing that* and *knowing how* in the contextual situatedness of knowing from a particular body, place, and time' (Risner, 2000, p.168, original emphasis). This research project adheres to a realist epistemology, firstly, through the understanding that observations are 'theory-informed' rather than 'theory-determined' (Wainwright, 2004, p.234), secondly, through a focus on the 'lived experience' of the research informants as opposed to a reliance on texts (Wainwright, 1997) and, finally, in the adoption of a triangulation of methods (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). The realist researcher aims to formulate critical frameworks to interpret complex social

phenomena (Marsh and Smith, 2001). Although realists do not take the positivist stance of viewing themselves as separate from the social world under investigation, they do support the notion that normative assumptions govern the social world (Kelly, 2007a). As Pawson and Tilley (1997) succinctly explain, 'The social world... consists of more than the sum of people's beliefs, hopes and expectations' (p.23).

### **3. Case Studies**

#### **3.1. *The case study model***

The case study approach adopted reflects the research focus on social interactions as they are produced and illuminated by a wide range of dance practices in varying social settings. This method may be descended from scientific methodology, but it has been widely adopted in the humanities and social sciences (Stake, 2003). Case studies are valuable 'for refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalisability' (Stake, 2003, p.156). Case studies are particularly effective when the researcher has limited influence over the phenomena being investigated and the boundaries between context and the event immediately unfolding are blurred (Yin, 1994). The research focus in the current study is on social interactions as they are produced and illuminated by a wide range of dance practices in varying social settings.

Stake (2003) defines three categories of case studies: these are 'collective', 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental'. The 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' approaches reflect, respectively, a desire to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a particular research setting and to undertake one case study to seek understanding on another phenomenon (Stake, 2003). However, this study is characterised as belonging to the 'collective' case study model: six case studies of varying dance practices and social settings were chosen because their inclusion and the

subsequent investigation allows a degree of generalisation to take place, facilitating theorisation of additional, similar cases outwith the current study (Stake, 2003). The extent to which conclusions resulting from case study research may be generalised is, naturally, contentious. As case studies are concerned with the complexity and embodied state of social worlds, disparities and inconsistencies can be unearthed from the conflicting opinions of participants involved (Adelman et al, 1980). 'The search for particularity competes with the search for generalizability' (Stake, 2003, p.140) yet, crucially, a case study seeks to understand only the case at hand (Stake, 2003). The question of how findings from the current study may be generalised with a focus on theory and research setting, rather than population, is discussed in the concluding chapter. Finally, 'case study is... a choice of what is to be studied' (Stake, 2003, p.134). The final selection of case studies in *The Hidden Dancers* was of paramount importance for unearthing the phenomena of realities: the primary means by which this was achieved was through formal or purposive sampling (Stake, 2003); concerning both the selection of the case studies themselves and the informants within them.

### **3.2. *Selecting the case studies***

The setting of this research in Scotland's largest and most multicultural city ensured that a wide range of participatory dance activities and practice would be available for study. Following on from a primary mapping exercise to ascertain the volume and range of participatory dance events taking place in a select area of Glasgow, it was necessary to devise a method to categorise this data for the selection of case studies. Over 80 dance activities and practices were unearthed in a three mile geographical radius, encompassing Glasgow's city centre and beyond (see Appendix 2), and the aim was to reflect, as far as possible, the breadth, depth and richness of existing participatory dance 'events' in the final selection.

Under the umbrella term of 'dance studies', scholars have studied dance in a number of different contexts, but despite, or perhaps because of, their disparate approaches, academics continue to define and refer to movement through utilising the labels of 'form', 'genre' and 'style' that reflect the aesthetic and historic relationship between each type of dance. In particular, references to 'concert dance' and 'social dance' are widely used in the current literature in a more or less uncritical fashion despite the preoccupation of previous scholars with proposing definitive forms of dance, using varying terms including 'concert dance', 'theatrical dance' or 'art form dance', 'social dance', 'ritual dance', 'religious dance' or 'sacred dance', 'world dance' and 'aerobic dance' (Cohen and Copeland, 1983; Hanna, 1979; Kassing and Jay, 2003; Nahachewsky, 1995; Pugh McCuthcheon, 2006). By examining the genre and style of dance being performed in each potential case study and the nature of its social setting, the three proto-dance types of 'concert', 'social' and 'sport', were drawn from the above terminology and adopted as a structuring device to assist in making sense of the information collected as part of the initial mapping exercise. 'Concert' relates to dance practices that are traditionally associated with high art and a stage setting; ballet being the obvious example. 'Social' dance reflects those dance activities and practices that embody physical (for example, dancing in partners) and social (for example, they are set within a bar or nightclub setting) interaction between individuals dancing. 'Sport' dance was a label proposed especially for those dance events (activity and practice) that have traditionally been associated with a military and competition format (Highland dancing) and are strongly associated with the promotion of exercise (dance in formal education). Thus, all potential case studies were 'sorted' and attached to the most relevant labels, with the understanding that some overlap is inevitable – for example, ballet may attract the label of 'high art' but there is a social dimension to the ballet class – before the case studies were decided upon.

Each 'type' of dance form has two case studies attached to it. The case studies are the professional ballet class and inclusive creative dance class (so-called 'concert dance'), line dancing class and salsa club (so-called 'social dance') and Highland dancing class and dance in primary education (so-called 'sport dance'). The decision to use this classification of dance forms is tied to the study's predominant concern with participatory dance activities and practices, all of which are characterised in part by the movement performed, and usually involved in the 'event' title i.e. *line dancing* class. Indeed, it is the codification of 'movement' which leads the action to become known as dance (Smith, 2008).

Arguably, classifying dance is a hopeless task as 'we do not think that the scope of such practice is ever determinate and concede that different legitimate interests may call for different articulations of the same practice' (Sparshott, 1995, p.14). Cohen (1982) has warned against giving labels to dance, arguing that this will prevent dance genres and styles from naturally merging, and labels can be misleading as they cause attention to be drawn to shared characteristics of genre and style, rather than to those physical properties that characterise dance types from one another. Sparshott (1995) argues, by classifying dance by its historical and social setting (the aesthetic dimension is not mentioned), we are saved 'from inventing reasons' (p.26). The terms 'concert', 'social' and 'sport' are heuristic labels, rather than definitive categories; they can be understood in different ways. As Nahachewsky (1995) argues:

The validity of a typology does not depend on which element it is based on, but rather on how it is used. Its usefulness depends on its relationship to the specific research objectives, its manifestation in the data, and the care used in its application (p.4).

Using the labels 'concert', 'social' and 'sport' provided the means to a) select the case studies, b) identify and interrogate the genre-specific literature review attached to each case study (see Appendix 1), and c) assist in the design of interviews and observation field notes

and unearth additional dimensions of dance activity and practice. For example, the literature on line dancing focuses on the physical and psychological benefits of taking part, yet consideration of the 'concert' dimension of this practice, with its technical and performance implications, within the data collection, revealed additional findings of significance.

However, I could not simply select the case studies; individual institutions, organisations and venues had to positively respond to an invitation to take part (see Appendix 3). Meetings were held with certain prospective case study groups up to a year before data collection took place where logistics demanded forward planning (for example, in the case of the professional ballet class), or where the ethical considerations demanded that extra care and planning would be needed (within the inclusive creative dance class and primary school). The case studies selected represent a wide range of dance types and standards, social settings and groups. Appendix 4 illustrates this depth in reference to both the practice (the dancing undertaken) and the activity (the social setting) investigated.

#### **4. Ethnographic Approach**

##### **4.1. *Ethnography***

Ethnography is the study and description of cultural phenomena through qualitative research rooted in fieldwork. There are two main intellectual traditions in ethnography; the first is associated with the British School of Social Anthropology and its proponents of the 1920s and 1930s, including the anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard centering on long-lasting, intensive fieldwork, taking place in non-Western communities and cultures, and a concern with signs, symbols and rituals (Colosi, 2008). The second approach, which developed simultaneously, involves the Chicago School of Sociology, and the exploration of urban living through ethnographic research in the city, primarily to explore marginalised and 'deviant' groups (Colosi, 2008).

Following the Second World War, a second development saw members of the Chicago School use fieldwork to explore symbolic interactionism.

Wainwright (2004) also undertakes a brief review of the merits of post-modern ethnography and the style of accounts written and presented, tracing a movement from the narrative accounts of Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard, to works which take the form of detached and abstract tales, based on a realist stance and incorporating minimal theory. Unsurprisingly, this postmodern approach has attracted criticism in some quarters for running the risk of becoming individualist and insular, not easily reconciled to contributing to social issues at hand (Wainwright, 2004). In contrast, and recalling discussion that featured in the first two chapters, the aim of sociology of dance is crucially to both understand, contribute to, and shape society (Brinson, 1983a; 1983b; Thomas, 1995).

As pointed out by Wainwright (2004), the term 'ethnography' may constitute a specific qualitative research approach or be the starting point to describe the dominant research method within the tradition; participant observation. These differences can in a small way relate to the distinctions between anthropological and sociological ethnography, tied to the two schools of thought noted above. Wainwright (2004) cites Van Maanen (1988) and Travers (2001) to highlight that anthropologists often spend upwards of a year in the setting under investigation, while sociologists adopt the use of ethnographic research methods but typically spend a much shorter time in the field. The fieldwork undertaken for the present study took place over nine months and saw involvement with different case studies often taking place in the same week. However, with six case studies, there were gaps of researcher involvement and interaction between and within some of the case studies; depending on the particular logistics and timings of each one (Appendix 5 details the involvement schedule attached to each case study).

Streubert and Carpenter's (1999) criteria for ethnography consists of: '(i) the researcher as instrument; (ii) fieldwork; (iii) a reciprocity between data collection and analysis; (iv) a focus on culture; (v) cultural immersion; and, (vi) reflexivity' (Wainwright, 2004, p.62); the present research engages to varying degrees with all six points, the latter three being inherent to ethnographic as opposed to general qualitative research. Yet the fifth point, 'cultural immersion', could not be fully sought owing to the relatively short amount of time spent in each setting. Thus, the current study is not characterised as an ethnography but rather engages standard ethnographic research methods to interrogate the social and cultural worlds of dancers. The six case studies encompassing varying types of dance, standards of dance and social settings, necessitated six tailored approaches (Appendix 6 illustrates the particular combinations of research methods that were drawn upon).

#### **4.2. *Dance ethnography***

Ethnographic methods of participant observation and qualitative interviews were employed in line with the constructivist ontological and realist epistemological positions taken, which value the experiences, knowledge, and opinions of participants in seeking an understanding of the realities of their social worlds. This approach is closely linked to one facet of dance ethnography adopted in the current study where the researcher as participant observer is simultaneously a dancer. Dance ethnography as a distinct tradition is the study of dance events and their social and cultural worlds through fieldwork and textual study (Buckland, 1999b) and is 'necessarily grounded in the body and the body's experience' (Sklar, 1991, p.6). Dance ethnography has been traditionally characterised by certain themes and foci: non-Western dance forms, the agency of production, the intersection between theory and empirical investigation and the unearthing of ethical and political dimensions of dance (Davida, 2011). The tools adopted include qualitative interviews, participant observations,

and the use of dance-specific resources including Labanotation, and the researcher's own body.

Dance ethnography has evolved from what Gertrude Kurath termed as 'dance ethnology' in the 1960s, where dancing was considered as 'a microcosm of social life' (Davida, 2011, p.10) that, when studied, could provide insights into a particular culture, through to studies conducted in the 1970s, influenced by the positivist tradition (Buckland, 1999b). In the post-colonial era and following the demise of the Soviet Union, a call was made by dance scholars to evolve dance scholarship from relying on theoretical models borrowed from other academic fields to what Judith Alter (1991) termed 'dance-based dance theory', grounded in both kinetic dance experience and empirical evidence (Davida, 2011). This action was concurrently undertaken by Deidre Sklar (1991), and in the reprise of her seminal paper *On Dance Ethnography* (2000), she proposes that the discipline should focus on two particular trajectories; socio-political and kinaesthetic. The socio-political approach takes as its starting point the idea that dance is socially constructed movement and inquiries using this approach tend to focus on themes of identity and processes such as globalisation (Sklar, 2000). The kinaesthetic approach looks at how a deeper understanding of the dancing itself constitutes a way of knowing and is concerned with somatic themes including proprioception and synaesthesia (Sklar, 2000).

Over the last twenty years, other frames of reference have been explored, influenced by a postmodern and post-structuralist approach, and the practice of dance ethnography was resituated 'as a form of fictional, literary text' (Davida, 2011, p.6). As highlighted in Chapter Two, this trend has been criticised for disembodiment of dance and the dancer's body, leading to a concern that the established mode of study, that is, ethnographic field work, was in peril. The response to this concern has seen dance scholars undertaking ethnographic research on 'home ground' (Davida, 2011), an action that is reminiscent of the Chicago School that Erving Goffman is strongly associated with, and with associated turns in ethnomusicology.

By turning to local communities, rather than to far-flung places that are the traditional destination of the anthropologist, a 'new' type of dance ethnography has evolved: 'art world dance ethnography' or 'artistic dance ethnography' (Davida, 2011). This most recent approach sees 'hybrid ethnographic methods being merged with traditional anthropological practices to the field of art world dance in post-colonial times' (Davida, 2011, p.13). As Davida (2011) argues:

[A]ll dances were conceived by specific dance-makers at the outset... they are purposeful products bearing the markings of the society, time, and place that fostered them and as dance ethnographers, our purpose is to find out the how and why of this (p.1).

The interdisciplinary approach adopted by the present study reflects this most recent development through drawing on ethnographic research methods including the resource of the researcher's own body and focusing on social phenomena within a home city. However, as emphasised previously, this approach does not constitute (dance) ethnography in itself.

### **4.3. *Participant observation***

The different types of observer roles adopted for the collection of data range from observer as participant to complete participant (Gold, 1958; Junker, 1960; Sands, 2002; Walsh, 1998). For the purposes of clarity and consistency, this study uses Gold's (1958) typology of complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer to explain the different roles that were drawn upon, as necessitated by my dance ability, the dance practice and standard of dance, and the social context characterising each setting. However, it is important to note that Goffman actually 'preferred the term observant participant to participant observer and participant as observer, implying that, irrespective of levels of personal participation, all social interaction could be observed' (Whiteside and Kelly, 2016, p.25).

Within the case study settings, I was present as both a dance participant and a researcher. Participant observation is defined as observation carried out by a researcher who has a set role in the setting under investigation (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998). Fieldwork in participant observation allows the researcher to evaluate the actions of participants in practice, to witness their opinions, attitudes and beliefs in the field (Gray, 2004) and to observe non-verbal actions and elicit data on incidents as they unfold (Cohen and Manion, 1997). Green and Stinson (1999) argue that participant observation in a dance setting allows the researcher to have greater interaction with other participants, which in turn can create an atmosphere of comfort and trust, and participating through dancing is crucial in order to experience kinesthetically the practice under investigation. The latter reason cited here was particularly relevant in the present study in relation to practices that I had never danced before: contact improvisation, salsa dancing, line dancing and Highland dancing. In addition, dancing with the participants provided me with the opportunity to not only witness face-to-face interaction between the research informants contributing towards, and shaping, the dance realities but to actually become part of these interactions, which allowed another level of analysis to take place. I have present and previous experience as a dance participant (having undertaken years of vocational training, primarily in ballet, as a child and young adult and as a current and enthusiastic amateur learner of ballet and Irish dance); I was able, willing and happy to dance. In addition, my feeling of 'belonging' and technical 'competence' (Sands, 2002, p.36), offset some of the disorientation experienced when participating in 'new' dance practices: etiquette and knowledge were transferable to a certain degree across case studies. However, a feeling of discomfort was still experienced in all of the settings to some extent, which as Hammersley and Atkinson (1989) argue, can play a key role in allowing the researcher to maintain a sense of perspective through experiencing an important balance of detachment and involvement.

The ethnographic fieldwork undertaken and the subsequent field notes written up (see Appendix 7 for an example) were based on 'a complex combination of sensation and perception' (Gray, 2004, p.238). Data collected was primarily concerned with the dancing taught and performed and with the social interactions witnessed; the feelings, actions, attitudes and dress displayed by the dance participants themselves, as well as with the space, layout and physical features of the space. Mental capture was the primary method for initial recording (with the exception of the professional ballet class where the observer as participant role was adopted), with jotted notes being taken down directly after class, in particular, to capture key quotes and conversations. A complete write up from each event was then made before analysis took place. Observing while dancing was a key challenge encountered in the research. Jackson (2005) discusses the difference in approach when the dancer themselves is dictating the writing project, rather than an external expert: 'I cannot simultaneously represent all the ideas and processes that are repeated in one moment of dancing' (p.26), however, my skill in participating, observing and recording, naturally increased as the data collection period progressed.

#### **4.3.1. *Participant observation within the case studies***

A minimum of five observation sessions took place for each case study, and when these occurred, depended on the logistics of the individual case study. For example, the inclusive creative dance, line dancing and Highland dancing classes, and the salsa club took place weekly, hence I attended, danced and observed on a weekly basis. The professional ballet class took place every day and so I attended on consecutive days. The schedule at the primary school depended on the planning that took place within the institution and the decision made by individual class teachers to lead dance sessions; therefore, observations were intermittent and took place over several months. However, in each instance, the

observation period began before interviews commenced, providing me with the chance to meet potential interviewees and to allow observation themes and topics to feed into the interviews (crucial for a study focused on social interaction), constantly modifying and improving the data collection process. As with the interviews also conducted, topics were drawn from the 'concert', 'social' and 'sport' elements of the activity and practice suggested by the literature reviews undertaken and presented in Appendix 1. A more complete picture of the realities in each setting was also accessed through gaining access to key back stage regions, as discussed in Chapter Two, including the green room and lunch space of the inclusive creative dance class, the bar and seating areas of the line dancing class and salsa club, the changing rooms of the private dance school where the Highland class took place, and the staff room of the primary school. Wainwright (2004) talks about feeling like an 'honorary member of their ballet company' in his ethnographic study of The Royal Ballet (p.79), and dancing within the key front stage performance space, while having access to the back stage spaces was an important contributor to this status, which I often shared in the present research. This feeling was particularly heightened in those case studies where I was an active member of the class and demonstrably had a shared experience with participants, derived from technical ability, previous dance training, and an enthusiasm to experience and learn the practice. This was particularly evident in the inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class and Highland dancing class.

The professional ballet class was the only case study in which I did not dance and the role of observer as participant (Gold, 1958) was adopted for a number of reasons. I did not have the requisite dance ability, but more importantly, this was a professional working environment and not a place to 'try and keep up'. Notwithstanding this, I already had a good working knowledge of the ballet class format and the practice, albeit at a lower technical level and in a vocational context from over a decade ago. In addition, the ballet dancers involved in the study were used to taking class with strangers sitting in front of the large mirrors and watching, by virtue of their professional status. Interestingly, surveillance as a normalised

state was also found in the primary school case study; children are used to being watched in school settings and to having unfamiliar persons present. Thus, within both of these case studies, participant behavior was probably less likely to be affected by my overt observation.

Concerning the inclusive creative dance class, organisational policy dictated that I could only be present in the class if I were dancing within it. The organisation would not sanction the gaze of non-dancers in a safe and secure space primarily designed for adults with disabilities to dance. I had to dance to gain access. With regards to the line dancing class, even if I had not been willing to dance, this would have been strongly encouraged by the particular instructor leading the class, and it would have been difficult to have remained seated week after week. Doing the dancing also allowed a bond to be created with the other participants who were very protective of the dance form (as is explored in detail in the next chapter), and would most likely have felt uncomfortable having a seated audience possibly 'judging' them for line dancing.

In the case studies discussed so far, observation was always overt, but within the salsa club, I adopted the covert role of complete participant (Gold, 1958). The main justification for this was a logistical one; it simply was not possible to explain the study and achieve the informed consent of the fifty plus people who were dancing and watching in the space, constantly moving around in a haze of loud music and bright lights. In addition, and in contrast to the other case studies, I could actually be part of this setting without having to acknowledge the research that was taking place. Concerning the other five case studies, my intent had to be explained and acknowledged as part of the process of gaining entry. However, owing to the highly social nature of the salsa club setting (I was constantly simultaneously dancing, talking and watching) it was possible to obtain observation data and to undertake a large number of ethnographic interviews (explored below). The public nature of the salsa club is also significant: the salsa club was not characterised by a type of membership that excluded 'outsiders'; an invitation to enter the space was not necessary.

#### **4.3.1.1. *The researcher as ‘observer’***

In this study, Goffman’s (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy is adopted to explore patterns and incidents of face-to-face interaction in varying participatory dance settings: the micro behaviours and beliefs exhibited and shared. These behaviours and beliefs were accessed, viewed and sometimes even supported by myself, as I both danced and observed in all but one of the case studies. This section draws upon Goffman’s framework and situates the researcher as dancer (both as an ‘observer’ and as a ‘performer’) firmly in the various case study settings. I acknowledge, demonstrate and interrogate the interactional role that the researcher can play, by reflexively discussing examples of the conduct and etiquette I participated in, and the responses I observed.

As explored previously, Goffman (1959/1990) suggests that an ‘observer’ may be familiar with the performance that he or she is witnessing, impacting on his or her experience and understanding, through drawing upon an existing vocabulary of fronts. There are certain widely-accepted actions and behaviours that I understood had to be performed and that were transferable across the majority of dance settings; including the tying back of long hair, removal of jewellery, wearing of appropriate clothing and footwear, engaging in a minimum of talking in the front stage space and obeying the Goffmanian director or figure of authority. Thus, by understanding what would be expected of a dance participant and being able to participate in the social performances that unfolded in each case study, and depending on the overall context and specific interaction or incident taking place, my observer status waxed and waned between one that was very close to performer to one that was more akin to audience member.

Goffman’s vocabulary of fronts, as a research resource, complements Schütz’s (1967) phenomenological concept of an existing ‘stock of knowledge’: a familiar understanding of

attitudes, experiences, stories and values, discussed above. This concept proved particularly important in the professional ballet class, where I only gave a social, rather than a dance performance. Within this context, vocabulary of fronts could literally be translated as the vocabulary of ballet. Dancers in the front stage space 'checked' that I, as the observing researcher, not only understood what was being said, in relation to the instructions being given and followed, but that I had previously experienced the movement through undertaking training in ballet. Understanding of ballet vocabulary, an 'inside secret' (Goffman, 1959/1990), gave the dancers the means to 'check' that the stranger in the studio was in some way a member of the team, however peripheral their placing. Within the front stage space of the studio, more than one dancer asked me if I 'knew what was going on', ascertaining not only the importance of having 'inside' knowledge to draw upon for the setting under investigation, but to be able to confirm this knowledge to the 'observees' enquiring, and thus gain a sense of membership.

Within the primary school case study, I actually started off dancing with the children in all of the dance sessions, including the ceilidh session with Primary Four (P4) children (aged between 7 and 9), the whole-school Zumba sessions, the creative movement with Primary One (P1) children (aged between 4 and 6) and the street dance sessions led by an external specialist for Primary Five (P5) children (aged between 8 and 10). Within the ceilidh session, there was a sense of the raucous dancing taking over and it did not seem to matter if I, as an adult researcher, was 'setting to' a pupil during the dances. Concerning the whole-school Zumba sessions, the front stage space was very much shared between the adult teachers and child pupils as, crucially, everyone within this space was dancing. During the P1 classes, I appeared to be viewed as something of a novelty figure and my presence was welcomed by the youngest pupils in the school. However, after fully participating in the first two P5 street dance sessions, it became apparent that as the sole adult dancing with them, the preference among the pupils was for me not to be doing so. This was made clear to me as I observed shared looks and gestures; the pupils were engaging in a form of collusion to

subtly communicate their wish to enjoy being the sole dance performers, and owners of a dance reality during a specialist activity that had been set up specifically for this class for a fixed period only. Hence, I left my role of performer, moving from dancing to sitting and watching, and this action, together with my ready admittance to the 'iconic' back stage arena of the school staff room and my appearance, which obviously marked me out as an adult, meant that I naturally fell into the team of teachers, as opposed to the one comprised of pupils. As Goffman (1959/1990) points out, the formation of teams is assisted by shared 'attributes of age, sex, territory, and class status' (p.81).

Another case study that reflected a transition from the primary role of performer occurred within the salsa club. As is explored in the next chapter, the reality within the salsa club was one that maintained and promoted a high level of technical performance and understanding, as well as a certain appearance, particularly evident amongst the female dancers. After attending the first night in a rather dull black skirt and navy top, I quickly revised my outfit in time for the second observation through purchasing and wearing an electric blue leopard print dress that lightly swirled out from mid-thigh when I turned. The brighter and tighter the outfit, the easier it was for one to blend in. However, my limited salsa dance experience was the greater challenge to 'fitting in' to this setting. Noting my beginner level, some of my (male) partners chose to dance with me in the back stage space of the balcony within the space and to the side of the bar, rather than leading me on to the front stage space of the dance floor. My partners did not explain to me their reasons for doing this, but the strategy not only served to make me feel more comfortable, through being provided with a 'safer' space to increase my knowledge and skill of salsa, but also ensured that my beginner salsa performance did not threaten the reality being promoted in the main dance space. However, given that the attendees, who were there to dance, wanted to have a more advanced dance experience than the one that I could facilitate, observing rather than performing became my primary occupation during the salsa club case study.

Engaging in basic dance behaviour and etiquette, coupled with a competence and willingness to dance, or at the very least, an enthusiasm for the dancing proved crucial for moving from the role of observer to one of team player as the observations progressed. The main benefit of such assimilation was the opportunity to observe routinely team behaviours, rather than those performances instigated and impacted upon by the presence of researcher acting solely as observer.

#### **4.3.1.2. *The researcher as (dancing) 'performer'***

As a researcher as dancer, my dance performances facilitated, to varying degrees of success, my immersion into each setting. Goffman (1959/1990) writes, 'we commonly find that the definition of the situation projected by a particular participant is an integral part of a projection that is fostered and sustained by the intimate cooperation of more than one participant' (p.83). This 'intimate cooperation' was particularly evident among participants engaging in certain dance activities and practices, and had to be understood and performed by myself, for team membership status to be obtained and sustained.

Despite my lack of experience and knowledge of the dance form, the Highland dancing class constituted the most natural setting for me, from both a social and dance perspective, owing to the rigid format of the class and the private dance school setting, both of which I had experienced before. During the first class, I actually entered the studio late (having been held up with consent paperwork in the reception area), and knew to go quickly and quietly to the *barre* and join in the *plié* exercise taking place. I also listened to the teacher and kept my talking to a minimum. Goffman's vocabulary of fronts is most often applicable to social scenarios, however, the concept of a vocabulary of fronts can also, I would argue, be applied to embodied knowledge and to 'muscle memory'. Previous experience in ballet and Irish meant that I was able to resemble a Highland dancer through my dancing; my body could

produce the key elements of good posture, turnout and pointed feet. My body would not have been able to perform the shapes that it did if it had not been through a similar regime before and, crucially, I would not have supported the disciplinary dance training, if I had not (whether consciously or unconsciously), supported one elsewhere previously (to reiterate, I studied ballet vocationally until the age of 18). This latter point is significant because, as became apparent, the dominant dance reality in the class, which aimed to preserve and promote the physical, traditional and regulated nature of Highland dancing practice was a source of tension between the teacher and older participants (aged between 18 and 30), who supported this reality, and the younger participants (aged between 7 and 14), who rebelled against it (all participants were female). The dance performance that I gave belied a certain previous social and cultural background, and naturally allied me to the teacher and older participants. Through conversations I was drawn into (for example, discussion about various syllabuses, boards and association) and gestures noted (stretching together, comparing feet), I was subtly welcomed as a member of one sub-team within the class, led by the teacher or director of the scenario. One incident in particular, provided me with the means to gain sub-team membership. The teacher had been increasingly frustrated with the poor effort and commitment shown by the younger members of the class over the observation period, and at the penultimate session, furiously shouted her opinions: 'This just isn't good enough. Am I going to have to go ballistic like I did just before the exams?... *That was absolutely appalling. Horrendous*' (observation session). As somebody who was not the intended recipient of this tirade, I could have moved myself to the side of the room, or engaged a facial expression that was respectful, rather than downright guilty, but, mirroring the behaviours of the older participants in the setting, I followed suit. I continued this performance of 'looking and feeling bad' into the back stage space of the changing rooms. Discussion ensued on how the older participants (including, by implication, myself) needed to try harder to help and motivate the younger ones. This was a performance that I created consciously. I engaged in behavior that was encouraged in a private, vocational dance school teaching a highly codified form of dance: '[I]f the performer is to be successful he [sic]

must offer the kind of scene that realizes the observers' extreme stereotypes' (Goffman 1959/1990, p.49); the 'observers' in this scenario now constituting the other team members.

Prior to undertaking the PhD project, I had worked in the disability arts sector for a number of years and felt comfortable in an integrated environment. However, attaining a level of comfort with the creative dance practice, largely contact improvisation, employed in the inclusive creative dance class proved to be a challenge for me: the majority of my previous and current training was in ballet and Irish dancing and in settings, where steps and dances were set by the teacher, rather than explored by the participants themselves. The bravery, creativity, flow, risk and trust that I felt was inherently necessary to engage in contact improvisation, was tested by my own lack of experience and fear of performing it. However, it became apparent over the course of the observation sessions that my nervousness was shared by other members of the class, most notably by the support workers and volunteers, who also danced. The embarrassment experienced through engaging in, and trying to perform, contact improvisation 'correctly' (without fully understanding what that meant), gave us a shared experience to bond over. In contrast to the Highland dancing class, it was actually a lack of familiarity with the movement that led to my assimilation within the inclusive creative dance class.

As someone who was fully participating through dancing within the majority of settings, the possibility existed that I would commit discrepant actions. The most obvious example of such an action occurred during the line dancing class. A performer may commit discrepant actions (one example being a '*faux pas*') purposefully or unintentionally, even when they grasp the nature of the scenario, and understand the intimate cooperation sought to support a certain reality (Goffman, 1959/1990). An example of my unwittingly challenging the reality sponsored by participants occurred in the line dancing class case study. From the first observation session it was apparent that a sense of protective pride was felt by both the teacher and regular participants over the practice that they were performing: they were

aware that dominant common perception viewed line dancing as easy and stressed to me the technical and progressive nature of the activity in the front stage space. Unfortunately, I did not modify my dance performance from the first; my feet remained pointed and turns were made using the head to spot. The connotations with ballet, viewed by the participants as being a 'superior' dance form, were obvious and as a result I had to draw on particular strategies (including downplaying my technical dance ability) to show that I was respectful, serious and enthusiastic about *learning* and *doing* line dancing.

The ways in which dance participants engaged in activity and practice, dramatically highlighting or hiding certain facts (to be explored in the next chapter) in order to confirm or challenge the values of a particular community, was better understood by adopting Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model. Attaining honorary 'team' member status gave me the means to seek out underlying patterns of behaviour and social interaction that supported or fractured existing realities across the case studies. In addition, comparison of behaviours exhibited between the front stage and back stage regions accessed, gave an added dimension of understanding as the interchanging nature of roles in different spaces became apparent.

#### **4.4. *Interviews within the case studies***

The application of interviews in social science research (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2002; McCracken, 1988) and in sociology of dance studies (for example, Benn and Walters, 2001; Green, 2001; Heiland et al, 2008) has been widely adopted thanks to the focus on the 'lived experience' of the individual. Interviews are a particularly effective means for understanding the personal experiences and opinions of individuals and to seek, clarify, and elaborate on their self-understanding of their place in a particular social world (Kvale, 2007). Much has been written on the subject of the qualitative interview as a means to seek access to people's beliefs, experiences and understanding in a valid, credible and ethical manner (for

example, Bryman, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Flick, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989; Holstein and Gubrium, 1998; McCracken, 1988; Robson, 2002). The use of interviews in the current study was appropriate for two key reasons. Firstly, given the relatively short amount of time spent in each setting, interviews were a way to ensure that details, issues and opinions suggested by initial observation sessions or from the relevant literature could be further understood and not left unexplored. Secondly, the framework adopted, Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, in part focuses on the relationship between realities and different spaces. Undertaking interviews could not only illuminate and explain certain actions and behaviours displayed front stage but potentially reveal discrepant sentiments to be in existence, thus revealing a more complete picture of the worlds that I was accessing. This latter point was revealed to be a significant one, and is closely linked to findings unearthed in the line dancing and Highland dancing case studies in particular, explored further in Chapter Six.

As highlighted by Kelly (2007a), various typologies of qualitative interview exist (Flick, 2002; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Lofland, 1971; Robson, 2002; Seale, 1998). For the purposes of consistency and clarity, Flick's (2002) typology comprised of 'ethnographic', 'expert', 'focused', 'problem-centred' and 'semi-standardised' interviews is drawn upon to explain the different types that were used, in response to the range of social settings and roles of informants involved: each receives further attention below.

Both theme-oriented (Kvale, 1983) and unstructured (Robson, 2000) questions were asked in order to facilitate openness between interviewer and interviewee. Interview questions and topics were guided by the individual literature reviews undertaken in relation to the dance activity or practice defining each case study, and from data gained from observations. As is common, the semi-standardised interviews undertaken within each case study had a list of questions or topics attached, but with each interviewee, the exact wording and order were adapted, new topics were added, and others were omitted (see Appendix 8 for the

framework of questions pertaining to the Highland dancing case study). This flexibility was especially important within those cases studies where a range of abilities, motivations, standards and commitment to the activity were uncovered as the interview was unfolding (most notably, in the inclusive creative dance, line dancing, Highland dancing classes and in the primary school). I had my 'shopping list of topics ... [and] considerable freedom in the sequencing of questions, in their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics' (Robson, 2002, p. 278). Within the majority of the case studies (aside from the study taking place in the primary school), the opportunity was taken to interview certain individuals more than once, in a process of 'member checking' (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.27) so that interviewees could expand upon and clarify points that had previously been made.

Such an approach was particularly important given the relatively short-term relationship that I was able to enjoy with individuals in each setting. An obvious concern linked to this latter point concerns the quality of trust and rapport that I was able to build with key individuals involved in expert, group and semi-standardised interviews, shaping the atmosphere, approach and direction of each interview event. This issue was to some degree counteracted by the decision to engage with observation sessions first and only approach individuals directly with an invitation to be interviewed mid-way through or at the end of the observation period and also through participating in the majority of settings as a dance participant. Individuals were able to see my enthusiasm, willingness to participate and vulnerability (for example, in trying to master certain dance steps and movements), creating a sense of a shared common ground. Within the majority of settings, participants were taking part for recreational reasons, thus a sense of enthusiasm and perhaps nervousness was readily understood and appreciated. Concerning the ballet and primary school case studies, which were shaped by a more formal and institutionalised context, I had established good relations with gatekeepers involved and these contacts helped to select interviewees to be invited to take part and facilitated the key introductions.

#### **4.4.1. Ethnographic interview**

Ethnographic interviews (Flick, 2002) are closely linked to the ethnographic tradition owing to the fact that they actually take place during fieldwork.

Many qualitative researchers differentiate between in-depth (or ethnographic) interviewing and participant observation. Yet, as Lofland (1971) points out, the two go hand in hand, and many [sic] of the data gathered in participant observation come from informal interviewing in the field (Fontana and Prokos, 2007, p.39).

Ethnographic interviews were carried out 'in the field' wherever I had face-to-face access to the participants as they danced. Within the different settings, I had the chance to follow-up or initiate conversations and discussions about ideas and issues linked to the research setting. Spradley (1979) describes these opportunities as: 'a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants' (pp.58-59).

This interview type was particularly important in the salsa club case study, since the covert nature of the observations undertaken meant that overt interviews could only take place with my 'gatekeepers', contacts that I had initially attended the salsa club with. Ethnographic interviews could only be used in an extremely limited fashion within the professional ballet class case study – a consequence of my lack of interaction with the dancers, as the result of not dancing. I had to wait for dancers to approach before class started for any brief but directed conversations to be had.

#### **4.4.2. Expert interview**

The use of expert interviews is an appropriate qualitative method for the reconstruction of complex experiences and is used when the research interest has a focus on... experiential knowledge, rules for action routines and knowledge relying on systematic problems, which can be mentioned explicitly or implicitly (Meuser and Nagel, 1997, p.488 cited in Fletcher-Watson, 2013, p.134).

This interview type was adopted within the professional ballet class case study to gain data from the ballet master and dancers, and with the class teachers interviewed within the inclusive creative dance, line dancing, Highland and primary school case studies. Katz Rizzo (2014) has noted that, through the increased interest in and research on the profession, ballet dancers in particular have 'found their voices' and can be highly articulate in interview settings. As informants speaking on behalf of, and within, the confines of their profession these interviewees are

of less interest as a (whole) person than in [his or her] capacity of being an expert for a certain field of activity. [He or she] is integrated into the study not as a single case but as representing a group (of specific experts) (Flick, 2006, p.165).

Viewing the teachers and professional dancers as 'experts' with certain agendas guided by their professional standing is significant in a study concerned with the impression management of performers. Interviewees may consciously or unconsciously portray a certain professional impression and, as with all interview situations, may modify their behavior in the presence of the interviewer (Bryman, 2012).

#### **4.4.3. Focused interview**

A third type of interview, the focused interview (Flick, 2002) merges the boundaries between formal and informal talking, to gain opinions about particular issues and to observe the

interaction between the different interviewees (Kvale, 1996; Robson, 2002). Robson (2002) highlights that these types of interviews can 'have a substantial degree of flexibility and are effectively some form of hybrid with characteristics of a discussion as well as of an interview' (p.283 cited in Kelly, 2007a, p.151). Data gathered through a focused or group interview can reveal how ideas and knowledge develop within a specific cultural context; there is less focus on intimate decision-making moments or individual stories (Kitzinger, 1994).

Focused interviews were carried out to uncover the perspective of school pupils in the primary school case study. Four interviews took place with children from the P1, P3 (two groups) and P5 classes. One rationale for hosting interviews with small groups of children is to counteract the unequal power balance weighted in the favour of the adult researcher that often characterises research that seeks to elicit the views and opinions of children; as noted by Punch (2002), children may feel intimidated when talking with the unfamiliar adult in a one-to-one situation. At the beginning of each focused interview, I proposed a macro topic for discussion such as, 'how would you describe dance?' Pupils were evidently feeding off and responding to one another, ensuring that conversation was directed by them rather than by myself. This process granted a degree of agency to the children, enhancing the reliability and authenticity of the data. As Kefyalew (1996) has noted: 'taking children as a target group is dependent upon the degree of freedom they enjoy to take part actively in a research process' (p.204). The Highland dancing class case study also saw children involved in the research, but only one interview took place with a person aged under 18 and this was semi-standardised in nature (the interviewee was 14 years old and this interview type was adopted as the best approach).

#### **4.4.4. *Semi-standardised interview***

Semi-standardised interviews were employed within the inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class, Highland dancing class and dance in primary education case studies. The

use of a semi-standardised interview framework allows the researcher greater freedom within the questioning process (Green and Stinson, 1999; Robson, 2002) and richer detail was gained through facilitating further discussion of certain events and opinions as relayed by the research informants (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). Semi-standardised interviews are useful because they allow interviewees to express themselves in their own terms and to bring up topics that they consider significant (Shiner and Newburn, 1997). Oppenheim (1992) argues that 'the ideal free-style interview would consist of a continuous monologue by the respondent on the topic of the research, punctuated now and again by an 'uhuh, uhuh' from the interviewer!' (p.67). Several of the interviews conducted in the current study reflected this ideal; as mentioned earlier, a factor in this success was the trust and rapport that particularly characterised those case study settings where I felt most at ease. For example, during an interview with a participant involved in the Highland dancing case study, Rose, I was able to empathise with the experiences that she related concerning a syllabus exam when her mind went blank and the examiner asked her to re-start. Mirroring her story with a (true) account of a similar experience I had had allowed us to form a bond, and rich discussion swiftly flowed.

Within each case study, key performers representing different roles were invited to take part in an interview. Appendix 9 provides details of the individuals who were interviewed as part of each case study. As Morse and Johnson (1991) state: '[p]rimary selection is the ideal method of sampling for purposeful or theoretically sampling' (p.136) and in this research the interviewees were identified as 'situationally positioned individuals with unique identities' (Brett Davies, 2007, p.148).

## **5. Ethical Considerations**

Janeswick (1998) emphasises that as qualitative researchers continually come into direct contact with people, the possibility of ethical dilemmas are a constant. Particular ethical

concerns were linked to three of the case studies, where I worked directly with groups of people designated as 'vulnerable': children under 18 (Highland dancing class and dance in primary education) and adults with learning and physical disabilities (inclusive creative dance class). I submitted an application to the Research Degrees Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for ethical approval to conduct ethnographic research, which focused on the method adopted for inviting institutions, organisations and venues to take part and the production of relevant documentation to use within these settings (for example, informed consent forms and participant information sheets (see Appendices 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14)). Given the succinct focus of the below section on working with vulnerable groups, it is important to note that many of the challenges and issues encountered in ethnographic research – for example, understanding when informed consent is being given – are also applicable to working with groups of people designated as non-vulnerable. Discussion about the most appropriate terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities is ongoing. This study reflects advice given by Pellicano et al (2013) in their focus on research with individuals with autism and both refers to 'disabled people' and uses person-first language ('people with disabilities'), in recognition that people have different preferences.

Interview transcripts and field notes were stored in a secure digital format and only accessed by myself. Anonymity was assured through the use of pseudonyms in the study.

Organisations, institutions and venue involved in the research are not named. I also submitted a successful application to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, which facilitates a police check.

### **5.1. Working with vulnerable groups**

The inclusive creative dance class, Highland dancing class and primary school case studies are here considered together as

[t]he obstacles facing childhood researchers working from the perspective of children as social actors are comparable with the problems encountered in social research carried out with other social groups experiencing social exclusion because of their ethnic, gender or social status (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.483).

People with learning disabilities are potentially vulnerable 'because of their limited cognitive capacity and/or being in a powerless position' (Iacono, 2006, p.173) and similarly, children may be vulnerable due to the power imbalance between children and adults (as illustrated by a range of sources drawn together by Punch, 2002, including Alderson and Goodey, 1996; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Hood et al, 1996; Mauthner, 1997). Concerns noted include the impact of having lived in a sheltered or institutional environment (in reference to working with disabled people) (Dalton and McVilly, 2004) resulting in limited educational and social experiences and opportunities (Cea and Fisher, 2003; Ellis, 1992; Hayden et al, 1992; Hill and Lakin, 1981 cited in Fisher, 2003), and an understanding that attention spans may be shorter, and vocabulary used by individuals may be both limited and different (Boyden and Ennew, 1997).

However, despite the potential to share certain vulnerabilities, the discussion presented is not to imply that adults with learning disabilities and children are inherently the same. While the fact that children, as 'pupils', tend to be encountered in group situations, and therefore treated similarly, it also needs to be emphasised that the extent to which an individual may be deemed 'vulnerable' should be made on an individual, not a group basis.

As Christensen and Prout (2002) demonstrate, children have often been viewed as the 'other' in research; this argument can be extended to disabled people. Dalton and McVilly (2004) argue that researchers should only include people with disabilities in research if it directly benefits them, predominantly medically. However, this perspective places the onus squarely on the notion that disabled people should only be included in research when it is

their disability that is of interest to the researcher, rather than thoughts and opinions related to another primary life experience; i.e. a dance class. The approach adopted in the present study stems from so-called 'ethical symmetry'; 'the application of general values to specific circumstances' (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.478), whereby 'the researcher takes as his or her *starting* point the view that the ethical relationship between researcher and informant is the same whether he or she conducts research with adults or with children' (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.482, original emphasis). The same approach of ethical symmetry was also applied when working with adults with a learning disability in the present study.

### **5.1.1. *Informed consent process with vulnerable groups***

Extensive literature exists on the subject of how one's capacity to give informed consent may be determined (Iacono, 2006) and constitutes a central theme in the literature surrounding the ethics of working with people with disabilities. Studies considering the ethics of research involving children has similarly focused on themes of confidentiality and informed consent (see for example, Alderson, 1995; France et al., 2000; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Stanley and Sieber, 1992; Thomas and O'Kane, 1998 cited in Punch, 2002). Yet, as Dresser and others have argued, 'no single accepted standard for determining decision-making capacity exists' (Dresser, 1996, p.68, see also Ramcharan (2006) and Fisher (2003)).

Informed consent 'requires a person to appreciate the current situation, possess sufficient information, understand the information given, be able to weigh up the pros and cons, [and] communicate a choice voluntarily and free from coercion' (Dean et al, 1998, p.58 cited in Cameron and Murphy, 2006, p.114). The latter factor is particularly significant as individuals may feel pressured into giving their consent due to the unequal balance of power existing between researcher and participant (Griffin and Balandin, 2004). Ideally, research participants become involved 'after giving their competent, informed, and voluntary consent' (Dresser, 1996, p.69). Cameron and Murphy (2006) provide guidelines for deducing when

the process of informed consent is being understood and when it is being granted, highlighting the need to observe eye contact and body language, and non-verbal responses (for example, the nodding or shaking of a head). Face-to-face communication or 'individualized communication' (Cambridge and Forrester-Jones, 2003, p.8 cited in Cameron and Murphy, 2006, p.116) is crucial for detecting a participant's understanding. Yet it can still be difficult for a researcher who does not personally know each individual participant to be able to perceive the extent of an understanding and willingness to take part.

Several solutions and strategies have been proposed including introducing necessary information about the research and consent process in segments (Dresser, 1996), adopting simplified language and visual aids (Cameron and Murphy, 2006), and through asking friends, relatives and support workers with 'decisional capacity' (Iacono and Murray, 2003, p.43) to assist.

Members of this circle are closest to the vulnerable person; they are the ones who love and who care most; collectively, and through discussion, they are the best judges of whether the proposed research would benefit the person or those they see as occupying a similar position; and, they are the people who will, because of their regular contact with the person, know if they are upset, worried or hurt because of the research or the actions of the researchers (Ramcharan, 2006, p.185).

Of course, the key concern here is that supported decision-making can degenerate into substituted decision-making (Freedman, 2001 cited in Iacono and Murray, 2003).

However, the concept and process of informed consent also needs to take account of the setting within which consent is obtained as modifying the space can redistribute the sense of power and facilitate the process of decision-making (Fisher, 2003). Within the inclusive creative dance class, Highland dancing class and primary school, consent to participate was necessary from all those involved (following consent from the relevant organisation or institution). However, the processes by which consent was gained to conduct the case

studies were very different. Within the former setting, at the first observation session, the teacher asked everyone to sit in a circle before introducing me to the class, the research project was then introduced, together with the notion of informed consent and why it was being requested, stressing the voluntary nature of taking part. Teachers, support workers and volunteers were interspersed between clients (the term used by the organisation to refer to disabled dance participants) and together they went through the research information and informed consent forms (see Appendices 13 and 14). No incidents of clients being persuaded to agree and sign were observed. The forms had been designed using Easy Read format, following conversation with staff based at the organisation, although some non-Easy Read documents were also issued depending on individual needs and capabilities. Teachers, support workers and volunteers completed their own consent forms at the same time and, as I made my way round the circle, I drew upon a number of different strategies to explain the project and answered questions and broke down and repeated explanations. A significant amount of time (over 30 minutes) was freely given by the organisation to ensure that nobody (including myself) felt rushed. One client, Lucy, was concerned that the project was titled *The Hidden Dancers*, linking the term 'hidden' to how she felt people with disabilities were viewed in society. She was keen to tell me that 'we are elite, this is the elite class' (within the organisation). Lucy was concerned that I was working with people who are not considered to be 'real' dancers', i.e. people with disabilities, revealing that dominant attitudes relating to disabled people as dancers and as members of society were shaping her perception of the research. I explained that the word 'hidden' was being used because the focus of the project was on people dancing in schools, studios, community settings and clubs, rather than on stage in front of an audience. Lucy then said that she understood.

Informed consent cannot be granted firstly and directly by children (Punch, 2002): researchers must apply first to adult gatekeepers, most often situated in a school environment (Mauthner, 1997) through establishing good relations and the confidence of staff in the school (Punch, 2002; Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). Within the Highland dancing

class, the parents of the children involved gave their consent for them to take part in the research. The school assumed the responsibility of granting me the opportunity to undertake the case study on behalf of their pupils, contingent on my successful application to the PVG scheme, and on the basis that all interviews and observations would take place on the school premises during school hours. This process mirrored the approach used to gain consent to interview and observe the professional ballet class: the organisation took responsibility for issuing proxy consent on behalf of the class. As noted previously, it is accepted thinking (both in the minds of those staff members granting proxy consent, and in the minds of the participants themselves) that surveillance is 'normal' for professional dancers and for children.

### **5.1.2. *Data collection with vulnerable groups***

An effective way of carrying out research with children is to combine traditional research methods used with adults and techniques considered to be more suitable for use with children. By using traditional 'adult' research methods, such as participant observation and interviews, children can be treated in the same way as adults and display their competencies. Thus, they are not being patronized by using only special 'child-friendly' techniques (Punch, 2002, p.330).

The use of different types of interviews and observations across all case studies reflects the ethos of 'ethical symmetry' mentioned previously; Christensen and Prout (2002) expand upon the thinking of Alderson and Goodey (1996) further:

[R]esearchers do not have to use particular methods or, indeed, work with a different set of ethical standards when working with children. Rather it means that the practices employed in the research have to be in line with children's experiences, interests, values and everyday routines (p.482).

I am not aware of any studies that adopt the 'ethical symmetry' approach when working with people with disabilities, but I found this an appropriate standpoint to adopt when undertaking

the inclusive creative dance class case study. As highlighted by Eder and Corsaro (1999) cited in Christensen and Prout (2002), ethnographic thinking provides a means to understand an individual's perspective and their social and cultural worlds. Interviews with the school pupils, the children in the Highland dancing class and the inclusive creative dance clients took place without the direct presence of a third party. In the case of the Highland dancing class and primary school case studies, children were interviewed in a space where no teachers or teaching assistants were present, reducing, as far as possible, the effects of any possible power imbalance; informants were less likely to feel that a 'right' answer was being sought (Solberg, 1996). The children were observed speaking enjoyably and freely, disclosing views and opinions that they may not have done otherwise (Mauthner, 1997). I did not request this format in either case study. Due to scheduling and a lack of resources within the primary school, no adult based at the institution was available to 'sit-in': hence interviews took place within earshot of teachers, but not in the same space as them, and certainly without their active involvement. A similar format took place when talking to the child interviewee in the Highland dancing class; our discussion took place on the premises, in a space next to the studio. In the inclusive creative dance case study, there were ample opportunities to host interviews in the large café and lunch spaces of the venue where the class was held; teachers, volunteers and support workers were present in the space, but researcher and interviewee had their own table and space to talk.

Certain strategies were adopted to maximise the potential for participants to feel comfortable and willing to share throughout the data collection period, which subsequently increased the richness of material gained (Hill, 1997). Not only is using clear and accessible language necessary, but the researcher must also use the vocabulary and terminology employed by participants (Christensen and Prout, 2002), termed by Christensen (1999) as local 'cultures of communication'. This concept has been applied to research with children but may not come easily to a researcher who views children and people with learning disabilities in terms of 'limitations of language and lack of articulateness' (Ireland and Holloway, 1996, p.156

cited in Punch, 2002, p.328). In addition, children often use generation-specific slang words and phrases that a researcher with limited experience of being with children would simply not have encountered before. As “grown-ups”, we are limited by our tendency to process the talk of children through our own view of the world’ (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988, p.9 cited in Punch, 2002, p.329). In addition, the researcher too often underestimates the difficulty of remembering what it was like to be a child (Punch, 2002 citing Fine and Sandstrom, 1988; Hill, 1997), and in the context of the present study, may have little or no experience of having a disability and being a member of society. However, other issues raised by scholars focusing on research with children should pertain not only to disabled research participants, but to all informants involved in the study. Alderson (1995) cited in Punch (2002) stresses the need to consider the worth of certain research questions, the likelihood of obtaining answers to them, and to understand that the data obtained is reliant on the researcher not displaying an ‘adultist’ (one might even say ‘researcherist’) attitude.

## **5.2. Summary**

The key ethical issues that needed to be considered in relation to the inclusive creative dance, Highland dancing class and dance in primary education case studies relate predominantly to the informed consent and data collection processes. Although this research study was not especially invasive, it could be viewed as ‘intrusive in terms of the participant’s life’ (Cameron and Murphy, 2006, p.116). Hence, particular strategies were adopted and best practice processes followed that would promote a positive experience for all involved in the research, and generate data that was useful and reliable. Two of these strategies were crucial. The ‘circle of support [as] a ready-made “ethics committee”’ (Ramcharan, 2006, p.185) comprised of teachers, support workers and volunteers guided the data collection process through providing ongoing advice and support to their clients, each other, and to myself. Secondly, the engagement with ethnographic research methods allowed me to better

note and respond to possible ethical issues and dilemmas as they emerged (Eder and Corsaro, 1999).

This research project is entitled *The Hidden Dancers*, and, arguably, children and adults with disabilities who dance constitute 'hidden dancers' more so than other groups involved in the study. Both groups are marginalised in society and receive limited attention in the literature linked to the relevant case studies (as explored in the literature reviews conducted, see Appendix 1). Although the aim of this study is not consciously to 'work for the right of people to have a voice and to be heard' (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.483), these case studies can be viewed as a kind of advocacy through a desire to solicit and share the views and opinions of groups of people who dance and constitute members of society, yet exist on the periphery and are underrepresented in existing research.

## **6. Analysis**

### **6.1. Grounded theory**

The original seminal texts on grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998), laid the groundwork for 'a style of qualitative analysis' (Wilson, 2009, p.6) whereby 'actors are seen as having, though not always utilizing, the means of controlling their destinies by their responses to conditions' (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.5). Reflecting the ontological stance taken, rather than seeking a single, concrete truth, the grounded theory researcher recognises the spectrum of co-existing social realities and interpretations in existence (Charmaz, 2000). Grounded theory is a 'systematic, qualitative process used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic' (Creswell, 2002, p.439). It is a qualitative method which obtains its name from the practice of generating theory which is 'grounded' in data (Babchuk, 1997). The

strongest claims for the use of grounded theory are accorded to research into relatively unexplored areas (Samik-Ibrahim, 2000), and there is a precedent of both the case study model and grounded theory being used together in dance research (Wilson, 2009), although the individual research strategies have most often been considered as separate entities (Meyer, 2001). The aim of this section is to explore how the present study has been influenced by grounded theory, while clarifying that it is only a grounded approach to data coding that was embraced for analysis.

Within true grounded theory research, data collection, analysis and development of theory take place concurrently (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Sandelowski et al, 1989), until a coherent theoretical framework is made overt following saturation of data and the emergence of a 'core category' (Strauss, 1987). As was the case with Wainwright's (2004) doctoral study, this last stage was omitted in the current research, reflecting the adoption of grounded coding rather than theory. However, given the influence of grounded theory on this project, some discussion and investigation is helpful.

Engaging in any form of grounded theory study... requires the researcher to address a set of common characteristics: theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, treatment of the literature, constant comparative methods, coding, the meaning of verification, identifying the core category, memoing and diagramming, and the measure of rigor (Mills et al, 2006, p.27).

The present study reflects many of the characteristics of grounded theory set out in the above quote, including sensitive use of Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy and the undertaking of preliminary literature reviews to guide and contextualise the study, and to constitute another, and important, form of data. A grounded coding frame was created for the analysis of the data and the action of memoing was a feature of the data collection period. The current study is not, however, attempting to understand the social reality of the research informants as perceived by them (Glaser, 1998) in the sense that the study is considering possible unconscious as well as conscious actions, behaviours and perceptions.

As Moghaddam (2006) states: '[i]t is not persons or organisations that are sampled but rather incidents and events' (n.p.), and the grounded coding process and utilisation of Goffman's concepts generated patterns of social interaction that the informants were not (or, to be more precise, not necessarily) aware of.

Many of the strengths of grounded theory contribute to the present study, as 'well performed grounded theory meets all the requirements of "good Science": significance, theory-observation, compatibility, generalisability, reproducibility, precision, rigor, and verification' (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.27). Grounded theory 'offers a set of flexible strategies, not rigid prescriptions' (Charmaz, 2000, p.513), yet as two of the original proponents of grounded theory (in addition to Glaser), Corbin and Strauss (1990) argue, the inherent canons and procedures must be recognised to counteract the temptation and propensity for researchers to carry out their own variations while arguing that it is grounded theory that is being undertaken.

## **6.2. Grounded coding**

Within the present study, analysis of preceding case studies was conducted while data collection for the next was underway. Many of the case studies, particularly mid-way through the fieldwork, overlapped with one another, allowing the data collection and analysis process to be constantly refined. Following each observation session, I went through the field notes and created a memo to assist the next session. However, constant comparison was not a feature of the analytical process: the coding process, as shall be discussed, was simplified and as mentioned above, no core category was sought. Rather than coding on a word-by-word basis, I analysed the meaning uncovered in groups of words (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This approach proved a more useful means to identify key concepts and themes linked to the research topic and protected against 'data overload' and extensive use of time (Allan, 2003). Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed before grounded coding, the

core of grounded theory analysis (Babchuk, 1997), was adopted. The full process features open coding (working with the raw data), followed by axial coding (refining the emerging theory), culminating in selective coding (whereby all categories are linked to form a core category) (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) state '[a]nalysis is the interplay between the researcher and the data' (p.13), and grounded coding was adopted as a means to conceptualise the core findings from huge swathes of data (Moghaddam, 2006).

The first two stages of grounded theory coding were employed in the current study; open and axial coding. Appendix 15 demonstrates the coding process that was followed. The method of open coding saw meaningful words and statements separated from interview transcripts and field notes, conceptualized, and grouped together (Brown et al, 2002). Spiggle (1994) describes the initial part of this process as 'identifying a chunk or unit of data (a passage of text of any length) as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon' (p.493). The secondary process, 'axial coding' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) or 'reflective sorting' (McCaslin and Scott, 2003), sees named categories or concepts arise as suggested by the raw data and represents a transition from understanding the data based on a sense of what it is describing to one that links sets of meanings together (Moghaddam, 2006). Through axial coding, a framework built on inductive reasoning, gives meaning to the phenomena being investigated (Moghaddam, 2006). The same technique of grounded coding was applied separately to the interview transcripts and the observation field notes, before categories and concepts derived from these two methods were brought together.

## **7. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the overarching methodology of *The Hidden Dancers*, beginning with an exploration of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research, the constructivist ontology and realist epistemology, and ending with a discussion of specific

ethical issues that had to be considered, concerning three of the case studies in particular. The ontological and epistemological approaches adopted ensured that the actions, attitudes, behaviours, opinions and views of participants shaped the exploration of the social worlds being investigated; this is reflected in the combinations of ethnographic methods (types of interviews and observations) that were adopted, tailored to the nature of each case study. In addition, situating myself as researcher within Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical framework provided me with the means to reflexively consider the role that I played in the project's methodology. The case study model itself received specific attention, particularly in regards to the reliability and authenticity of the approach, and the selection of particular case studies to reflect an aim of the current project to encompass a wide range of participatory dance activities and practices. Moving through the methodological journey, following a reflection of the influence of grounded theory on the present study, the grounded coding framework adopted for analysis was explored, as 'regardless of the role it plays, process can be thought of as the difference between a snapshot and a moving picture... Theory without process is missing a vital part of its story—how the action/interaction evolves' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.179). Central to the planning of the data collection process, across all case studies but of particular relevance to the three that involved vulnerable groups, was the issue of ethics. Best ethical practice reflecting the necessities of data collection, and particular strategies adopted during the fieldwork (with particular attention on the process of explaining and gaining informed consent and collecting data), were followed.

#### **4. THE PRESENTATION OF HIDDEN DANCERS IN GLASGOW**

##### **1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the key findings of each case study through interrogating the micro performances given by the ‘hidden dancers’ of the project’s title and unearthing the larger realities within each setting. The context for, and nature of, each case study is introduced together with the key literature that shaped the design of interviews and observations and which facilitates contextual understanding of the findings. Moving through each case study in turn, each introductory section ends with a reminder of the specific research methods used and introduces the ‘voices’ (interviewees) attached to the specific activity and practice.<sup>1</sup>

Additional participants from observation sessions also feature throughout the text (listed in Appendix 16). The exposition essentially draws on sensitive use of Goffman’s concepts, and the extent to which they are utilised, depends on the particular case study being investigated. Discussion is structured by the data and uses elements of the dramaturgical model that are most beneficial to illuminate the key findings that reflect the nature of the realities in existence. A fuller exploration of the study’s use and understanding of Goffman’s dramaturgical terms in framing these findings is subsequently presented in the following chapter. This chapter concludes by illustrating the contribution that each case study has made to existing bodies of relevant work through building upon, and extending, recent arguments and approaches.

##### **2. Maintaining a Working ‘Reality’ in the Professional Ballet Class**

As Mary (one of the dancers and heavily pregnant) and I entered the studio, there were five or six dancers already in the space. All were very spaced out – nobody next to another. They were all doing some kind of stretching on the floor.

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<sup>1</sup> Where data from interviews and observations are drawn upon, quotes are presented verbatim.

As more people came in, the company manager went round with payslips for everyone and handed them out. People stuffed them into bags and shoes at the sides. I chose to wedge myself in between pieces of set that were against the full-length mirrors: a giant red tartan armchair and a pile of sylphide wings. This was the third time I had attended, and the dancers closest to me now smiled at me as they took their place for *pliés* at the barre (observation session).

## 2.1. Introduction

The great spectacular dance form of the Western world is, of course, the ballet... Properly, the term ballet refers to a particular form of theatre dance, which came into being in the Renaissance and which has a tradition, technic [sic] and an aesthetic basis all its own (Martin, 1939, p.173 cited in Keali'inohomoku, 1970, p.40).

Keali'inohomoku's (1970) ground-breaking study, which positioned ballet as an 'ethnic' dance form of the Western world, linked the popularity and dominance of the practice to the 'distinctive... "look" of ballet' (p.40). This aesthetic 'distinctiveness' has been honed through centuries of training (Morris, 2003) and the professional ballet class case study in the current project both reflected and continued this tradition. Taking place six days a week (with dancers expected to attend a minimum of five classes), the class was an integral part of the working day for the dancers. Each session lasted for up to 90 minutes and followed the traditional format of *barre*, centre and *allegro* practice. A variety of ballet 'masters' and 'mistresses' and guest teachers took the class, ensuring that both classical and contemporary dance was taught, tied to the repertoire currently in rehearsal. Both mixed and single-sex classes took place each week. An information board provided advance notice of which member of the ballet staff (or guest teacher) was taking the class and the name of the pianist accompanying them.

In comparison to the dance practices encountered in the other case studies, ballet constitutes by far the greatest body of relevant research: as explored previously, the genre dominates the sociology of dance literature that is both ethnographic and which draws upon

specific sociological theories and frameworks. With reference to the professional ballet class, entwined themes of discipline, identity, pain and suffering shape and characterise the ongoing experience of the ballet dancer (see for example, Alexias and Dimitropoulou (2011) and studies produced by Wainwright et al). This ballet culture is compounded by the process of globalisation and the constant pressure to perfect both technique and versatility, yet retain the distinction of a particular company style (Turner and Wainwright, 2003; Wainwright et al, 2006; 2007). Additional themes highlighted within the literature include the need for an environment that promotes dancers' health and well-being (Brinson and Dick, 1996; Buckroyd, 2000; Dixon, 2005; Johnston, 2006; Salosaari, 2002; Wootten, 2009) and an exploration of the individual agency of ballet dancers (Casey, 2009; 2012; Kolb and Kalogeropoulo, 2012; Salosaari, 2002). Public perception of ballet is polarised: the genre is viewed both as a world characterised by eating disorders and bloody feet, vividly portrayed in the film 'Black Swan' (2010), and a fantastical twilight fairy world where dancers perform beautiful shapes and emote exquisite stories (with reference to the great classical and narrative ballets, for example, 'Sleeping Beauty').

The daily company class can be described as the mandatory back stage setting for preparation of the literal front stage performance in the theatre as part of runs and tours. The focus in the present discussion is on the back stage rituals that were inherent to the roles played by ballet masters and mistresses, dancers and pianists. In contrast to the other case studies considered in the thesis, the ballet class was a site of 'real' work for *all* individuals present. The studio constituted an organisational working space, inhabited by a 'boss' and colleagues, and Goffman's (1959/1990) concepts allow us to perceive and interrogate the underlying alliances, currents, tensions and strategies, that supported a certain reality, characterised by a balance of respect and hard work, to be maintained. Achieving this balance was a necessity: the staff spent countless hours together, not just in the studio, but through living, performing and touring together. The action of managing this ongoing and necessary reality was outwardly led by a team of authority figures taking the role of ballet

master or mistress in the space (sometimes in conjunction with, or on top of, another official or unofficial role as shall be demonstrated). Ballet master, Robert, explained that all these authority figures

teach with quality and understanding and all those things but they don't teach class exactly the same. Cos' a good teacher will say the same things anyway, they just say them in different ways, but there is a sort of variety of how you deliver it, so there's different personalities as well.

It is the existence and impact of this 'variety' that is of interest here; how the expected actions, (namely, instruction and feedback) changed ever so slightly, depending on which authority figure was leading the class on a given day. Goffman's framework reveals a triumvirate comprised of an authority figure that fulfilled the dual roles of 'director' and 'training specialist', (both in dramaturgical terms and, in the current case study, literally), secondary authority figures who were a step down in the company hierarchy, fulfilling the dual roles of 'go-between' and 'confidante', and the dancers as 'colleagues' (Goffman, 1959/1990). Data collection was carried out through adopting the observer as participant role and by conducting expert interviews with the in-house ballet master, Robert, and the dancers, Emmanuelle, Aidan and Mary.

## **2.2. Ballet master as 'director' and 'training specialist'**

[T]he director's the one directing, he's running the show... he directs and if he says he likes something, he likes something. If he doesn't like something, he doesn't like something. That's kind of his role. The director certainly isn't a friend (Aidan).

Aidan unconsciously expanded upon a central Goffmanian concept in describing the role of Grant, who was director both by job title, and through dramaturgical action, and who consciously made the decision to teach class. As the person ultimately responsible for 'running the whole show', Grant's interest was very much centred on knowing, and

increasing, the standard of performance in class, more so than any other authority figure involved. Dancers were well aware of this fact: 'I think initially when Grant took the class, it was very tense. You know, he's the director and you had to prove yourself and everything, but the more he takes, the more it gets relaxed' (Mary). Another dancer, Darren, told me at the beginning of one class, 'It's a bit nerve-wracking. He's our boss. But it's good... Grant sees us at our best and at our worst'. The Goffmanian strategies of 'soothing and sanctioning' (Goffman, 1959/1990) were drawn on extensively by the various authority figures. The former process explains the method by which group feedback and instruction, detailed below, were delivered and the latter process is explored further on.

[A] *petit allegro* exercise featuring lots of beating, was described as "knit one, purl one".

Grant's reaction after the first group had performed the pirouette exercise was to drily state, "Mmm... let's try the second group".

"For the non-ladies go from a clean position and a little earlier".

During a *batterie* exercise, the dancers all seemed to go wrong at the start, at the same time. Everyone kept going to the bitter last beat, but at the end Grant said "Oh dear, that didn't go well did it. We're going to have to do that again". People chuckled in agreement (observation sessions).

The 'soothing' strategy of humour and black comedy was drawn upon and delivered with confidence by Grant because the dancers could be expected to react accordingly; to appreciate the humour and its intended purpose which was to lighten the atmosphere and bond 'director' and dancers together: to make the former appear a little more human and a little less frightening. The use of humour was also appreciated because as Emmanuelle, a French dancer, explained

It [feedback] happens to me all the time and I hate it because when you've done something wrong and you know you've done it but you just keep going, because you have to keep going and the teacher comes up to you and is being like "You need to do this" and you're like "Yeah, I know." But, you can't tell them "Yeah, yeah, I know, I tried." For me, it's just like "Ahh." But sometimes they also know that you've done it wrong and they know that you're aware of it.... They are funny as well because you do something and they go "Oh my God, this was

terrible”, and you go, “I know, I know, I’m sorry. I’ll be better tomorrow.” They know that you know.

Director and dancers supported the same professional reality through reaching a ‘working consensus’. Feedback and instruction were a necessity but the method chosen respected the dancers’ intimate knowledge of their capabilities. This approach continued with the giving of individual feedback while other dancers were performing:

Grant approached Andrea as she walked off the floor, while others were performing the *pirouette* exercise. Another dancer was approached about his arabesque and performed the move again on the side. However, I (and I presume the other dancers), could not hear what was said (observation session).

‘[W]hen they see something that’s really not good, then they tell you individually’  
(Emmanuelle).

As highlighted by the dancer, Aidan, and the ballet master, Robert, the relationship between dancers and staff is a continuous one:

If you’ve got a ballet mistress or something that’s been vile to you the day before, it’s very hard to look that person in the eye the next day and smile, you know, and that’s professional conduct and of course you do your best but you’re not gonna run about waving your arms and saying how great everything is (Aidan).

[M]ost teachers in a company class, will go and then take a day’s rehearsal so you’re not only just seeing that person once, you’re seeing them for six hours. So you know how they are at the end of the day, so you know where they need to be at the beginning of the day as well, so there’s a lot, it’s all in the head. A lot of it. And in the feet (Robert).

The same ballet staff would be involved in the subsequent classes and rehearsals that constitute the ongoing life of professional ballet, and a poor dance performance given by a dancer, or a disrespectful social performance given by a teacher, subsequently shapes

future interaction, and thus, the relationship between them. Within the ballet class, the literal roles of director and ballet mistress or master can be understood better through being linked to the dramaturgical role of 'training specialist', treading a fine line between being supportive and disciplinary. Ballet staff have 'the complicated task of teaching the performer how to build up a desirable impression while at the same time taking the part of the future audience and illustrating by punishments the consequences of improprieties' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.157).

### **2.3. *Ballet master as 'go-between' and 'confidante'***

The seeking of advice and reassurance was a theme of the classes led by Robert:

Amélie went up to Robert before class started and was talking to him and pointing to her lower leg. The conversation ended with her saying "thank you" and moving back up the studio. Between *barre* and centre practice, Sebastian was talking about a pain in his leg with Robert. Robert had walked over to him and put his hands on his shoulders: "Are you sore?" He told him to be careful and put his arm round his shoulders (observation sessions).

Within the ballet class, it was apparent that certain authority figures were projecting themselves and being viewed as, a buffer between dancer and director by adopting the unofficial roles of 'go-between' and 'confidante'. The latter role saw dancers shrugging off a particular impression that they were aiming to give (for example, fit and injury-free) and sharing particular issues and concerns with Robert. Aidan explained that

[t]he ballet mistress and master should be a conduit, ideally, between the dancers and the upper management. So they report from the director down to the dancers and they say "right, this is what the boss wants", but then they should also report back from the dancers to the director and they should see the side of the dancers, usually, hopefully, who knows and say "look, this guy, I'm worried about his foot", or "this guy's doing that role better. Take a look, see what you think. It's your call but I think..." you know. That's the role of the ballet mistress and ballet master. They should be a conduit there. Ideally, they'd be

someone you could talk to, and say, preferably confidentially, but you never know.

Closely linked to the role of confidante in the professional ballet class is that of go-between and again, a focus on concerns over injury and performance was discerned. However, as a non-dancer, Robert explained that his loyalties ultimately need to lie with the team of authority figures for his role to successfully operate.

I walk in and we go “ah!” you know, we cuddle and we chat about everything, but as soon as I go out, I don’t have any other interests that they have. It makes it hard if you want to turn round to that person and say “you’re really not dancing well, I’m gonna take you out”, over dinner and stuff like that, it’s quite tough and I’ve seen management that are close with people and they’ve made tough decisions and then all of a sudden they don’t talk to each other for four weeks. It’s not the best (Robert).

Goffman’s (1959/1990) explanation of the go-between as someone who ‘learns the secret of each side and gives each side the true impression that he [sic] will keep its secrets’ reflects Robert’s thoughts and experiences. However, potential difficulties aside, other social actions observed further cemented Robert’s role positioning as supporting the team of dancers. Friendly interaction with the dancers and a show of understanding of the strains and pressures that they faced were themes of the classes he taught:

Orlando missed the *frappé* exercise and went to his bag to change from socks into flats. Robert wandered over and [recognising his decision of when to change shoes] said while smiling, “you detest *batterie*”. Between *barre* and centre, Robert joked with a female dancer about the quick movement of her shoulders, she laughed and responded, “it’s the Latin spirit.”

Between two exercises in the centre, Robert said to the class, “just watch Lara in her boxer shorts. They make your legs look good”, inspiring laughter (observation session).

These incidents suggested that the dancers welcomed the existence of an authority figure that was more obviously on 'their side', and understood and appreciated Robert's personality.

I do a thing in the class, Sometimes I say, "let's do circus" and the pianist will play da, da-da, da, da, da, da, da, da, dah and everybody turns... *fouettés, à la secondes*, whatever, or we do big jumps with the men and things like that, so it's more of a trick driven thing, which is vital. You know, you have to have those tricks and that sort of stuff (Robert).

Towards the end of one class:

Jumps progressed from small to big *jetés*. It got very exciting; at one point people started clapping in time to other dancers *jetéing* down the diagonal. There were "whoops" and smiles and laughter. Mary and I backed into the doorway as they charged at us and almost into us. People were applying their skid brakes at the last moment (observation session).

Class is the starting point for every working day, and '[s]ometimes it's just too much for yourself, and you just want to do the show and the rehearsals and company class takes a lot out of you so it's hard to get into it sometimes' (Emmanuelle). Class 'can just feel a wee bit monotonous... if you're tired, it's like "oh, here's the same thing every day"' (Mary). Robert recognised this state of affairs and certain strategies existed within the class to keep the dancers motivated.

#### **2.4. Dancers as 'colleagues'**

The class was a dancer-centred activity. 'There is that knowledge that this is your time to improve yourself, work on yourself' (Emmanuelle). 'Class is your opportunity to bring your technique out the box, improve it, work on it' (Aidan). 'It's more like a medicine for us really. It warms us up, the purpose of warming up for the day ahead' (Mary). United by their shared understanding of the purpose of this work ritual, the dancers can be viewed as 'colleagues'.

They 'share a community of fate. In having to put on the same kind of performance, they come to know each other's difficulties and points of view; whatever their tongues, they come to speak the same social language' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.159). Adherence to the 'same social language' (notably, for many dancers, English was not their first language) was demonstrated both through conventions such as limiting verbal communication in class, and the performance of actions that appeared to be more autonomous, but were in fact 'sanctioned' (Goffman, 1959/1990). Both features reflected the dancer-centred nature of the class.

I do not like communication in class, outside of, maybe a little bit of banter and a little bit of back and forth. I don't agree in people talking loudly while other people are dancing, laughing a lot while other people are dancing... There's this professional recognition of something amazing that's just happened and then there's sort of foolish screaming and shouting (Aidan).

Independent behaviour during class was sanctioned by the authority figure present because, as Robert explained, 'half the time, they need that freedom so [you can't go] "oh, I don't want you doing that" when they're grown up people'. Autonomous actions were also sanctioned because they conformed to the necessary reality in some way; they were linked to the dance performance that was subsequently going to take place:

Sebastian moved away from the *barre* mid-exercise to massage his back on a roller to the side of the studio. Another dancer stopped what he was doing at the *barre* three or four times to go down onto the floor, to massage and circle his ankles, and to lie on his back to work on his hips. There was no reaction from anyone (observation session).

During many of the *barre* exercises, dancers were performing and finishing at quite different times to one another. This was not commented on or corrected. Dancers sometimes finished in different ways as well – with an extra balance or a stretch, or a relaxing of the arms straight away, rather than a lowering down into *bra bas*. Dancers were constantly tweaking their positions and jiggling muscles and joints – especially during the *penché* exercise (observation session).

The ballet wear was a real mixture – only two pairs of ballet tights and lots of leotards, black tights and shorts with several bare legs. Quite a few of the guys were dancing in socks. Dave started at the *barre* in ugg like fleece lined slippers, before switching to flats. One of the guys had a white cut-off t-shirt that said “I heart SF” on the front. I was assured later that this stood for ‘San Francisco’, not ‘Sci-Fi’ (observation session).

A final key example of seemingly autonomous but ‘sanctioned’ behaviour in the class was performed by the role of the pianist. This figure can be viewed as a ‘colleague’ of the dancers when reacting to the mood of the class and colluding with them in sympathy.

[I]f you’re in a bad mood, and then the pianist is in a bad mood and the music is not as good and everybody’s “ahhh”, but sometimes with somebody you’ll be like, you know he’s going to play tunes that you like. He just lifts up the atmosphere and make you feel better and makes everybody feel better. Especially if everybody’s kind of tired. I would say the music set the entire atmosphere of the class and it’s so helpful for the steps and for the technique, if, you know, you think of music and you happy in your head then you dance much better than when you not. Some dancers just go in and say “oh, can you play this?” and some like show tunes. And when it’s somebody’s birthday, then, we don’t know when, but at some time in the middle of the class, the pianist plays ‘Happy Birthday’ and we all stop and clap to that person (Emmanuelle).

Aidan believed that,

The most important thing [person] in the room in class, from my personal opinion, it’s the musician... The thing is, if that pianist can’t identify with the dancers and give the dancers the musical response to what it is they’re doing or lead them in what they’re doing then your whole class is gonna be, rather than ten per cent brain on music and the rest on body, is going to be fifty per cent on keeping your own rhythm and time and then for me, that ruins a class.

Returning to the start of this discussion, the ultimate authority figure in this class, Grant, actually ‘sanctioned’ and capitalised on decisions made by the pianist, to continue his tactic of bonding with the dancers through using dry humour:

“Was that ‘Blind Date’? How very 80s of you Frank”.

During a pirouette exercise, Grant’s response to the music being played was “This is kind of marching music isn’t it? Margaret Thatcher’s funeral music” before saying to the pianist, “Bit more Kylie?”

‘A *tendu* exercise at the *barre* was given and performed once before Grant asked the pianist to “pick up the pace”. The tequila song was the result’ (observation sessions).

## **2.5. Summary**

Within the professional ballet class, there existed a need for a certain working reality to be maintained, characterised by respect and a shared aim to promote the standard of dance performance. The class in question was embedded within a larger landscape, a field (Bourdieu, 1977), populated with a network of artistic directors, ballet staff, administrative managers, dancers, examiners, boards and associations, companies and venues, and the spectators of the end product: the ballet performance. The competition and rivalry felt between dancers was ever-present: ‘There are people right at the top that some might feel aren’t pulling their weight or don’t, haven’t earned it, there are some... if you get caught up in it, it’s something that will destroy you’ (Aidan).

With this greater context in mind, the necessary work-respect balance was dependent on maintaining a balance of roles. Reflecting the hierarchy of the organisation, this discussion firstly looked at the role and strategies employed by the ultimate authority figure, Grant, who employed the ‘soothing’ (Goffman, 1959/1990) use of humour and black comedy to give feedback and instruction. Secondly, the role of second-in-command and ballet master, Robert, as confidante and go-between was considered. As explored, this role was especially important because of the ongoing relationship between authority figures and dancers, and the challenging world, emotionally and physically, of professional ballet. Lastly, I examined the role of dancers as ‘colleagues’. This group was defined in part through its engagement in similar and autonomous (but ‘sanctioned’) actions. Independent and individualised dance performances were ‘allowed’; partly, because of the recognition that dancers need a certain

freedom during an everyday ritual, but also, significantly, because the actions made still conformed to the professional ballet reality: all were linked to improving the dance performance in some way. This case study is the most sociological one in terms of drawing upon a range of Goffmanian roles, reflecting both the approach taken by Bourdieusian and Foucauldian studies previously explored, and the structured world of professional ballet.

However, this consideration, recognising individuality, also needs to be extended to the figures in authority: humour may be employed for a purpose, but it also reflected a particular personality. Significantly, adopting the observer as participant role and actually sitting and watching the dancing allowed me to note these micro autonomous actions, and the tiny fractures they made in the visual picture or scene unfolding with each ballet exercise. The ballet class is traditionally characterised by its lack of social interaction and the individual performances on the part of the teacher or dancer have received little consideration. Hence, examination of the 'hidden' microsociology of the daily ballet class, described by Aidan as, 'unlike a performance and unlike a demonstration of any sort, [where] there is that anonymity there, where you can just work on yourself', has been largely ignored in the literature.

### **3. 'Performance' and 'Integration' in the Inclusive Creative Dance Class**

Fraser asked people to work in groups of three and four. One person lay on their back and then their front while the others found their pressure points, stroked their limbs down, uncurled their fingers, rocked them from side to side, and then gently stretched their limbs. Some people chose to opt out of being massaged (Fraser said you could) but I took part. Sybil stayed in her wheelchair but Aliya (her support worker) massaged her head, neck and shoulders for her. It looked very gentle and tender (observation session).

### **3.1. Introduction**

Zitomer and Reid (2011) have cited a number of sources (Dey 2003; Helfenbaum 2009; Kaufmann 2006; Nonhebel 2007) to define inclusive or 'integrated dance as a dance in which participants with and without disabilities engage together' (p.140). Within the present case study, clients (as mentioned previously, the term used by the organisation in reference to disabled participants), teachers, support workers, students on placement and volunteers all performed and participated (danced) in the class together. Where the term 'participants' is used in discussing this case study, reference is being made to all class performers. This class was split into two 60 minute segments (with a lunch break in between) and took place on a weekly basis. The focus of the class was to increase creativity and technique, and rehearse repertoire to share and present upcoming work (depending on the time of year).

Although empirical literature (rooted in experience and observation) on inclusive dance is limited (Quinlan and Bates, 2008; Zitomer and Reid, 2011), existing studies overwhelmingly focus on dance participants with physical rather than learning disabilities, reflecting the preoccupation of 'disabled dance' (Herman and Chatfield, 2010) on bodily and performance aesthetics, and the relegation of dance participants with learning disabilities to the sphere of dance therapy rather than dance education (Benjamin, 2002; Zitomer and Reid, 2011).

Kuppers (2001) expands upon the problematised disabled dancing body:

On the one side, disabled dance is seen as therapeutic – the relationship between body and dance is unproblematic, dance is an 'opportunity' for disabled people to discover themselves as 'whole' and 'able'... On the other side, disabled dance can be seen as performance: challenging dominant notions about 'suitable bodies' (p.29).

The existing literature, focusing on participants with physical disabilities, revolves around a number of interrelated themes: the role of contact improvisation (Davies, 2008), the method of instruction (Herman and Chatfield, 2010; Whatley, 2007), performance aesthetics

(Benjamin, 2002; Koppers, 2000; Quinlan and Bates, 2008), advocacy (Koppers, 2000), and spectatorship (Cooper Albright, 1997; Benjamin, 2002; Koppers, 2000; 2001; Whatley, 2007). As highlighted by Whatley (2010), studies have also generally focused on professional performance, rather than on education, training and amateur participation. A limited number of ethnographic studies include the 'voices' of dance participants, teachers, choreographers and audience members (for example, Patrick and Bowditch, 2013; Whatley, 2007; Zitomer and Reid, 2011). However, further investment in, and understanding of inclusive dance cannot be brought about solely by scholarly study:

[A]ccessible dance culture needs not only accessible techniques, work spaces, training facilities and stages, but also wider educational work on the level of dance literacy; our ability to read dance and appreciate its manipulation of bodies, spaces and time (Koppers, 2000, p.119).

People with both physical and learning disabilities were part of this case study, and individuals with both or either type of disability have been traditionally viewed as the 'other': a dominant attitude within the literature and in society. Disability can mean 'a variety of ways of being in the world' (Henderson and Ostrander, 2010, p.3) and the concept 'functions as [one] of otherness – it is a name for widely different impairments, and widely different embodied experiences' (Koppers, 2001, p.31). However, as highlighted above, inclusive dance is almost exclusively viewed on an aesthetic basis, as an act of advocacy, or both. Little attention is paid to the enjoyment, embodied and 'lived experience' of inclusive dance participants (both disabled and non-disabled).

The class in the current study aimed to promote an inclusive experience that also developed a certain standard of dance performance. Here, the discussion focuses on the intersections between these two aims or realities, examining how actions and perceptions linked to each, supported and challenged the existence and value of the other. The dance performances facilitated and given, actively promoted inclusivity by encouraging respect and friendship: a

result of the close physical contact integral to contact improvisation. However, the emphasis on inclusivity shaped the promotion and perception of dance performance through a focus on creativity, positivity and praise with less attention on technique and criticism. This approach was inextricably linked, in part, to the existence of certain dual roles adopted by a number of sub-groups among the participants including teachers, support workers, volunteers and students on placement.

Inclusive dance is an exciting area of study. As Cooper Albright (1997) explains, the disabled body 'insistently refuses to be neatly packaged as metaphor. It is hard to abstract disability, the reality of its status "as is" breaks through the theoretical gloss to confront whomever [sic] is writing about it' (p.60). To reiterate, the participant as observer role was adopted here, and interviewees represented a cross section of the class; they include the teacher, Fraser; clients, Ewan and Lucy; Ekaterina and Gary who were students on placement, and a support worker turned volunteer, Lawrence.

### **3.2. *Inclusivity and dance performance: a single dance 'reality'***

This section considers how the myriad of dance forms that featured, principally contact improvisation, but also street dance, Bollywood and ballet (collectively labelled here as 'creative dance'), not only promoted inclusivity in a physically participatory sense, but also promoted whole-class team bonds. This 'physical closeness' facilitated the construction of friendships and respect between participants – significant features of the class reality – and was apparent in three key ways. Firstly, the adaptive physical potential of creative movement was exploited. Secondly, the place of humour, both within the dancing and social interaction, was very much encouraged by the teachers. Lastly, everyday movements were incorporated into exercises and choreography.

As Davies (2008) highlights, contact improvisation is an adaptable dance form, and its inclusive potential was appreciated by participants:

Everybody has their own individual style of movement and I think what [the class] looks at and appreciates as well, is different styles of movement. We're not, most of us anyway, we're not ballet dancers, we don't have that conventional dancery... but when you look at it, everybody's got their own, this beauty in every style of movement and I think that's what we achieve (Lawrence, volunteer).

There were numerous examples of movement being adapted, particularly in duets involving an individual who uses a wheelchair, and by participants in group work: during one exercise, 'Aliya lay horizontally across the arms of Sybil's wheelchair, just above her lap and turned the wheels of the chair for both of them while Sybil wrapped her arms around her torso to keep her from falling' (observation session). Clients adapted the movement to suit their needs: 'When they're doing like kicks or stretches with the feet, I use my arms. I'm good at adapting. Even though I'm in a wheelchair, I don't see myself as any different from able-bodied dancers' (Lucy). One of the teachers, Fraser, commented,

People still say, so how can you get somebody in a wheelchair to dance? People still say that to me and I'm like "why wouldn't they dance?" Just because they might not have any legs, they might not have any arms, they might not have, they might be paralysed from the waist down or from the waist up or whatever that disability might be, anybody can dance, whether it's in the blink of an eye, the turn of a head, or the wiggle of a finger.

The assistive role of support workers and volunteers within every session was not limited to the particular client that they supported. One wheelchair user, Nathan, did not have a companion with him in the sessions, and when movement too quick for him to do on his own was required, a participant who was not a wheelchair user (perhaps another client) would immediately step in and help:

Client, Julie, pulled Nathan back into the circle when he was unable to manoeuvre himself. During the dancing around in the circle, single file, support worker, Aliya pushed Nathan and her colleague Duncan, pushed Sybil in their wheelchairs. There was no hesitation, the action was seamless (observation session).

The teacher, Fraser, explained the role of the support workers and volunteers:

[W]e see the support workers and the carers, really, as a massive help within the group. If we didn't have the support workers, the carers, participating in our sessions, I don't think that we would get the work to the same level as what it has been so far.

The mechanics by which a reality promoting an increasing level of dance performance was aimed for was sharply brought into focus when guest teacher, Laura, led a class that very much focused on technique:

We were asked to all face the mirror and Laura led a *plié* and *tendu* exercise using the terminology of parallel, first and second. Following this, we copied exercises using side and forward stretches, followed by a *dégagé* forward and up to *retiré*, with the arms moving from first to fifth and release-based movements using the arms and bended knees. Elena, one of the support workers, said "that's a bit complicated". Lucy (client) told me that it was "too hard". Nathan and Sybil barely joined in at all – I think they just weren't sure how to adapt the exercises when they were using a wheelchair (observation session).

Fraser commented on content and method of instruction:

I think that [use of technical terminology] sometimes blocks people off, if they've got that structure and that routine. I would start off with creative movement and then start to build on that once the body's a wee bit more freer, to explore dance and take on the technique. But if you do it the other way round, I think that immobilises people a wee bit... It's nice to be nice and clear, and just explain. Like instead of your first position, and second position, I do train tracks, Charlie Chaplin feet, spread apart. You know, just nice and simple, because these guys don't know the technical terminology, and it's not important... I think the language is the biggest barrier, to dance and to inclusion and integration.

In addition to utilising the adaptability of creative movement, the teachers encouraged friendship and respect within the class, through embedding humour in the dancing. For example, during one session, we were asked to form a circle and to each perform a move for everyone else to copy as part of the warm-up:

Client, Albert's, chosen sequence ended with him doing push-ups on the floor, which then had to be copied amid lots of groaning. This exercise was fun and hot to do – there was a lot of laughter. James (client) did a very nonchalant sequence which ended with him smoothing his back and doing the 'drama' hand movements across his eyes and face. "Drama!" [a saying in the class that denoted the performance of a certain diva-esque movement], shouted everyone (observation session).

During another exercise, we each had to cross the studio, either in a low or high position (as instructed by Fraser) and,

for the low one across the floor, Paddy (support worker) just lay down and struggled all the way across in a sort of caterpillar like movement, before reaching the end and lifting his arms for help to finish. There were many willing people to haul him across and much laughter. Leila (volunteer) slowly crossed the floor on all fours, and the (nice) laughter increased when she explained that she had recently had a hip replacement (observation session).

Humour was also built into choreography, planned for a public performance, in a duet between Nathan, a client, and the teacher, Fraser:

Nathan walked on with his stick to the middle of the stage. Fraser came on from the opposite side and danced around with his wheelchair, sort of playing with it. Nathan told Fraser where he wanted it, directing him all over the place before changing his mind. I heard Fraser say, "you're enjoying this aren't you?!" (not choreographed). People were laughing and Fraser danced it up through shrugging and pretending that he was exhausted. When Fraser finally wheeled Nathan around, Nathan's stick was pointed out in front of him – like a chariot. Then Fraser pushed Nathan and he sailed off the stage and we heard a massive cymbal crash (observation session).

In contrast to the professional ballet class, where humour was primarily used as a social strategy to manage working relations, within the inclusive creative dance class, the experience was very much part of the dancing. As Goffman (1959/1990) explains, where '[p]ractical jokes and social games are played... embarrassments which are to be taken unseriously are purposely engineered' (p.25). The class was populated with groups of people who had little previous practical experience of dance, but were aware of existing dominant perceptions concerning what dance 'is' or 'should' be, linked most obviously to certain images drawn from ballet. Therefore, the possibility existed of embarrassing oneself through trying to perform a particular movement in emulation of this ideal.

Lastly, certain (positive) everyday actions characterised both the micro spontaneous social and, significantly, the choreographed or guided dance performances that took place in the class. Hugs, eye contact, and the giving of high fives were choreographic themes in the class, and supported the promotion of inclusivity as a central concern.

Fraser said, 'I know you've spent the morning together [this was during an afternoon class and he had been absent earlier], but as we're walking round, you can give someone a hug' – cue, lots of hugging as we walked round. People smiled and laughed. There was also an awful lot of eye contact being made when we were all walking round the space as part of the warm-up (observation session).

The weaving of everyday actions into exercises and choreography was consciously planned as a means to cement the whole-class team, and in particular, to integrate new team members:

[W]e have Lena, we have Tom, and we have Minnie [all clients], who are brand new to that group so, that's, it's the easiest way to make contact. It really is the easiest way and without putting pressure on to somebody. If you say "go and make, you know, some contact with somebody", that somebody feels the pressure of making these beautiful big shapes, when actually you know, a high five is the simplest, because everybody knows what a high five is. So to make that, it's just a first piece of contact between people (Fraser).

### **3.3. *Inclusivity and dance performance: a complex 'reality'***

Creativity, praise and positivity were key characteristics of the class, both between clients, support workers, students and volunteers, and between the teachers and these groups in the class. Many of the individual exercises, and all of the classes, ended with the lead teacher instructing everyone to 'give yourself a big round of applause' (observation session). Feedback tended to focus on the positives, rather than on where there was room for improvement, and content focused on creativity, rather than technique. However, this approach had some repercussions for those clients with additional and previous training, coupled with natural ability. As Ewan, one of the clients, explained to me:

I feel like I can do a lot more. I want to try the stuff from the 'Step Up' movies and that kind of thing. I would really like to do a dance course, to be part of the Conservatoire. I would really love to give it a go and dance in the Conservatoire.

The above approach was, in part, shaped by the conflicting roles of Fraser, the teacher:

I just like to check base... because they are all my friends, you know, this is my opportunity to dance with the guys and just to relax actually and not have the stress of having to think of structure or themes or choreography or anything like that. This group is just about... I'm not a teacher actually. I'm coming in to dance with my friends.

However, Fraser was also aware of the potential negative impact of his long-lasting and close friendship with members of the class:

[S]ometimes if you've got one class that are so used to having me in that class, like the young ones, they're not very good at taking other people who come in, actually to teach them because they're like, "where's Fraser?" you know, and then they might switch off cos they're so used to it so a lot of the classes don't, if you're with them for too long, they don't want to let you go, you know.

Reliance on the lead teacher was evidenced in the afternoon class following a morning class with the guest teacher, Laura: 'In the circle at the beginning, Fraser asked if everyone had enjoyed themselves and there was a muted response followed by Lucy loudly announcing, "I like your class more"' (observation session). Goffman (1959/1990) makes the point that familiarity that may prove detrimental to the presentation of a certain performance (in this case, a dance performance) can be counteracted through the periodic changing of audiences, but as the experience with Laura demonstrated, this action can reveal the problem rather than be the solution. The dual roles of teacher and friend (cementing Fraser's status as a member of the class team) were problematised further by the fact that teachers had a duty of care to the clients that they were working with. This saw them necessarily embodying a third role of 'informer' (Goffman, 1959/1990) through needing to feed important information back to relevant third parties including members of the client's support network. One instance involving this role was linked to the stress of preparing for a public performance:

I think Lucy's maybe feeling a bit left out. I think she's maybe a bit out of her comfort zone... This would be her first performance and it's a lot of pressure and I think we just need to leave it to Lucy to decide. In other words, I think she needs, she needs support. Lucy needs, *we've all had a wee chat about it* and I think Lucy needs extra support (Fraser, emphasis added).

In this context, the 'we' mentioned above constitutes teachers, support workers and other members of the client's network.

A second group within the class, the students on placement, also experienced a clashing of roles, but in this case, the tension felt was between their actual and desired positions within the class. The focus on creativity and positivity discussed previously, clashed with their

vocational training, where technique was a paramount concern. Discussing the dance performances given in the class, Gary stated,

It's limited in technique but I think that's just the fact that most of the people here haven't had technique training that I, I should have technique because I study dance [vocationally at college].

The welcoming of college students on placement reflected the inclusive nature of the class, but the opinions they expressed back stage during an interview with myself, complicated the desired dance reality and not only clashed with their own non-disabled and vocational experiences, but demonstrated certain preconceptions concerning inclusive dance. The students on placement expressed a wish to give greater support to the dance aspect of the reality through wanting to adopt a 'figure of authority' role that would be at odds with their official status as guest:

It's difficult just biting your tongue and not saying anything because it's not our place to say it. You can't, we don't really have any authority, we are here for placement, we are enjoying dance, we are working with people and yeah, we can't really cross the line. We are here coming from elsewhere, we are outsiders (Ekaterina).

We've been trained in a sense, although like we're in the same line as everyone else, like we're starting at the same bit [of the dance] as them, we can see what's wrong and what's right. You kinda can't speak up though. You've just got to be like, let the actual workers deal with it. But I feel like I'm dying to have a place here (Gary).

However, tension between inclusivity and the need to give a certain dance performance was best exemplified through the concerns of the support workers and volunteers, the result of their attendance in the dual roles of carer and dance participant. Their participation in both roles was vital yet problematic. Firstly, they were partly 'coerced' into dancing owing to their professional role of providing support to their client, enabling his or her participation. As Lawrence explained, 'we're paid to support people. [T]he guy that supported before me left

and it left a vacuum, a lot of people to support, and I just went in. It was part of my job really'. Therefore, support workers did not necessarily have any pre-existing personal experience or interest in dance, yet, as pointed out previously, they did have preconceptions as to what dance is or should be, and expressed concern at participating:

[W]e live in a very competitive world and you're judged by how good you are and particularly when I started, I'm not a dancer, so I was afraid that I was going to stand up and look a complete idiot but as I say if that's the case, that is my job. Deal with it. Everybody is so positive and supportive but it still takes a lot to get over that, that feeling of competitiveness. When we're doing a piece or individual bits, and you follow, you're asked to follow somebody like Fraser or Cathy [both teachers]; you think "oh shit". I can't do that, I can't compete. I wasn't comfortable, I mean I love movement, I always have done but you know, within a sports context. I mean dancer? Me? Nah (Lawrence).

At the beginning of this section of the rehearsal, Siobhan (stage manager) led a kind of pep talk on stage. People were told that they needed to multitask: "Enjoy it, learn it, do it". "Not much then" muttered support worker, Aliya (observation session).

The potential for feeling embarrassed was an ongoing and prominent concern for the support worker as dance participant because their primary audience, their client, witnessed them wrestling with attempting to fulfil both roles within the class. Strategies adopted by the support workers to manage the situation included a mixture of apologising, self-deprecation and the full engagement with exercises and choreography within sessions, defined by Goffman (1959/1990) as 'defensive strategies' in a bid by the performer to 'protect his [sic] own projections' (p.24). 'Siobhan (stage manager) went around the room to find out who was doing the show and when she got to Lawrence, the response was "Hard luck. Yes, I am doing it" (observation session). Lawrence pre-empted the reaction that he dreaded through acknowledging it first.

In drawing this discussion to a close, it is important to note how keen support workers were to emphasise the enjoyment that they got from participating and reflected the shared desire

of participants in the class to support a reality that was both inclusive and focused on developing a dance performance:

I've got so much out of my involvement personally. I suppose anything dance or any activity, music, art or whatever, you're just putting yourself on the line and I think you are bringing yourself as a human individual out and it's a bloody brave thing to do, particularly as we are not a dancer, well I'm not a dancer. But I think I have got to the point now where I really, I really don't care now how people view me. And there is a freedom in that. I just enjoy it. I really don't care as much how it looks. It's how it feels to me, so that's, that's brilliant. Really self-indulgent. I love the positivity (Lawrence).

### **3.4. Summary**

This case study has focused on those moments where the simultaneous aims of inclusivity and dance performance intersected to consider how they jointly shaped the realities inherent to the class. The dance performances given promoted inclusivity and social contact, as well as closeness through physical contact. The adaptability of the creative movement allowed for challenges to be overcome, enjoyment to be had, and imaginations to run free. Both the social experience of humour, and the physical actions of everyday gestures woven into the choreography, contributed to the sense of friendship and respect experienced in the class. Within the class, social closeness and support was evident and supported.

Yet, the central ethos of inclusivity shaped the technical progression of dance performances owing to varying needs, standards and fears among the participants. This approach, which was complemented by the nature of feedback given (positive rather than critical), caused some frustration for clients who had the potential to learn and perform a practice characterised to a greater degree by its technique. A degree of tension was further reflected in the dual roles experienced by certain groups of participants. The situation was either concurrent (such as the teacher present both as friend and informer or support workers also present as dance participants) or demonstrated a distinction between actual and desired

roles (as in students desiring to act as teachers). Although this class operated within a secure space (as mentioned previously, individuals could only be present within the space if they danced within it), external forces shaped the social interactions within, through for example, necessitating the creation of a 'safe' space, and existing tension between perceptions of what dance 'should be' and what disabled dancers are 'capable of'. Literature that is shaped by the views of different groups of participants in an inclusive dance setting is rare, as is consideration of participants with learning as well as physical disabilities. However, through applying an inclusive research approach to an integrated setting, the present case study reveals the complex nature of the realities that shape the interactions of a group of people (and members of their support network), 'hidden' both within society and dance scholarship.

#### **4. Two 'Realities' within the Line Dancing Class**

Class started with the 'warm-up' dance: 'Flobie Slide'. I took a place reserved for new people near the front, and as part of the dance, pointed twice to each side before beating my heel twice on each foot and proceeding to turn. The lighting was dim and the venue manager sat on one of the many seats ringing the dance floor with his newspaper propped up, oblivious to us. 'Human' by The Killers blasted out as, with varying degrees of elegance, rows danced in unison to face a new wall. I let my mind wander as the movement took over and then I promptly went wrong (observation session).

##### **4.1. Introduction**

The international phenomenon of line dancing has been practised since the 1970s (Nadasen, 2008), yet the majority of ethnographic literature views the activity as an alternative to traditional aerobic classes (Gordon et al, 2001; Keogh et al, 2009), with most studies focusing on the physical and psychological benefits of taking part. Key works concentrate on the positive link between line dancing and an increase in external social activity (Nadasen, 2008), the acute physiological stimuli produced by line dancing (Gordon et

al, 2001), the factors which affect the class attendance and enrolment rates of older women (Gavin and Myers, 2003), and the benefit of the activity to healthy adults aged over 60 (Keogh et al, 2009). Additional studies have noted the impact that the role of the line dancing instructor has on the experience of a class (Gavin and Myers, 2003; Nadasen, 2008) and the existence of dominant racial and social connotations attached to Country and Western music (Neal, 2007). However, limited attention has been paid in the literature to the attraction of line dancing itself: the steps, the movement and the kinaesthetic experience.

This case study directly contributes to the above body of work through unearthing and interrogating a reality that sponsors the dancing itself as a central experience. '[W]hat distinguishes line dancing is its multifaceted impact at the personal, social, and community levels' (Nadasen, 2008, p.339). While line dancing activity is indeed multifaceted, I argue that the nature of the dancing, and the dance practice itself, have a greater role to play in promoting enjoyment of the experience, than has been acknowledged in the literature to date.

The two-hour class was based in a community venue and took place once a week, during the late evening. The format saw beginner and improver dances being taught in the first half of the class and intermediate and advanced dances being taught in the second half of the class. Participants either left as the level of the dances increased, or stayed to watch, or stayed and 'gave it a go'. There was a core of advanced ladies who generally stayed for the full two hours. There was no back stage setting in this activity – changing rooms were not necessary (people danced in their everyday clothes) and the dance floor, bar, tables and chairs all shared the same front stage space. In addition to observing and dancing within the line dancing classes, I interviewed the instructor, Kate, and five participants: Marlene, Pat, Hamish, Betty and Jane.

The key finding from analysis of the data was the unearthing of two contradictory but simultaneously existing realities within the class. One reflected the perceived dominant public perception of the activity as a low-status genre that is easy to perform; the other aimed to promote line dancing in contrasting terms, as a challenging activity and a practice to be proud of. Significantly, it was the existence of an 'outsider', myself as researcher that caused these realities to become apparent. Participants were aware of, and thought I held, a stereotyped view of line dancing, and wanted to challenge it. 'So did you enjoy it? What did you think before?' (instructor, Kate). 'It's not what you expect it to be. It's a lot more energetic isn't it?' (participant, Marlene).

The instructor, long-term participants and committed beginners, were very much aware of the popular culture connotations of line dancing; 'Fingers in your belt hooks and hee-haw and scuffing' (Pat). Hamish discussed the assumed physical appearance of attendees, one that is strongly linked to the 'red-neck' associations discussed by Neal (2007):

You can just go in anything; you don't necessarily need to have the cowboy boots and the checked shirt. The perception that people have of it, is that it's just people who go who are into Country and Western. You don't go for the dancing, you just live for Country and Western you know, gun slinging and things like that.

The instructor, long-term participants and committed beginners constituted the key team and colluded to present the second reality, aiming to 'protect' themselves and each other from mockery and to attract a sense of status derived from practising a technical skill. The vast majority of participants were white, female and aged over 50, the typical demographic highlighted in the literature as taking part in line dancing (Gavin and Myers, 2003; Gordon et al, 2001; Nadasen, 2008). However, through certain acts of 'impression management', members of this team unwittingly betrayed their partial belief in the first, less positive, reality. In addition, the actions of sporadic and taster attendees, comprised of a greater variety of

ages, nationalities and ratio of male participants, consistently fractured the reality that the team aimed to sustain.

#### **4.2. *Line dancing is what you think it is***

Actions that promoted the dominant public perception of line dancing as low-status were at times sponsored by the instructor and long-term participants (as shall be explored), but most obviously by sporadic attendees. This latter group was attracted to the activity for social rather than dance reasons, to have a laugh both with, and at, line dancing and included attendees (predominantly male) who viewed the activity as an opportunity to pick up (female) partners. As the key performer directing the scenario, the instructor Kate, the 'figure of authority', assumed responsibility for minimising the damage that was being caused to the reality that the committed attendees sought:

There were a group of four youngish people (two couples I think) – one of the guys, Ben seemed embarrassed to be there, and wanted to take the mick out of his friend Charlie who wasn't rising to the bait. Ben was swearing during the dance and talking a lot; nobody else really talks when they're dancing. Marlene was getting annoyed with Ben and I'm not sure what he said, but Marlene replied with the words, "well, men only last for 30 seconds" before walking off the dance floor. This was between dances, and Ben immediately responded by asking what "kind of men she had been having". Kate tried to control the situation by saying to Marlene, "there are some things that should remain unsaid" before moving quickly on to the next dance (observation session).

Ben was not taking the dancing seriously, and this was particularly evident because other people on the floor were. Kate reacted to Ben's disruption in two key ways: '[T]hrowing banter back at him (when we were not dancing), and ignoring him (when we were dancing)' (observation session). 'Derisive collusion' (Goffman, 1959/1990) was in evidence as the line dancers worked with one another to show their disdain for the 'others' through ignoring them and passing knowing looks of hostility.

During another class, we were joined by a group of ladies on holiday in Glasgow. They were referred to as 'rolling visitors' by Kate, a (as it transpired) derogatory term that was applied to those groups of people who viewed line dancing as a novelty activity 'to try out'.

People just come to see what the [venue] is like, so I get what you call rolling visitors. I've had them from all over the world. So they actually come to see what the [venue] is, they don't actually come to do the line dancing, they just know the line dancing's on. They're more nose-y than they are actually wanting to do the line dancing. "Oh, there's line dancing on! Let's go to that" (Kate).

This explanation was provided during an interview and so constituted 'treatment of the absent' whereby a performer engages in 'uncomplimentary terms of reference' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.172) when those being discussed are not present. The group of female tourists made up for their lack of knowledge of steps and dances, and an understanding that these were primary considerations of the class, with their enthusiasm. However, they appeared to believe that focusing on having a good time, rather than trying to dance well, was an acceptable or even desirable reality:

The dancing from all of them was very enthusiastic; they were really going for it – the kicks, the wiggles. This was made all the more obvious by the fact that the rest of us were not 'going for it.' We were far more staid, and the advanced ladies in particular, responded to their raucous laughter with rather frozen smiles (observation session).

As explored briefly in Chapter Three, I also unwittingly fractured the sponsored reality, and crucially, this subsequently shaped the impression that Kate sought to give both me and those that she was teaching:

I was waiting outside the front door, when Marlene and Pat (who have taken me under their wing) and two of the advanced ladies arrived. One of the advanced ladies suggested we ring the bell that I was standing under. Being not much over five foot, the only way I could reach it was to jump or go on my pointes. So I went up on my 'tippy toes' as Marlene called it. When we got in, Kate asked how we had gained access. Marlene then told Kate, "she [I] went up on her tippy toes'. Kate's response was, "you know I used to be a ballet teacher". This theme

associating myself with ballet seemed to continue throughout the class. During 'Skinny Jeans', there is a sequence where you are meant to point your feet, which I did (in converse shoes). Kate shouted into her mike, "you're doing your ballet Beth", causing everyone to look (observation session).

At the next class, Kate was again keen to emphasise to me that she 'used to do ballet and tap and all that as well' (observation session). 'I'm actually a ballet teacher. Don't tell them in here. I think it's more technical and there's more delight in the ballet when you see that person getting better and better, and stronger and stronger at it' (Kate). Kate seemed keen to distance herself from those that she taught through emphasising her knowledge of a dance practice considered to be a high art form. Yet, once my background was recognised, other participants also chimed in with their experience and knowledge of forms of dance that places more emphasis on artistry and technique:

Line dancing is not my main activity. Certainly not. It's the ballroom, the Latin, Jazz, things like that. I must admit, I'll be very honest, I don't go about boasting that I come to line dancing because, not among my dancing friends, certainly not (Betty).

The implication is made that Betty referred to her 'dancing friends' as so, because they engaged in what she believed is a more valid (i.e. 'harder') form of dancing. The participants of this case study, including Kate, did not wish to be viewed solely as line dancers, and so unwittingly fractured the very reality that they were trying to support by communicating their apparent underlying belief that line dancing was a lesser dance form in comparison to other practices. When comparing line dancing to other practices that they knew of, or engaged in, participants and instructor viewed the activity negatively based on the relative accessibility of its technique, viewing it as repetitive, boring and easily accessible. As Betty confided: 'I mean you must look at those girls and the different physiques... You know you couldn't imagine them doing much other kind of dancing, like in the ballroom dancing class, but they can do this'. Hamish explained:

I don't find it challenging really, I don't see the challenge, I just see it as "learn the steps" because the dances are quite short, quite repetitive, you know, so I don't see it as being that challenging for me anyway. Maybe it's because I do dance, maybe I have a slight advantage when I go to the line dancing.

Here, individual performers derogated other members of the central team. In an encounter with an individual associated with a dance practice imbued with higher status, both instructor and participants were 'putting one another down' to communicate their understanding of, and disassociate themselves from, the aspects of line dancing that are most readily criticised. The sentiments being communicated here can be termed as 'discrepant sentiments' (Goffman, 1959/1990) as the instructor and participants shared with me opinions that were at odds with their aim of advocating for the technicality of line dancing.

However, and significantly, these opinions were only expressed to me, in the back stage area of the bar during interviews. A united front, promoting the serious business of learning and doing line dancing, was always presented in the front stage space on the dance floor during the activity.

#### **4.3. *Line dancing is not what you think it is***

As the key performer in the team, line dancing instructor and dramaturgical director, Kate extensively drew upon the loyalty and friendship she inspired to control the class experiences. She supported the desired reality by making the dancing the paramount experience, focusing on achievement and progression, and aiming to move at a suitable pace and standard for the majority of participants. Kate was aware that certain participants 'get a wee bit more intense and want to learn, learn, learn' and sought to meet their aim and expectations:

Kate had a head piece with a mike on, and instruction was both verbal and visual. She talked us through the movements and often the counts, the whole time, dancing with us. The one time that she stopped dancing, the class pretty much went to pieces, with just some of the advanced dancers still going, and of course the rest of us weren't behind them (in the row) just then (observation session).

Jane neatly summed up the success of Kate's approach:

She keeps everybody involved, but she goes over all the dances, and she builds it up so it incorporates people who are really good, well by my standards, very good, and people who have never done any steps whatsoever and I think there's a nice atmosphere so you don't need to feel like you're an expert. I think there's a bit of humour and it's very supportive.

Kate employed a range of tactics, including tact, to support the participants in the class and display her own role in leading the classes. 'During one of the pre-break dances, Kate asked if "we wanted that [instruction] again?" Kate then said "I see a small nod" so we went through it again' (observation session). Control of the setting by Kate was also evidenced through the imparting of criticism presented as teasing. 'I knew that someone had made a mistake when I heard the words "That was a great variation" coming from Kate' (observation session).

When I asked when would be the best time to talk to everyone about my research and to explain the paperwork, the following conversation took place: 'Kate told me to wait until the break. "What time is the break?" "When I say so" was the curt response' (observation session). An interactional strategy that consistently draws on tact and teasing was assisted by the format of the activity which, sees

participants perform the same sequence to different 'walls'; literally, the walls of the space, and Kate is the only person who does not switch direction during the dances and directs from the raised platform of a stage. She can always see all of us (observation session).

Routine, repetition and familiarity with the dance and movement, together with the physical challenge presented, all served to assist the enjoyment of achievement and progression: a balance was sought and maintained. 'I thought "I'll go to this for a laugh", but actually; it's a lot more technical' (Jane). The line dancing class was 'a lot more complicated, a lot more proper dancing than we thought it would be' (Marlene). Kate explained how this dance reality (and the one being sought) was at odds with public perception:

Years ago in the classes, they all used to dress up. I had my cowboy boots and my cowboy hat but as the dances progressed and got harder and harder and harder, you sweat more so you cannae wear the hat. It's just too much.

The desire to get things 'right' resulted in limited verbal interaction occurring while dances were being performed:

Conversations only really took place when people first arrived or during the break. When I was watching the advanced class, many people were dancing with their heads down, watching their feet, or other people's feet. Facial expressions were concentrated (observation session).

There were numerous examples within the class of participants enjoying the sense of achievement when they learnt and remembered certain steps and sequences:

When we did do the coda right (well, the people I could see), there were cries of "yeah!" from the participants. Marlene was getting frustrated over the triplets in one dance and proudly exclaimed afterwards, "I had it by the end!" (observation session).

However, the opportunity to progress was assisted by the physically accessible nature of the dance practice (which as explored earlier, also constituted a key site for derision), most obviously illustrated through its repetitive nature:

Their whole life is about repeating. Everything's repeated. You drive the same way, you dance the same way, so it's a repetition thing but they can progress. If they want to go on to harder dances, then that way they can (Kate).

I like it because I think once you've got, once you've picked up some of the basic steps, it all seems to be combinations, which is maybe what dancing is all about, I mean I've never, ever danced before (Jane).

Progression was linked to the possibility of 'promotion' within the dance and social hierarchy of the line dancing class. Where participants were physically placed (or took their place) in the rows was dependent on, and denoted, their experience.

Experienced people went at the back and less experienced people in the middle and front. People walked to 'their' place quite naturally. Kate explained that this was all part of line dancing etiquette – because different 'walls' are danced to in line dancing, you always need someone who knows what they are doing in front of you. I was told where to go (observation session).

Attendees were very much aware that different levels of performance were in existence, and dancing alongside the more experienced participants, gave beginners and less proficient performers knowledge and skill to aspire to: 'The way that Kate does it. That's happening at the top level... the same as jazz and tap and ballet and all that' (Marlene). The dance performances given by Kate and the advanced ladies were admired, which increased their social status within the class.

During the break, Kate and one of the advanced ladies went through a dance, just the two of them, to the music from 'Skyfall'. It was very, very lyrical, with large, sweeping movements, and was performed in unison. People sitting at the sides were watching. Pat told me that "it's nice, just watching the dancing. The advanced stuff is much softer. Not like what we do. Very quick, staccato" (observation session).

This incident revealed both an existing sense of ‘dramaturgical discipline’ and one that inspired continuing ‘dramaturgical loyalty’. Through orchestrating the opportunity to witness a dance performance to aspire to, Kate was communicating the reward that is possible through continued commitment and attendance. During another session that welcomed several first-time attenders, Kate asked two of the advanced ladies to go at either end of the ‘line’. These ladies then adopted a role that was more closely aligned with that of instructor:

At one point Sheryl turned to face the wrong ‘front’ and ended up face to face with Debbie who calmly pointed with both index fingers forward. Sheryl quickly and sheepishly turned to face the correct way (observation session).

During another dance,

Kate asked the majority of us to perform ‘Vertical Expression’ at the front of the class while she, Debbie and Eloise performed ‘Bang Bang’ at the back of the floor. The same music was used, yet ‘Vertical Expression’ was danced at a faster speed. We were clumped together and the spacing was uncomfortable – there was a large gap right at the front and one of the advanced ladies dancing with us, put her hands on my waist and manoeuvred me into that gap (observation session).

The dance hierarchy was linked to and reflected an existing social hierarchy, revealed most obviously by the close friendship that existed between Kate and a core group of regular and long-term participants, facilitating cohesive support of a dance reality:

Kate told me that she has been friends with many of the long-term attendees for many years and that they all live in the same part of town. Several of the advanced ladies have been attending classes for over a decade (observation session).

The ones that have been with me the longest, right, a lot of people have said we look like a team. We all turn our heads at the same time. “You all turn your shoulders at the same time.” “You all step on your foot at the same time.” But that’s only because they’ve been trained by me (Kate).

It is interesting to note the use of the term 'trained' rather than 'taught' in the quote above, again, the link between technique and line dancing is emphasised. However, there was also evidence of other strong friendships within the class. Many people attended on their own but, as evidenced by Gavin and Myers (2003), it is common for family members and friends to experience the activity together. A key appeal of line dancing was the lack of need for a partner (Gavin and Myers, 2003; Nadasen, 2008): 'I don't want to be that close to someone!' (Jane). Line dancing provides a space for non-romantic friendships to dominate and flourish. 'Nine times out of ten, they know someone before they come' (Kate). Although, as noted above, Betty was rather unenthusiastic about this particular dance activity, she went because her daughter, Jane, asked her to:

It's a good occasion for us to be together, you know. We came [to the venue] for the New Year and she liked that as well so she says 'I'm going to try and learn' so I says 'I'll come with you' and *I'm afraid* that's why I came here (emphasis added).

Friends continued to 'perform' to one another outside the front stage space: 'We show everybody the dances. And when the songs come on, "Right, see, this is what we do." We're going to a party on Saturday night and if the music comes on, we'll be up there dancing' (Pat). In addition, performers who were proving their commitment through continued attendance were gradually assimilated and rewarded by increased sociability from core team members. As Kate succinctly explained, 'nine times out of ten... if you're here for six weeks you're in'. Awareness of increased integration was illustrated by the following conversation between Marlene and Pat:

Marlene: We've only been coming, for what, about 8 weeks?

Pat: Yeah. Since the second week of the New Year. So, February, March and we're now in April. And you find you chat now, you get to know more people and/

Marlene: And Kate's more with us chatting.  
Pat: She knows more about us now than...!

Marlene: I think we're gelling a wee bit. As I say we don't know the new ones, but we know Jane and her mum and Eloise, they come up to us, and that other lady, so I think we're kind of gelling a wee bit.

#### **4.4. Summary**

To summarise, the central finding of the line dancing case study revolved around the significance of the dance practice in the construction of a reality that contrasts with the dominant view that line dancing is an easy and low status activity. Key factors in support of this reality included the accessible yet challenging nature of line dance practice itself, which allowed for a sense of achievement and progression to be enjoyed, the existence of an intertwined dance and social hierarchy within which participants may aspire to a higher status position, and the place of friendship in inspiring a sense of dramaturgical loyalty and discipline. As director of the ongoing scenario, Kate engaged in strategies such as 'tact' to heighten performances that contributed to the sponsored reality and attempted to limit those actions that fractured it.

This analysis suggests that although in line with literature surveyed (Gavin and Myers, 2003; Keogh et al, 2009; Nadasen, 2008), participants may have attended in the first place predominantly for fitness and social reasons; it is the dancing itself that encourages and ensures their long-term attendance. Engaging in the practice inspired pride, thus counteracting the derision originally felt, shaped by outside perceptions: 'I have very quietly said at least to some people "you should really come along because the dancing's great". I just think it's a shame. I wish it was popular' (Jane). This conclusion, mirroring a change from prior expectation for an expected social and fitness experience to a desired technical dance reality through practical experience, contributes another line of consideration, previously hidden, to the literature. Significantly, it was the overt presence of myself as researcher that unwittingly acted as catalyst; I became the audience observing the

(sometimes contradictory) acts of impression management that were presented front stage and back stage.

## **5. The Sponsored 'Reality' within the Salsa Club**

It was a novelty being expertly whirled around. I felt the rhythm. I could move my hips in time, but following a crash course from my partner in some basic salsa moves (mambo, cross body lead), I was failing to follow his cues. I stepped on his foot, my hair hit his face. I kept looking at his feet. I was comfortable turning but was told that I was doing that too fast and then I stabbed another dancer with the high heel of my shoe. My partner laughed, "It happens all the time", and steered me towards an emptier spot (observation session).

### **5.1. Introduction**

Latin American culture has permeated every arena of popular and recreational culture in Western society, through festivals, restaurants, music and dancing (Pietrobruno, 2006). Urquía (2005) has described 'salsa' as a 'marketing term for a group of related forms of music and dance that draw on rhythms from the Spanish speaking Caribbean' (p.385). García (2013) highlights Willie Colón's description of salsa as less of a particular music or dance genre and more of a concept: a 'social, musical, cultural, hybrid force that has embraced jazz, folklore, pop and everything else that is relevant or could stand in its evolutionary path' (Colón, 1999, pp.6-7 cited in García, 2013 p.128). Salsa can also be described as a global dance form: 'a transnational practice, enjoyed by diverse classes, races and ethnicities, [which] cannot be easily linked to a particular group' (Pietrobruno, 2002, n.p.).

Urquía (2005) has charted the progression of salsa dancing in the UK, demonstrating how it progressed from infrequent salsa dance events in jazz clubs in the 1970s, to private gatherings hosted by, and within, Latin and Central American communities in the 1980s, to the emergence of Lambada (a commercialised dance originating from Brazil) in the 1990s

and the appearance of organised salsa classes and clubs in Spanish and Latin American bars and restaurants. The subsequent rise in popularity saw nightclub settings programme salsa club nights and the appropriation and standardisation of salsa dancing by the awarding body, United Kingdom Alliance (UKA). This final stage marked 'a moment when Salsa became embraced by the "mainstream" and marked a further de-ethnicisation of Salsa and integration into local sensibilities and tastes' (Urquía, 2005, p.391).

The most relevant body of literature to the salsa club case study also adopts the case study model. This tradition has had a significant impact on a strand of ethnographic salsa dance research linking the activity to a particular location: studies carried out in the last ten years have considered salsa dance in Belfast, Hamburg and Sacramento (Skinner, 2007), Belfast alone (Skinner, 2008), Los Angeles (García, 2008; 2013), Montreal (Pietrobruno, 2002), London (Urquía, 2005) and the US state of Illinois (Bosse, 2008). As previously stated, all of the case studies in this project are located within the city of Glasgow, and in common with the works cited above, the location has significant bearing on the realities uncovered in the salsa club. Covert observations took place on a weekly basis at the salsa club, which operated late at night in a specific space within a nightclub. Semi-standardised interviews were carried out with regular attendees, Maggie and Janet.

The reality desired by the attending dancers was an 'authentic' and embodied salsa experience; this was a reality that was both supported and challenged by the dance and social performances given, and shaped by the close-knit community of the club. In the eyes of the salsa dancers, the notion of 'authentic' related to the giving of a certain technical performance, abiding by heteronormative etiquette and engaging with a sense of exotica and glamour: themes attributed to the global salsa experience. The motivation for supporting a particular salsa reality is found within the dance genre's designation as a 'global' and 'glocal' practice. Salsa dancing is 'a global phenomenon' (Skinner, 2007, p.488): its geographical spread is world-wide. Yet, where 'global processes intersect at the local level' (Skinner,

2007, p.496), 'glocalisation' occurs (Holton, 1998, p.16 cited in Skinner, 2007, p.496): salsa dance practice in Glasgow is shaped by cultural, economic and social systems pertinent to the location. According to a number of studies, non-Latinas/os engage in salsa as a means to communicate consciously or unconsciously a sense of worldliness, thus attracting cultural and social status (García, 2008; Skinner, 2007; Urquía, 2005). The globalisation of salsa dancing not only explains how the dancers in the club were able to access the activity in Glasgow, outside its sites of origin, but explains its appeal as a dance form that is non-Western, and therefore of the 'other': exotic and glamorous. Bosse (2008) discusses the need felt by Western salsa dancers to access a Latin soul, and as Janet (one of the dancers) explained:

Salsa speaks to my non-Western soul. Like it's my outlet. Because I'm not like, I'm not white. I am, obviously, but sometimes I feel like I really am Latina, all of these non-Western cultures are just so attractive...I love colours. I love all of that popping hotness, so I feel like for me it is a little bit exotic and non-white. That's sort of my secret side or something.

It is worth noting that the social and dance performances given in the salsa club were similar to those observed in the line dancing class in that they were consciously made in response to pre-existing dominant images associated with the activity. However, within the salsa club, there was a desire to present and maintain dominant perceptions as the reality, in contrast to the line dancing class where the dominant perception or reality was constantly challenged in the hope of replacing it with another.

Stepping into the salsa club space, I was immediately assailed by a riot of colour, movement and noise. Couples were so close together that at first glance, the dance floor was a seeming uniformed mass of limbs. A second look revealed that each couple were dancing in their own particular fashion; there were variations of style, standard and speed. Dresses and skirts were short and colourful and the female dancers with long hair had let it down and it whipped out behind them. People ringed the dance floor, either sitting and watching in groups, or standing on the very edges, moving with the beat (observation session).

People attending the salsa club, in the words of dancer, Maggie, adopt one of three roles: 'They're either there just for a drink, which is sometimes the case, just to watch, or they'll be a dancer'. This discussion is primarily concerned with the latter role as it is this group of performers who had the biggest responsibility in constructing and supporting the desired reality, while the drinkers and watchers may be considered to play the more passive role of observers (Goffman, 1959/1990). Nonetheless, all individuals within the front stage space shared the responsibility to a certain extent, as the attraction of salsa dancing was a uniting factor:

It would be tricky to accidentally enter the space and suddenly discover that salsa is there. You enter the venue through a narrow entrance – there is a small A4 sign saying 'Salsa dancing every Thursday', then you head down a corridor, it's a little warren like, and follow the sound of salsa music. There is no charge to enter. There are no bouncers or staff on the door (observation session).

Dancers gained membership to the floor by having the necessary salsa technique, adhering to the heteronormative etiquette, and by adopting the correct physical appearance as part of the collective front (Goffman, 1959/1990). Examples of the latter were more obviously communicated by the female dancers and included allowing one's hair to be free, thus (kinaesthetically and visually) promoting the sense of a free spirit; wearing clothing that was colourful, tight and revealing; and bringing appropriate footwear (both male and female dancers were observed changing into dance shoes of the Capezio type). In Goffmanian terms, the salsa dancers on the floor, the front stage space, were striving to present a serious salsa reality to each other and to the 'observers' ringed round.

## **5.2. *Dance 'performances' and 'realities': conflicting salsa styles***

The purpose of the club activity was not to *learn* salsa, but to *dance* salsa; existing technical knowledge and skill was a necessity. However, as highlighted by the literature review,

several competing styles of salsa are in existence, and Cuban, New York, and a hybrid form fusing salsa with ballroom, jazz and hip-hop were all observed operating simultaneously in the setting. The majority of dancers in the club did not originate from Glasgow: some were students studying in Scotland, while others were migrants. We may surmise that the style that dancers performed was the result of the particular salsa journey that they undertook previously, and one that was indicative of class, ethnicity, location, time and money. For example, salsa dancers who learnt how to salsa in Glasgow were more likely to perform the Cuban style as this is the one taught by the majority of schools based in the city. Pietrobruno (2002) illustrates that the globalisation of salsa has led to the existence of a profusion of salsa styles and, arguably, there is no single 'authentic' salsa dance style in existence. However, as she emphasises: 'the exotic appeal of salsa outside of its sites of "origin" is, nonetheless, founded on the truth —or perhaps the illusion— that a genuine dance can be reproduced' (Pietrobruno, 2002, n.p.). Mirroring the conclusions of previous studies (Bosse, 2008; García, 2013; Pietrobruno, 2002; Urquía, 2005), the underlying tensions between the dancers of each style that were observed in the present study were the result of different frames of validation, most obviously illustrated in the projected belief that Cuban salsa is leant additional legitimacy through its link to an original site of salsa, and the regard in which New York salsa is held on account of its focus on technical performance.

Within this Glasgow salsa club, the existence of competing salsa styles served to fragment a cohesive reality: dancers of each salsa style constituted a sub-team and each group believed that their salsa style attracted the greatest prestige and presented it accordingly. Janet was a New York salsa dancer and defines this style as 'better' because

it's harder, because it is on the offbeat and so it's an extra challenge. But there is also a subtlety to it and it's less obvious. Like when you go back to dancing on 1 [the first count], it feels like you're going back to kindergarten, you know, after you've been in uni.

On the other hand, the challenging nature of New York style led Maggie, a Cuban dancer, to describe it as a 'really different dance. It's really difficult. I hate it. I don't like it'. She preferred Cuban because

I think there's more support... in terms of how the guy holds you or how you're moving, but as with LA style, [in New York style] the women's often kind of out here doing like a spinny thing or something fancy, and the guy's back there.

Maggie explained that for salsa dancers, 'usually it's one or the other'. 'People do have a preference' (Janet). However, although both styles were accepted as valid dance performances, when two dancers of opposing styles were not able or willing to work together, the visual whole was fragmented: 'You can't really have LA and Cuban in the same partnership' (Janet):

I watched another couple dance, both good. I had seen them dance with different partners earlier. The dance floor was fairly empty as it was the beginning of a new dance, and they started to move together but a sense of flow was missing. She couldn't work out what he wanted her to do, and just walked round him, or moved really slowly, and then briefly stopped dancing. He looked embarrassed (observation session).

A third style of salsa, the hybrid fusion, attracted derision from both Janet and Maggie because technically, and therefore visually, it 'stands out' from the more accepted styles and was a greater challenge for followers to contribute to a good dance performance. 'My friend Ryan, he sort of performs a performance type of salsa in a social setting, and so it's a little bit too flashy' (Janet). 'He's got his own style, but he yeah, you just want a basic step. Not to be thrown about all over the place' (Maggie). Maggie and Janet's discomfort with Ryan's approach reflects Goffman's comments on maintaining a cohesive reality: '[M]embers of the team must not... present their own show' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.208).

However, the presence and actions of Jasper, an ex-champion ballroom salsa dancer and thus 'a performer [with] a higher status' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.67), garnered a very different response from the female dancers.

Jasper was swinging his leg up around the waist of his female partner, making her take bigger steps than the other ladies and performing snazzy moves, lifting and swinging her around. He crossed his arms and held her arms low as he attempted to jump over them. He held his partner in a classic ballroom hold whenever they were close together, before turning her one, two, three, four times. This couple really stood out. Nobody else was dancing like them (observation session).

His style of dancing was one that merged advanced technique with humour. Maggie told me that 'her heart both leaps and sinks when he asks me to dance with him' (observation session). 'Jasper walked over to a lady seated at one of the tables on the balcony who was partially hidden by her companions, and gestured to her with his hand. She had a drink in her hand and immediately put it down to go down to him' (observation session). So popular and coveted was Jasper as a dance partner that, as Janet informed me, 'he is never without a partner'. In blatant disregard of the accepted etiquette that sees the male leaders ask the female followers to dance, Jasper 'is generally an "askee". Lots of women ask him to dance' (Janet). In Goffmanian terms, Jasper's status is quite different to Ryan's: other dancers reacted to him with 'wonderment and chagrin rather than hostility' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.67), owing to the opportunity to interact with a dancer of markedly higher dance status. Jasper was not threatening, because he constituted a team of one and his presence increased the worth of the salsa reality not only with his artistic and technical brilliance, but also with his humour. He was so secure within his role as an ex-champion ballroom dancer that he was able to laugh at the role himself, while continuing the technical performance.

A common element across all three styles was 'know-how'; the skill and knowledge manifested on the dance floor. This was startlingly obvious when a couple from outside the salsa club who did not belong to this front stage space found their way onto the dance floor:

One couple on the dance floor, “townies” (Janet), seemed quite drunk and they and their dancing really stood out on the dance floor. They were dressed in more loose-fitting clothing. Janet said that they would have wandered into the space by accident, or heard the music and followed it – their dancing was more overtly sexual – she was rubbing her bum and breasts and walking away and towards him, and he was egging her on. The salsa dancers seemed to ‘up’ their technical performances in response to their presence (observation session).

Through drawing upon dominant connotations of salsa — exotica and sexiness — the intruders thought that their dance performance was valid, but created an ‘incident’ (Goffman, 1959/1990) through their lack of understanding of the technical skill of the dancers around them, leading to a perceived lack of respect.

### **5.3. Social ‘performances’ and ‘realities’: significance of regular partners**

With such a small and tight-knit community engaging in an activity that is physically intimate and which relies on dance performances of a certain style and standard to be given, sociability played a crucial part in maintaining friendly relations:

It’s its own little circle and it has its own kind of agenda and politics within it as well. In Glasgow it is a community, and I think you have to be willing to get involved in terms of the social side. I mean you don’t have to be best friends with everybody because some people are, but it’s not really what it’s there for, but you do have to be interacting I think, and that also helps in terms of the dancing, like then people will want to dance with you and see you as part of the whole thing (Maggie).

The salsa club was populated with regular dancers who generally only engaged with one another in this setting, and the reality of serious salsa was both supported and undermined by its existing close-knit nature. One key consequence of the desired dance reality and existing social reality clashing was expressed through the frustration experienced in only being able to attain a limited technical progression and experience:

I wouldn't say I do it to improve my dancing. I do it to kind of keep it up, because if you don't keep going it atrophies sort of. I don't think it's going to get you to an improved level. It's just kind of like more maintenance I think. Like, I might be quite good on the dance floor here, but I go home to New York and I suck... because you're just surrounded by all these people who can dance so amazingly and you're just like "wow, I want to dance like that". And that's kind of how I felt after the salsa congress also, like after Edinburgh. I was just completely like, not disillusioned but I was totally uninspired to go back after that (Janet).

Social relations were complicated further by the fact that as 'leaders', the male dancers were adopting the role of the 'authority figure' within each partnership. As Janet explained, 'the leader is the one who is like running the whole show'; the intertwined dance and social performances and, with certain partners, the dancing was known to be paramount:

So people that I know really, really well and I'm really comfortable with, we know each other and we know there's nothing inappropriate intended, then it's totally fine and safe and the physical closeness is a nice thing (Janet).

Dancing with the same performers regularly, gave individuals the chance to learn their individual movement style, which improved the technical performance given together:

If you're dancing with them for a while, then you get to know their way of moving or you get to learn the subtleties of their dances which is really nice. And they get to learn how you dance as well, so that it becomes a partnership, like a relationship, not with everyone, but with people that you build up over time... if they put their hand in a certain place, it means they want you to do something, so over time you would then realise that really quickly and then that would be specific to that one person and you react to it (Maggie).

With certain partners, 'chemistry' was shared, and if they were not present at one of the nights, it was defined as an 'off-day' (Janet). Dancers also sought out particular partners for specific dances: 'When Bachata music began to play, Janet looked out for Matt – "He's good at this one"' (observation session). Similarly, certain partners were avoided and, due to the

heteronormative nature of salsa dancing, it was usually male partners who were avoided, as a result of previous 'sleazy' performances and personality, unsafe practices, or more broadly, a boring experience. Female followers engaged in 'collusion' to communicate with one another when a certain partner necessitated avoidance.

As we walked up onto the platform, a guy in a striped shirt walked past us and gave Janet the thumbs up, mouthing the words, "we'll have to dance". Janet quickly smiled at him, turned and shook her head at me with an aghast expression. "He is so boring to dance with" (observation session).

Janet engaged in 'un-complimentary terms of reference' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.172) and 'shop talk' to point out what she termed as 'well-known grinders', to other female dancers. Additional strategies were employed both to warn other female dancers to try to avoid certain male partners, and to warn off the unwanted male dancers directly.

I mean if he's really pushing you close or something, well my first, the first sign that I'm not enjoying a dance is that I am not making eye contact with a guy. Strictly speaking, you should be having eye contact with your partner, like the entire time, because especially for the girl, you have to be focused on the guy because they are leading the dance, but the first cue that I am not enjoying myself is that I am like turned away and not making any eye contact with my partner (Janet).

'Informal cues or "high signs"' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.178) were adopted to subtly communicate to the male leader a lack of enjoyment with the experience, but without dramatically impacting upon the existing reality. Other, more violent actions on the part of the male leader, garnered a more overt response: 'There have been maybe like one or two occasions, when I've actually had to say "look, this is really painful". They're either being inappropriate or hurting me' (Maggie). Janet told me, 'I had a friend who said that "yeah, if you say 'no' enough times, to a guy you have to say 'no' to, they'll stop asking you eventually"'.

The sub-reality that was being fractured here was, in part, one characterised by the heteronormative roles and actions adopted and an etiquette that can be viewed as old-fashioned courtesy and romance. Female followers expressed the enjoyment felt in the simple gesture of being 'chosen' and asked to dance in an environment where this action is normative, and therefore 'safe'. As Janet shared,

One of my favourite things is when a guy comes and asks you to dance and then takes your hand and then he leads you to a spot on the floor. I wouldn't hold hands with some guy that I met at a club. No way. That's way too intimate, you know. But in a salsa club, I really like that gesture a lot.

However, the expectation is then created that the 'correct' behaviour (on the part of both male leaders and female followers) will continue on the dance floor. When 'other' behaviour was presented, female dancers reacted by creating a 'scene' (Goffman, 1959/1990). In part, 'scenes' took place because of friction felt on the part of the modern female salsa dancer who would not want to be attributed the label of 'follower' in realities outside of the salsa club, as they realise that 'from an outsider's perspective, an outside point of view, you could look at it and see how traditional it is and how gendered it is' (Janet). 'Correct' etiquette needed to be maintained in the salsa club for these existing tensions to be minimised.

Although these actions, on the part of Janet and Maggie, went against the largely unspoken normative etiquette adhered to in the club, and hence against the desired 'authentic' reality, arguably, the need to preserve the dance experience was paramount, because the visual and kinaesthetic element of the experience gave the greatest contribution to the sponsored reality.

#### **5.4. Summary**

This case study gives a flavour of salsa dance practice in a location not previously considered, the city of Glasgow, and in comparison with the ethnographic case studies previously cited (i.e. García, 2013; Pietrobruno, 2002) the framing of data within Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, draws upon micro sociological tradition to reveal the social workings of the salsa club and in particular, the intersection of dance performance (salsa style and standard) with social etiquette. I suggest that the experience being predominantly sponsored by the dancers sees the salsa reality as one characterised by a sense of 'authenticity': the sense of exotica and glamour attributed to the global salsa experience outside its sites of origin, rooted in a technical dance performance and heteronormative etiquette, giving attendees the chance to adopt [an]'other' identity. The use of different spaces within the salsa club assisted the sponsored reality: the activity was hidden in the sense that it was not well-advertised within, or immediately outside, the building and the majority of salsa dancers that I spoke to stressed that they did not socialise with other attendees in an 'outside' reality and therefore the salsa reality was easier to maintain.

The key dance and social challenges to the sponsored reality included the promotion and practice of conflicting salsa styles leading to the existence of sub-teams, varying standards of dance, departures from the agreed etiquette on the part of both male and female dancers (for example, abusing the role of leader, or refusing dances), limited chances for technical progression, and the constant need to appear sociable. Existing social and visual tensions were revealed within the collective team, necessitating the adoption of various strategies including the transmission of informal cues and a willingness to reach and display a certain a technical standard.

## 6. Two 'Teams' within the Highland Dancing Class

Rose, Kitty and myself stood facing the *barre*, preparing to perform ten extended high cuts (they look like box splits in the air) in a row. The recorded bagpipe music began and we took off. I could feel the younger girls sitting at the front watching us and was determined to do all ten. The three of us pretty much collapsed afterwards but were smiling even as we rubbed our hip flexors, thighs and rotated our ankles (observation session).

### 6.1. Introduction

Highland Games, a key performance arena for competitive Highland dancers, are widely recognised as both tourism and sporting events (Higham, 2003; Weed and Bull, 2004), and are closely entwined with a particular brand of 'Scottishness' – that of the old country, kith and kin, both in Scotland and throughout the world. This imagery is linked to the rapid growth in global interest in Highland dancing over the last fifty years, a dance form practised by over fifty thousand people world-wide (Scott, 2005).

Despite this growing interest, there is an absence of scholarly work looking specifically at Highland dance practice, and a dearth of ethnographic inquiry in particular. As Scott (2005) declared ten years ago, 'there are barely enough coherent ethnographic threads to weave a garment of identity, let alone a colourful and vibrant tartan that would better represent the nature of the culture' (p.22). The majority of literature that includes or impacts upon Highland dance practice is set within the Highland Games arena, with the majority of studies located within countries populated with substantial Scottish diaspora, and focusing on issues of authenticity, economics, heritage, imagery and tartan symbolism (Chhabra, 2001; Chhabra et al, 2003a; Chhabra et al, 2003b; Crane et al, 2004; Ray, 2001). A smaller body of literature considers the Highland Games in their 'home country' (Brewster et al, 2009; Jarvie, 1991; 2000). Additional related literature includes Shoupe's (2001) exploration of Scottish

ceilidh dances in the formation of 'communities' and Newton's (2012) account of the origins of Highland dancing that investigates its place as an 'authentic' dance form. Moving across to the field of dance science, a number of studies investigate injury within Highland dancing practice, which serves to illustrate its highly physical nature (Johnstone et al, 1995; Potter and Jones, 1996; Watson et al, 2013; Young and Loma, 2002). It is interesting to note that the physical effects of Highland dancing have attracted greater interest in the academy than the cultural and social context within which it is situated. Only one scholarly source that specifically sets Highland dancing within the latter field, Scott's (2005) ethnographic PhD thesis interrogating the development and trajectory of the solo competitive practice, has been unearthed in the extensive literature review conducted for the present study. In some ways, the current case study can be viewed as building upon Scott's (2005) work. The themes of regulation, standardisation and lack of innovation, bound up in notions of 'Scottishness' and tradition, and having an impact on the evolution and preservation of the dance form, are both introduced in Scott's (2005) work and considered in the present project. Scott (2005) argues that

any change within the sphere of Highland dancing must arise from a focus on and promotion of national strengths, as dancers pride themselves in the tradition as it stands today. The proud utilisation of Highland dancing is vital to encouraging its growth, since culture is not just something expressed to the outside world through caricature or parody in literature or art, but is something that is evident in daily life (p.411).

However, while Scott (2005) raises the concern that regulation is negatively impacting upon the artistic development of the dance form, this case study focuses squarely on the social impact of such regulation. A consistent theme in the following discussion is the idea that Highland dancing is 'different' and needs to be so. Its multifaceted nature, shaped by the confusing and convoluted history of Highland dancing, has resulted in an ongoing quest for legitimacy and validity within the 'field' of dance, primarily through stressing the technique and physicality of the dance form.

This discussion focuses on the impact that this external reality had on creating two opposing teams with the Highland dancing case study: the teacher and older female participants, who supported, fostered and protected the regulated nature of the practice, and the younger girls in the class, who rebelled against it. For the teacher and older dancers, the 'difference' of Highland dancing practice, its inherent regulated physicality, was perceived as 'sameness' by the younger members of the class, largely through the resulting emphasis on repetition of the same steps and dances. This analysis draws on the 'voices' of the teacher, Anne, two older participants, Rose and Kitty and a younger participant, Lydia, through the interviews conducted for the research. The class was small, (the maximum number of participants at any one class was seven) and ages ranged from 6 to 30. In common with three of the other case studies (the inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class and salsa club), this class took place (and was observed) on a weekly basis but, in contrast with those cases, it was based within a private dance school. Mirroring the line dancing class, the Highland dancing class also began with the learning and teaching of the easier dances (or rather, versions of the 'Highland' and 'National' dances), and then the younger girls left, before more advanced dances and versions were practised. Within the realm of solo competitive Highland dancing, the repertoire is comprised of five key dances: the Highland Fling, the Reel (of Tulloch), Seann Triubhas, Strathspey and Sword Dance (Scott, 2005); alongside these are the National Dances which include: Flora MacDonald, the Irish Jig, the Sailor's Hornpipe, Blue Bonnet, Highland Laddie, Barracks Johnnie and the Lilt, (these are dances that were brought into the repertoire of boards and associations in the 1970s). The turn-taking format adopted to learn and practise these dances played an important part in facilitating friendship and respect within the class, through allowing participants to sit, watch and talk quietly together.

At the heart of this discussion is the theme of validity. The support of the teacher and older participants for the standardised reality was linked to their belief that the dance form derives its legitimacy from the prescribed 'historic' set dances and steps. By 'standardised' I mean, that not only is there a limited repertoire to perform, that is not officially developed and added to, but that there is an ideal way to perform it, routed in technical ability rather than artistry, creativity and interpretation. This situation is facilitated and fostered by boards and associations (most notably, the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (SOBHD) and reflects an effort to present a single authentic 'Highland' (folk) dance form 'eroded' throughout the centuries. Hence, the regional variations that once existed within Highland dancing are no longer taught or performed in the mainstream (i.e. exam and competition) arena. Steps and dances need to be correctly learnt to existing syllabi and rule books, and to ensure that the necessary material is learnt to the required standard for examinations and championships, methods of training and instruction tend to be rigid and repetitive.

## **6.2. *Format and feedback***

As noted above, syllabus teaching denotes both the content that must be taught and the requirement to perform that content in a specific way. However, where Highland dancing differs to the syllabi of other dance forms is in its restriction to the same small set of Highland and National dances. This contrasts with the action of facilitating, and promoting, constantly evolving exercises and dances attached to other practices including ballet (as carried out periodically by the Royal Academy of Dancing (RAD) and International Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD)) and the existence of a syllabus section dedicated to the choreography and performance of your own set dance (as included by An Coimisiún in the examination and judging of Irish step dance). The class participants constantly aimed for the 'correct' Highland performance and, as the class teacher, Anne, explained: 'It is really athletic. Particularly for competitive dancers, I think it is really athletic. They have got so much stamina, it's outstanding for some of these dancers, it really is'. The focus on 'getting things

right' (steps and stamina) as directed by Anne and necessitated by higher authorities (such as the SOBHD), coupled with the creative limitations of the dance performance, resulted in rebellious behaviour being continually exhibited by the younger girls in the class.

Lydia seemed bored again, messed about with Hannah [another of the younger participants] during the 'Highland Fling'. "I've spoken to you both before. Please stop talking" (Anne). Lydia left the floor during the dancing of the 'Fling' and Anne called her back: "Please don't leave the floor" (observation session).

Lydia said several times how many hours she had danced for today – and that she will be dancing for four hours tomorrow. She said several times that her legs hurt a lot and that she was tired (observation session).

Each week, the younger participants initiated a constant stream of incidents and 'scenes' (Goffman, 1959/1990) that fragmented the class in two. As the key figure of authority, Anne was responsible for promoting a reality that valued discipline and hard work in pursuit of the desired standards, and the strategies selected to do this segregated the younger participants from the older ones, through the giving of critical feedback and the withholding of certain sympathies and privileges regarding pain, injury and the difficult technique. The majority of feedback delivered to the younger girls was directed specifically towards Lydia, the most rebellious participant in the class:

"Second position needs to be right out to the side here. I should not be seeing it in front".

"You're rushing it Lydia. That's why you are not doing it properly. I want you to do it properly".

"Your right foot was horrendous Lydia".

"I don't want to see it *here*, I want to see it *there*".

"Lydia, don't stick your bottom out". "Lydia, keep your back up". "Lydia, you dancing ahead is not helping you or anyone else. Dance in time please" (observation session).

In contrast, Anne's feedback to the older participants was gentler and more respectful: 'You are not shuffling out during the 'Lilt', you could only hear the shuffle in, but *I think you know*

*that yourself* (observation session, emphasis added).

For the younger girls, the appeal of Highland dancing lay in the potential of its performance and creative aspect: 'You know how they have the Highland Games? And they have the Highland dancers on stage? I want to do that' (Lydia). Ironically, however, it is the set dances that are performed and more importantly, judged, at these events. Lydia also wanted 'more modern stuff. Not just the same dances every single week. I like the show stuff more than the set dances'. Hannah, another of the younger girls, compared Highland to jazz: 'Highland is a lot harder'. 'More serious'. 'When you get it right it feels good, but when you get it wrong, you feel like you can't dance' (observation session).

The actions and frustrations of the younger girls constantly challenged Anne's authority and the reality that she, and their more senior peers, sponsored. Therefore, isolated attempts made by the younger participants to ingratiate themselves with this latter team through latching on to a likely shared reality constituted by pain, failed. Lydia was complaining about how much her legs hurt. Anne responded by saying 'dancers don't moan Lydia – they dance through the pain' (observation session). During the same class, 'Kitty spoke to Anne at the beginning and said that she had pulled an inner thigh muscle at work. Anne told her to "take it easy"' (observation session).

In Chapter Three above, I noted one especially memorable class, in which Anne had evidently had enough and created a 'scene' herself more forceful than any created by her young learners:

During the 'Highland Fling' when everyone was up, Anne suddenly stopped the music. "This just isn't good enough". "Am I going to have to go ballistic like I did just before the exams?" "I can't teach you new dances until you've learnt the ones that you're doing. If you practised at home, it would be different but you only do this on a Saturday". Her voice was raised; she was furious. "*That was absolutely appalling*". "Horrendous". "You've been doing this for long enough

now to know what you should be doing". Everybody remained silent (observation session).

The 'scene' being played out saw Anne abandon 'the game of polite interaction' and resort to harsh 'facts or expressive acts' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.205). Although this explosion appeared to be directed at everybody present, the respectful relationship that existed between Anne and the older participants (to which I return to) suggests that they knew that her outburst was not really directed towards *them*. However, her action had the result of seeing the two teams of participants bonding together as negative feedback was delivered to both. As the class bonded over the shared experience, a change in the younger girls' attitude was perceptible:

After the outburst, Lydia asked a dance-related question, asking if the *pas de bas* should be performed to the front or to the corner, during the 'Lilt'. She put more into her dancing after the outburst although by the end of the class she seemed to be dancing more half-heartedly again. However, she did not mention feeling tired or sore in this class. Hannah kept moving back and Anne had to keep asking her to move forwards to avoid being cramped (observation session).

Once the desired result had been obtained, Anne capitalised on the new situation through changing the focus and

told the class how excited she was to be going to see Ronan Keating in concert. She talked about how she is a big fan and has got front row seats. The atmosphere immediately lightened and the participants responded quickly by asking questions about the venue and saying how exciting it sounded (observation session).

Anne engaged in soothing and sanctioning (Goffman, 1959/1990) to mitigate the situation that had arisen and all class participants responded eagerly, thus helping the situation and quickening the pace of resolution.

Rebellious actions increased one week when Anne was absent and one of the senior members of the class, Rose, took the session. The younger girls behaved poorly:

Lydia was messing around, falling down, doing massive *pliés*, only doing each dance once with any evident effort and encouraged Hannah to misbehave as well. They both kept taking their shoes on and off. Rose responded by either telling them to get up and join in, or ignoring her. Kitty (another of the older participants) backed her up continuously: "You wouldn't be behaving like this if [Anne] was here" (observation session).

A number of observations can be discerned from the above excerpt to explain why Rose had such a challenging time managing a disciplined environment. Firstly, as highlighted by Goffman (1959/1990) a particular disciplinary front exists for the role of teacher and the need to perform in this role was understood by both Rose and the other participants. Therefore Rose had the potential to either rally and 'save face' or fail to maintain control. In other words, Rose had no choice but to attempt to embody the same authority and to carry out the same strategies that would usually be adopted by Anne. Yet because her more usual role was one of fellow dance participant, she was viewed by the younger girls as an 'imposter' (Goffman, 1959/1990). Although Rose was not authorised to give the particular performance of teacher (lacking the necessary skill and experience), not all the participants in the Highland dancing class required her to be. Kitty fulfilled the role of 'side kick' (Goffman, 1959/1990) in supporting Rose in her new found-role as the authority figure. The two of them were close friends and of a similar age. Rose, 'would always have someone to be aligned with over against the others present' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.186).

Following the class after this one, Anne and Rose caught up and 'agreed' on the progress of Kirsty, the youngest member of the class:

Rose: 'Kirsty didn't want to let go of my hands last week'.

Anne: 'I was just determined today. It's holding her back. She doesn't like the turn [in the Fling]'.

Rose: 'She gave me the face last week as well' (observation session).

The above scenario illustrates the measure of understanding that existed between Anne and Rose and, in contrast to the responses of the younger girls, the older participants in the class, Rose, Kitty and Nicola actively supported and welcomed Anne's disciplinary approach, understanding its necessity:

She's a really, really good teacher. She's not afraid to shout at me, even though she's known me for so long... there are times when Anne gets frustrated but she needs to sometimes because we're not working hard enough... The little ones are lazy sometimes I think. They forget that Anne's put a lot of work into this. When she tells me or Rose to do something, we'll do it. We'll get it sorted but a lot of the wee ones just, they don't listen to her. It bothers me a wee bit because I can tell that she gets frustrated but me and Rose try our best (Kitty).

Longstanding 'dramaturgical loyalty' between the team comprised of Anne and the older participants was evidence of how 'team-mates and their colleagues [can] form a complete social community which offers each performer a place and a source of moral support regardless of whether or not he [sic] is successful in maintaining his front before the audience' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.209). Anne faced a weekly struggle to motivate and inspire the younger girls to want to obtain the 'ideal' Highland dancing performance, and the older participants continuously supported her both front and back stage. They also emphasised their belief in, and enthusiasm for, the technical nature of Highland dancing:

I like the challenge of it, I never liked doing something if I could just manage it and Highland dancing is like, you're constantly trying to improve. And at the same time it's just, it's a lot of pain and hard work and apart from when you have done an exam and you've get your marks or you've done a competition – there's not the same sense of satisfaction that you can get in other dancing things. Because Highland has got to be so exact. It's like your knee's got to be flat and your leg's got to be straight out to the side, it can't be a bit forward, you've got to have the steps just right plus you've got to be trying to get up your elevation and, wow, the satisfaction when you're able to think, "yes, I managed to do eight extended high cuts in a row without holding onto the *barre*" (Rose).

However, although the existence of the two teams is the key finding in this analysis, it is also important to point out the admiration and respect that was directed from the younger participants to their older peers. There was very much a sense of a close-knit class community expressed through overlapping friendship groups, the roles adopted by the older participants in supporting the younger ones, and the praise that was constantly given between participants (if not between teacher and the younger participants). The Highland dancing class was distinctive within the school on account of the turn-taking format, the small number of participants in the class, and the fact that there was only one Highland dancing class in the school amid numerous classes attached to other dance practices. 'When we do the shows and things, we're always the Highland class that sits together' (Kitty). Despite the boredom that they often expressed during the learning and performing of dances, the younger girls evidently derived a sense of pride in the difficulty, and thus 'differentness', of Highland dancing when comparing it to other types of dance in the school. Friendships within the class were particularly important owing to the lack of friends and family with whom participants could discuss Highland dancing outside that environment. As Kitty explained:

Me and Rose talk about it all the time, we love it, but it would be nice to have friends at school... they don't seem to understand why I do it, why I love it so much. I don't get to talk to people a lot but see when me and Rose get up and do our thing and then we have a chat about it all. I just love that.

### **6.3. *Sympathy over stagnation***

Despite her disciplinary approach in the front stage space of the studio, Anne expressed back stage her sympathy with the younger girls' frustration, recognising the potential impact of the regulated nature of Highland dancing:

I do think that children get bored, there's no doubt and I think that we probably could do with some new steps, new dances from time to time. We have our

Highland dances which are 'Fling', 'Sword', 'Seann Triubhs', 'Reel' which have been going forever and then as I say the national dances, we haven't had any new dances for all these years... There has not been a lot of changes in Highland at all... I would say we're probably really stuck. When I think about that actually, that's quite dreadful. I think we are really stuck (Anne).

Anne expanded upon the reasons for the 'stuck' nature of Highland dancing, citing a concern with protecting 'the history if you like of Highland dancing and what's gone on before', in reaction to a belief expressed that the practice is misunderstood, tainted by kitsch notions of 'Scottishness' ('Sometimes I think we're almost ridiculed you know, the Scot, with the kilt') and not considered to be as difficult as other dance forms, ballet and Irish in particular. The latter concern was an obvious site of contention within the class: 'Lydia was doing jazz dance style poses and kept lifting her leg above her head. Anne asked her to stop. "I won't have you doing other types of dance here. This is Highland dancing"' (observation session).

However, in class, Anne did not manifest her concerns about the evolution and appeal of Highland dancing, 'destructive information' (Goffman, 1959/1990) which, if shared, could have shattered the whole-hearted belief in the rigidity and physicality of the practice being impressed upon the class. She demonstrated backstage her recognition that the regulated nature of Highland dancing was resulting in negative social repercussions, yet actually contributed to this situation through being a part of it. Although I did not observe the team comprised of Anne, Rose and Kitty expressing concern together that Highland dancing was 'stuck' (either front or back stage), the same concerns over standardisation were also expressed by the older participants, back stage even while they also continued to support it front stage:

Dances are always set by the SOBHD. You do what you're told. It's always set in Highland. You've got your alternative steps when you get higher up and you do funny wee tricks in the middle but that's about it to be honest. I think nowadays, if it was going to become popular again, I mean it has definitely gone downhill, not many people do it, I mean it's more popular in places like Canada. I think if it was to become more popular then maybe they'd have to have a modern twist on it... I think it would have to change ... But, oh well, I like it as it is (Kitty).

Anne recognised the creative possibilities of using Highland steps in innovative ways and presented original choreography at each of the annual shows held by the school:

I know teachers who do just put children on to do a 'Fling' or a 'Swords' or a 'Seann Triubhas' but I've always just thought that when it came to the displays, it's boring, you've got to do something different. You know, a couple of years ago, when we did the show we did a fabulous number, 'Pirates of the Caribbean', but we did the hornpipe steps and that went down so well... [T]he kids all love that and we like to do that when it gets to the shows, particularly Lydia, she's always going on about the show.

Indeed, understanding the popularity of working on 'other' Highland dancing, Anne used the possibility of starting work on the school show as a means of incentivising the younger children to work harder:

Anne: "If I see an improvement in the 'Fling', we will start show work next week".

Lydia (animated): "Hooray!"

Anne: "Are you listening to me?" "*If it's better*".

Lydia (looking darkly at the others): "It better be perfect".

Anne: "Listen to yourself Lydia".

[Fling takes place]

"There was a slight improvement. I want a big improvement".

(Class finally concluded with Anne's decision to "start a little bit of the show work next week") (observation session).

#### **6.4. Summary**

The teacher and older girls in the class supported a reality that accepted the tight regulation of Highland dancing: they appeared to believe that this is what gives the dance form, with its limited public understanding and confusing history, a sense of validity and distinction. They took refuge in the 'traditions' of Highland dancing in the face of perceived comparisons with better known forms of dance and derogatory associations with a trite kind of 'Scottishness'.

Although they admired their older peers and liked the idea of the ‘difference’ of Highland dancing, the younger members of the class were bored with, and resentful of, the highly standardised and physical nature of the practice, which necessitated a disciplinary environment characterised by repetitive dance (the steps and dances) and social (the continual giving of largely negative feedback) performances. Confusion and uncertainty (rather than frustration and boredom) was also apparent within the opposing team back stage: Anne and her older participants understood that the very reality that they supported as a team may also be contributing to the demise in popularity and creative evolution of the dancing they are so proud of.

This case study highlights hidden lines of future inquiry that could be of great significance, including a focus on the relationship between Highland dancing and ‘Scottishness’ within Scotland, and the challenge raised by the regulation of Highland dancing to its evolution as an aesthetic and creative dance practice.

## **7. Managing the Expected ‘Reality’ in the Primary School**

Classes filed into the school hall and after offering a prayer to God (asking for help to “listen”), Mrs Gibbs got up on the stage to lead the Zumba session. The session began with marching on the spot, swinging arms in opposition before a series of sequences took place: we clapped, jumped and lunged. Pupils were interpreting the movement and this was encouraged by teachers closest to them. Some of the pupils were better than the staff at keeping in time. Enthusiasm was mixed until ‘Proud Mary’ came on and then many of the teachers and pupils started chanting and singing the lyrics as we ‘rolled’ our arms and drummed our feet (observation session).

### **7.1. Introduction**

Despite its mandatory status, I know only of one scholarly study which focuses on the teaching of dance in primary schools in Scotland (MacLean, 2007). However, several

scholarly studies have looked at the teaching of dance in both primary and secondary schools in England and Wales (Connell, 2009; Rolfe, 2001; Sanderson, 1996; 2008) and the teaching of music (MacDonald et al, 2006) and arts (Wilson et al, 2008) in primary schools in Scotland. In addition, within Scotland, there is a sizeable literature on the subject of physical education before and after the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (see for example, Carney and Guthrie, 1999; Gray et al, 2012; Jess and Collins, 2003; Thorburn, 2010; Thorburn et al, 2011). Several studies mention dance in this context and, in particular, consider its (dis)placement from one area of the curriculum (Health and Wellbeing) to another (Expressive Arts) (Gray et al, 2012; Thorburn, 2010). The dominant themes arising from the above sources centre on teacher confidence, lack of resources, inadequate teaching training, and low priority for dance as a subject despite a supposed belief in its value.

Irrespective of the challenges noted in the literature surveyed, many of which were reflected in the opinions expressed by teachers in the current study, dance *is* delivered. To date, the research conducted has paid only limited attention to the mechanisms by which this takes place: the strategies adopted by teachers, and crucially, the behaviours and responses of pupils. In addition, the existing literature has sought limited input from school pupils: the voices of teachers echo loudly, but the opinions and views of the children that they teach are not heard. This case study builds on the small body of literature (Lamont, 2002; Lamont et al, 2003; Sanderson, 2008) that does solicit the views of primary pupils in relation to their arts education.

The discussion below examines how teachers and pupils managed the shared and expected reality that dance was taught, shaped by differing and common perceptions between teachers and pupils regarding the nature of dance education in a formal environment. The shared belief that dance is a specialism, and therefore requires specialist knowledge and skill, was the greatest challenge to the delivery and enjoyment (on the part of teachers and

pupils) of dance education; as was observed in the inclusive creative dance class, it was widely thought there was a 'correct' way to 'do' dance. As one class teacher, Mrs Hughes, told me: '[D]ance is one of these things where... a lot of dance is "do what I'm doing" and I'm just not comfortable doing that, you know'. The actions, opinions and views of teachers and pupils from the school are incorporated here to investigate how successful the performances of both teachers and pupils were, in 'saving face' through being situated within a reality where dance must be taught.

Observations took place across a range of dance sessions that were delivered throughout a period of five months and included P1 dance sessions led by Miss Kendall, whole-school Zumba sessions led by Miss Gibbs, P5 street dance sessions led by an external dance specialist, Aisling, and a P4 ceilidh class delivered by Miss Roberts. These teachers were all interviewed, and additional interviews took place with their colleagues, Mrs Finan (the Head teacher), Mr Patmore and Mrs Hughes. Focused interviews took place with Simon, Katie, Raj and Farah from the P1 class; Amita, Josh, Josie, Ali, Moni and Liam (in two groups) from the P3 class; and Youssef, Yosra and Sarah from the P5 class.

## **7.2. Perceptions of dance and 'saving face'**

Within this case study, the dance taught was most regularly characterised by its physicality and this approach, positively and negatively impacted upon the mandated reality that was shared by teachers and pupils. For example, the Zumba activity was viewed by both teachers and pupils as 'not real dance'. Prior to one session, in the staff room, which constituted the key back stage hideout, Miss Gibbs confided in me that 'it's not real dance you know, it's just me getting up and leading it from the front'. This sentiment was replicated by Miss Kendall who said after one of the P1 dance sessions: 'I'm sorry, it's not really dance. I don't really do dance'. Whether or not the teachers truly believed what they were saying is

irrelevant: they wanted to impress upon me their understanding that dance was multifaceted; artistically, culturally and technically. The older pupils expressed similar sentiments. Yosra (P5) described Zumba as 'only an exercising form of dance', before informing me that 'in dance like, you have to do facial expressions, like when you're doing a party', signalling an understanding of the artistic aspect of dance. Amita said of Zumba, 'it's not really; we can't like describe what kind of dancing it is. It's just like a dance. A normal dance'. Josie chimed in, 'it isn't like any unusual dances in it', which it transpired was a reference to codified genres. 'Miss Gibbs isn't just like dance, hers is like exercise and like stretching and that, whereas hip-hop is more like, you have to learn it' (Sarah). Pupils from the P3 and P5 classes subsequently expressed their desire to experience wider dance opportunities: 'Could you teach the school dancing and every day you teach a different class and every week you could teach us something different?' (Moni). The pupils viewed me as a dance teacher, in part due to my leading a discussion on dance, but also from seeing me dance in their classes and perhaps noting the way that I moved.

However, despite shared perceptions, Miss Gibbs delivered Zumba sessions and pupils copied and followed the dance performance, communicating a mixture of enjoyment and a sense of feeling indifferent. However, a third group of performers also had an important role to play, those class teachers who were not leading, but were supporting the reality through their active, if generally detached participation. A lack of interest, coordination and rhythm was evident in the front stage space during the whole-school Zumba sessions that all class teachers attended, and participated in, with their pupils:

The teachers dancing on the floor were lacklustre apart from Miss Kendall who was dancing at the side at the front with her pupils and really going for it. She was mock boxing with some of her pupils. Her colleagues exhibited bored, glazed expressions and wishy washy arms and feet. Miss Roberts was half-heartedly joining in, and at the beginning of the session, the Head teacher and Miss Roberts were having a conversation at the side, about half way up the hall, before then taking part (observation session).

However, crucially, all the pupils and all the teachers in the space were participating in the dancing and, however nominally, performing their designated role whether this primarily involved instigating or reacting to a sense of control.

In contrast to the dominant perceptions attached to the Zumba activity, the street dance taught to the P5s was viewed as 'real dance' because of the progressive approach taken. Choreography was learnt and built upon, rather than just copied as it unfolded: 'The dance was kinda like perfect' (Josie, P5). 'She [Aisling] like, speak quite clearly and, like, teaches you stuff that, until like you get it properly and then you're almost perfect' (Amita, P5). 'If, like, the teacher's got new moves to learn, it was like she tell us to stick working at it and I just like when she teaches us new moves and stuff and that' (Josh, P5). '[O]nce we've added new parts to the dance, Aisling like goes over it with us a couple of times, and then from the beginning' (Sarah, P5). The children enjoyed having the opportunity to build upon a particular work.

These dominant perceptions of dance, focusing on technique and progression, necessitated the need for the teachers to 'save face' in interactional settings. This notion has been explored by MacLean (2007) as a key concern of trainee teachers teaching dance in primary schools. Drawing on Goffman's (1959; 1967) frameworks, MacLean (2007) explains how '[f]ace was seen as a positive social construct that a person chooses for himself or herself in a particular situation in which a strong connection is made between face and feelings' (p.101). In other words, the more that a teacher feels like they are 'saving face'; the happier they will be in teaching. The class teachers aimed to 'save face' by communicating the dance experience, knowledge and skill that they had; this was a primary strategy adopted by Miss Roberts to teach ceildh dancing and by Miss Gibbs to lead the Zumba sessions. However, in the present study, it was not only the teachers who were seen to be 'saving face': the same approach was observed among the pupils.

Pupils aimed to 'save face' with their friends, by expressing their disdain of moves that caused embarrassment through being too easy or difficult to perform; this was noticeable in the street dance sessions in particular, when certain steps or moves were out of place with the 'street' vocabulary that had just been taught: 'The guitar bit (playing air guitar in time to the music) was led again in the cool-down, and two girls looked at each other with cringing faces' (observation session). This reaction stemmed from a feeling of embarrassment: the pupils felt too sophisticated to perform a move that seemed silly rather than fun. However, for the most part, Aisling's choreography tallied with the social performance desired by the P5 class, which clearly was a positive experience:

Aisling is better than the last teacher. I didn't like the last teacher. She was quite scary and dead moody. "You better do this, or else you're gonna sit in the corner". She treated us like Primary One's, "go in the corner" and she treated us like babies basically (Yosra, P5).

Examples of pupils feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed was also in evidence in the P1 class where pupils described dance as 'Rhianna' (Katie), 'jumping' (Farah), 'cartwheels and rolling' (Simon) and 'tricks' (Raj). Dance was imbued with 'specialness' due to the potential of performing particular physical feats and the association of particular moves with elements of popular culture. Hence, some of the children worried about being able to 'do' dance.

After we were put into groups and Frédérique was named as the pupil who had to make up a move and show the rest of us, he confided to me, "I've not learnt dancing". In the circle, one wee girl was in the classic shy pose of shoulders hunched, head down and tuning to one side, hiding in her shoulder (observation session).

It is important to note that although literature has focused on the awkwardness and uncomfortableness felt on the part of the class teacher who needs to teach dance, this

sense of needing to conform to notions of 'what dance is', is often shared by the very pupils they are aiming to 'save face' to.

### **7.3. *Strategies employed by 'lead performers'***

Within this case study, several individuals, Miss Roberts, Miss Gibbs and Miss Kendall, together with the head teacher, Mrs Finan, can be identified as 'lead performers': individuals who either delivered the bulk of dance activities or who encouraged and enabled their delivery. Within the school, the above teachers 'championed' dance education, either through directing its delivery proactively by sourcing outside specialists and schemes to be part of (most notably carried out by Mrs Finan), or by drawing upon a personal interest and knowledge of dance to teach their classes and their colleagues' classes, thereby ensuring that a general lack of willingness to teach across the staff team had a minimal impact on pupils.

Goffman (1959/1990) argues that 'performers often foster the impression that they had ideal motives for acquiring the role in which they are performing' (p.54). I observed a slightly different phenomenon: it was the colleagues of these lead performers who portrayed them as having ideal motives, placing particular emphasis on their ability to communicate personal dance knowledge. Mrs Finan highlighted the teachers who embodied these roles: 'Miss Kendall, Miss Gibbs, Miss Roberts, at the Zumba, I mean they're up there doing the Zumba stuff and the children are all responding'.

In turn, Mr Patmore explained that encouraging dance provision was

down to the head teacher... other head teachers would perhaps have a totally different view and close down certain things. As you know, individual schools are like little villages on their own depending on the head teacher, so we are fortunate that [Mrs Finan] has been open to all sorts of experiences for the children. She has always wanted them to experience a lot, a wide range.

Specific strategies, including knowledge of steps and dances, the giving of both praise and criticism, and the wearing of particular clothing, are examples of how these 'lead performers' presented themselves in a dance-specific role in an aim to control the situation that they were leading. However, as shall be discussed, certain incidents, linked to the dominant physical perceptions of dance explored above, challenged the experience of learning and teaching dance.

Within the whole-school Zumba sessions and P4 ceilidh session, it was evident that Miss Roberts and Miss Gibbs had knowledge and personal experience of performing the steps, and, crucially, appeared to be the most experienced performers in the front stage space (both from a dance perspective, and as naturally befits a teacher, in directing the unfolding social scenario). The importance of previous and existing knowledge and interest for a teacher's confidence to deliver dance has been highlighted (MacLean, 2007; Rolfe, 2001; Rolfe and Chedzoy, 1997; Russell-Bowie, 2010) and the lead performers emphasised the usefulness of this skill:

I know the [ceilidh] dances. Some people wouldn't be comfortable teaching it if they didn't know the steps. I just know it from school, weddings, and sometimes like Christmas nights out and things like that. Doing the ceilidh dancing at New Years' (Miss Roberts).

In the P4 ceilidh session, the 'Gay Gordons', 'Strip the Willow' and 'Dashing White Sergeant' were explained and danced:

Miss Roberts physically demonstrated some of the steps (set to and spin) and took the place of the middle dancer of the three to show the sequence in the 'Dashing White Sergeant'. Due to the lack of music playing, the teacher clapped and called out the beats – 4/4 time (observation session).

Miss Gibbs drew on knowledge gained from currently attending Zumba sessions outside the school to plan and lead the sessions within:

I go through them [the sequences] beforehand. You've got to take into account the steps of the dances that you plan, so that all children are able to follow them. You try to do steps that are going to involve all the children – not too tricky. And all the teachers as well. And the steps need to be good fun and not just boring, but have a little bit of an impact and get the energy going.

The format of the ceilidh class replicated the structure that would be adopted in a more social context; there was no warm-up or cool down, the dancing began straight away. The Zumba sessions also mirrored a session that would be held 'outside' (Goffman, 1959/1990) with its emphasis on warming-up, cooling down and high intensity movement constituting the bulk of the session, all undertaken to popular music. 'Moves included back-side-front clap, lunges to the side and jumping and touching the opposite elbow with your knee. The moves and music had a mambo/salsa twist to them' (observation session).

As with the line dancing class, the Zumba sessions were led from a raised platform, the stage in the main school hall, and each time, Miss Gibbs employed a different pair of 'helpers' from the P6 class who performed either side of her, copying and performing the same Zumba steps. This action reinforced her performance since both audience members (the pupils on the floor below) and temporary key performers, the accompanying pupils, were conveying a sense of legitimacy to the activity through agreeing, and even clamouring to, being allowed to be the ones up there. Through their sometimes nervous or embarrassed facial expressions and body language, they communicated to Miss Gibbs and the watching teachers and pupils, an understanding of the courage necessary to lead this performance, and thereby seemed to have a positive impact upon the level of effort and involvement discernible in the well of the hall. Miss Gibbs also purposefully changed her appearance for the highly visible role she had within the Zumba sessions, wearing clothing associated with

sport: tracksuit bottoms, t-shirts and hoodies. This outfit resembled that worn by the visiting external dance specialist, Aisling.

Unsurprisingly, the most codified movement was taught within the P5 street dance sessions.

One of the sequences featured:

Punch and punch, pull and pull (repeated – the second time, the ‘pulls’ were to the side.) Slide back with arms folded, and then jumps with the punch, ‘1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1.’ (Right arm refers to ‘1’, left arm to ‘2’). The sequence was taught by calling out these numbers. The children then went into second position and moved the knee in and out twice in a stance resembling a *plié* (observation session).

The need to maintain control was a paramount concern across the different dance sessions.

For the external dance specialist, whose role was not imbued with the same formal sense of authority as a class teacher, the use of praise was adopted extensively as a means to get the children ‘on side’ quickly.

A lot of praise was used and given in this class – ‘you’s are really good.’ ‘You all know what you are doing, every single one of you.’ Aisling also instigated applause – during the routines and at the end of the class. At one point, she split the children into two groups and a silent picture game was played. ‘That is really good. *No noise from anyone*’. The groups had to make a ‘7’, and an ‘s’ (‘think about it nice and quietly’) and a love heart. ‘Fantastic guys. We’ve got some quick learners here’ (observation session, emphasis added).

Class teachers highlighted the slightly different view that the children had of the specialists that came in:

It’s not me leading it, it’s somebody else. So they’ll try and get away with things that they might not before. They won’t listen as much to the coach, things like that. Because the relationship between a coach and pupils and teacher and pupils are different. Completely. Coach will come across as a more friendly kinda adult. Whereas a teacher isn’t as much, so (Miss Roberts).

Strategies involving 'soothing and sanctioning' (Goffman, 1959/1990) were adopted extensively in the above sessions, though not in the P1 dance and P4 ceilidh classes led by class teachers, where more disciplinary means were used. In both cases, the nature of the dance practice being explored necessitated control and constraint. Within the ceilidh class, it was evident that the children wanted to dance harder and faster; they wanted to spin each other round, and laugh and talk as they danced. Their desired reality tallied with the 'outside' experience of ceilidh dancing in a social, rather than in a formal education, context, yet it is the latter setting that denoted the nature of the experience. The very practice of ceilidh dancing, characterised by fast spinning, changing partners, clapping, do-si-dos and lively music, ensured a high level of social and physical interaction took place between the children. The pupils' willingness to engage fully in this experience and the potential that it could lead to rambunctious behaviour, led the class teacher to focus on a need to do the right step at the right time, perhaps to the detriment of pupil enjoyment:

The majority of the session was spent on the 'Dashing White Sergeant' (DWS). Confusion was mostly caused by the change in the two sets of three when new circles were formed. Miss Roberts seemed to be irate that the class were getting it wrong each time. Although she tried to re-set the three circles a couple of times, the space was not that well used. The children were told that they were migrating too close together and ended up clumped in the middle, meaning that they did not know who their new partners were. "You're getting it wrong because you're not listening" was said to a wee girl. The dance was performed over and over again with the aim of the class getting it right. Some of the children were pulled up when they went wrong and other pupils then seemed anxious not to end up in the incorrect place (observation session).

Miss Roberts felt justified in her approach because the position that she embodied as 'teacher' was always going to take priority over the role of lead performer and provider of dance education:

To me, it's just another lesson because it's the same with any subject you teach and there's rules in class no matter where you are so they're used to me, so it doesn't matter what lesson I'm teaching. You follow the rules. They know not to cross me. No difference in my class. There might be in others.

As with Miss Roberts' ceildh class, the need to maintain control also shaped the reality of Miss Kendall's P1 dance class, but was more obviously linked to health and safety concerns, brought about by the younger pupils' perceptions of dance, and to some extent, their young age. As mentioned previously, dance was 'jumping' (Farah), 'cartwheels and rolling' (Simon) and 'tricks' (Raj). Before the group work began, everyone was loose in the space and children were being asked to suggest moves. Miss Kendall said, "It has to be a move that everyone can do" following suggestions put forward that included cartwheels, handstands, and spinning around on the floor on one knee. The only one allowed was a "gentle handstand, but be careful". Several pupils wanted to do gymnastic style moves but Miss Kendall said, "safety comes first" and "we haven't got time to get the mats out" (observation session). Teachers as well as pupils had 'rules' to follow: overt educational guidelines and policies, and less overt etiquette and behavioural procedures, by which to teach.

#### **7.4. Summary**

The culture of control existing within primary schools dictated a largely normative set of social interactions: teachers and pupils had very specific roles to fulfil. However, through exploring the delivery of dance education, the existence of certain lead performers was unearthed – those class teachers who took the initiative to teach dance and were praised by their colleagues for doing so. Yet, shaped by certain perceptions shared by teachers and pupils on the specialist aesthetic aspect of dance, these lead performers, were conscious of the limits of their 'dance' presentation. Teachers expressed in back stage settings the 'dark secret' (Goffman, 1959/1990) that what they were doing was not 'really dance', and expanded upon the pressures and stresses associated with teaching, which relegated the teaching of dance as a subject low in priority. 'Dark secrets' consist of knowledge which is in direct opposition to the image that a team presents to its audience (Goffman, 1959/1990).

A principal tenet of Goffman's (1959/1990) model concerns the different ways that individual performers can view their own performances as either cynical or sincere, with the former equated with having no 'ultimate concern' for the audience concerned. This argument is too harsh to apply undiluted to the actions undertaken and role adopted by the lead performers in this case study, particularly with regards to having no 'ultimate concern with the belief of the audience', which is patently untrue in the case of teachers who devote their careers to the education of children. Yet, teachers were either not taken in by their performance (Miss Gibbs, Miss Kendall), or did not try to be (Miss Roberts). The role of their audience, the pupils, was crucial for protecting the dance performances (with regards to aesthetics, enthusiasm, knowledge and skill) given by the teachers. The pupils understood that their perceptions of dance and hopes for a certain experience did not tally with the abilities of their class teachers, yet they minimised potential damage, through constantly demonstrating how 'the inferior may be tactfully attempting to put the superior at ease by simulating the kind of world the superior is thought to take for granted' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.30). In other words, they listened, obeyed and danced.

Literature has focused on the negatives of teaching the arts, including dance, in formal education. Yet it *is* taught, and focus here is on the *how*. Additionally, the hidden opinions of pupils have not generally been sought and this is the first known study in Scotland that solicits the thoughts and views of pupils, about their formal dance education.

## **8. Conclusion**

This chapter, the largest section and the ethnographic heart of the thesis, has presented the realities revealed by data collected in the case studies, framed by Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy. Within each case study, I have explored the two-way relationship between social interaction and participatory dance activity and practice; how social micro

relations characterised the dancing being performed; and how the dancing itself shaped patterns of social interaction.

The professional ballet class was characterised by a need for a certain standard of movement, which by its very nature is so aesthetically exact, to be maintained and increased. This overarching aim necessitated that advice was given and feedback received, hence, the widespread adoption of 'soothing' strategies such as the use of humour, and presentation of the self as a confidante and go-between (Goffman, 1959/1990). The dancer-centred nature of the class was further emphasised by the micro actions of autonomy that were observed continuously on the part of the dancers, many of which were interwoven into the dancing (types of stretches, massaging joints, choosing the leg height of certain exercises). As has been emphasised, the sociology of ballet literature reflects and reinforces a top-down approach by concentrating on themes revolving around suffering. This study contributes to existing literature through resituating attention on the micro actions made by dancers and on the social mechanisms (the nature of the relationships between ballet staff and dancers) by which a professional class continues to operate successfully.

The inclusive creative dance class was a site particularly rich in intersections between dancing and social interaction. Hallmarks of the class included both the purposeful and spontaneous presence of humour and everyday gestures (for example, 'high fives') within the choreography and exercises set. However, despite the resultant positive environment, larger issues concerned with perceptions of dance and inclusivity led to underlying fractures beneath the more overt presentations of friendship and respect. A number of conflicting roles were in existence. Teachers were concerned with increasing the standard of dance performance, acting in a pastoral role for clients and being friends with participants. Support workers and volunteers were concerned with carrying out their named professional or official role and being required to participate in the dancing. Students on placement compared the experience to their own vocational training and wanted to be less of a 'guest' and more of a

teacher. Several clients felt constrained by the focus on creativity and wanted a greater focus on technique. As mentioned previously, this study is unique within the literature for its focus on every group of people participating in the setting.

The two-way relationship in existence in the line dancing class was best evidenced through the hierarchy that was in place within the activity, where participants were placed in a certain row denoting not only their level of dance experience and performance but also their social standing within the class. Long-term and regular participants had the coveted places at the either end of the back row. Participants, who were moving from beginner to intermediate to advanced dances, became aware of what progression was possible by watching their more experienced peers. 'Rolling visitors' and tourists were less aware that a hierarchy existed and their subsequent actions (that stressed the experience of fun over learning) garnered them lower respect, evidenced by the subtle and not-so-subtle derogatory responses of the teacher and other participants. This hierarchy is bound up with the dominant perceptions of line dancing in existence and, as we have seen, the team of teachers and participants presented conflicting personal fronts back stage and front stage. The majority of the literature has viewed line dancing as a physical and social activity to promote health and well-being. The present study focuses on the dancing within the activity, as a practice that inspires pride and achievement, evidenced through both the dance and social performances given.

In the salsa club case study, social and dance performances were very much bound up, reflecting the fact that this is a partner dance. 'Leaders' and 'followers' relied on one another to provide the desired kinaesthetic experience (that evoked the exotic and glamorous) by performing in a certain style at a certain level, and through contributing to a social experience that abided by heteronormative etiquette. If the former was taking place, 'rules' attached to the latter (for example, requesting dances, accepting dances, making explicit the enjoyment of a dance) followed. The setting of a nightclub in Glasgow, where a myriad of

styles and standards were in existence, together with a long-term, regular and small population of participants, led to the constant re-negotiation towards the above reality. Existing ethnographic literature considers the activity of salsa dancing in Western locations outside of its sites of origin. This research contributes another study to that strand of work, while adopting a sociological framework not previously applied, to examine the small scale social interactions that occur when salsa is danced.

Patterns of social interaction explored in the Highland dancing class – the discipline of the teacher, the support given by the older participants, and the actions of both rebellion and admiration instigated by the younger girls – were shaped by the difficult, standardised and regulated nature of Highland dancing practice. Yet, as with the line dancing class, performances given by the teacher and older participants in the back stage interview arena contradicted their presentation front stage. As emphasised previously, the dearth of ethnographic studies focusing on Highland dancing suggests a need for issues and questions raised by the present study to be explored further.

Within the primary school, the notion of ‘what dance is’ shaped both the dance and the social performances given by class teachers and their pupils. The teachers drew on particular strategies to deliver experiences that sought to satisfy both educational guidelines and their own, and their pupils’, perceptions of dance. A reality that was expected, in the sense that dance sessions *had* to be delivered, was provided through maintaining a balance between what dance *needed* to take place (concerning adherence to the curriculum) and what dance *could* take place (using the existing skills of teachers and an external dance specialist). Literature has thus far focused on the negative experiences of class teachers who are expected to teach dance in formal education; this case study explores the patterns of social interaction that ensure that it *is* delivered through involving both teachers and pupils in the research.

## **5. THE GOFFMANIAN DANCE SELF**

### **1. Introduction**

The shaping force of the current study, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is structured into six parts, outlining the dramaturgical principles of performances, teams, regions, discrepant roles, communication out of character and impression management. This design represents as a whole, Goffman's conceptual framework of dramaturgy, described by Manning (1992) as being comprised of a 'bewildering array of definitions and classifications' (p.40). Although dramaturgy is positioned under the broad term of interpretive theory, which views reality as a social construction (Smith, 2006), the sheer number and delicate composition and overlay of Goffman's concepts can necessitate practical use akin to 'scientific' sociology (Rawls, 2003). This contradiction results in a sense of tension as

People do not interact with typifications. They do things. They must be able to create and recognise actions as practices of a sort before typifications can be invoked. The question is how they do that: how social phenomena are made and recognised as witnessable enterprises (Rawls, 2003, p.222).

Previous to this chapter, the current study used Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy in three key ways: to introduce an argument for the applicability and contemporaneity of the framework for dance scholarship ('Establishing Sociology of Dance' chapter), to situate myself as researcher within the framework ('A Sociology of Dance Methodology' chapter), and to frame and present the case study findings (previous chapter). Practically, I wanted to see how dance worlds were constructed and sustained by both the dancing and the social interaction taking place. Conceptually, I want to interrogate the primary Goffmanian sensitising concepts that facilitated analysis and framing of the findings: the focus of this chapter. The structure adopted follows a top down approach through considering the more macro concepts first. I begin by examining the terms, 'realities', 'performances' and 'teams'

before paying attention to the various Goffmanian roles uncovered, concluding with a focus on the more micro concepts shaping realities, evident across the case studies, including 'soothing and sanctioning', 'derisive collusion' and 'shop talk.' The succeeding and concluding chapter focuses on broader sociological constructs including the binary of structure and agency inherent to participatory dance activity and practice.

## **2. 'Realities' across the Case Studies**

Goffman (1959/1990) defines reality as 'the maintenance of a single definition of the situation, this definition having to be expressed, and this expression sustained in the face of a multitude [sic] disruption' (p.246). Within *The Presentation of Self* examples of realities supported or challenged often take the form of small-scale incidents or encounters, but, crucially, they both shape and are shaped by a greater cultural, historical and social context. Examples resonant of the 1950s see American college girls consciously play down their intelligence to attract datable boys and Shetland islanders continuing to wear the traditional clothing of 'fleece-lined leather jerkins and high rubber boots' (p.48), to maintain a show of solidarity with crofting life, even when they no longer operate a subsistence living. In each case, the examples cited reflect a greater reality – male college students want to feel superior to their female counterparts, Shetlanders do not want to be mistaken for anything other than Shetlanders. Within the current study, the same pattern is in evidence. A primary school teacher changes her outfit when teaching dancing to signify that she now wishes to be associated with 'other' skill and knowledge.

Goffman's most basic question is: How does social reality sustain itself [?] and his reading of the concept embedded within that query can be viewed as limited. Goffmanian reality is viewed as a 'situated activity system' (Pinch, 2010, p.412) defined as 'a somewhat closed, self-compensating, self-terminating circuit of interdependent actions' (Goffman, 1961, p.96 cited in Pinch, 2010, p.412). Within the current research, each case study is rooted in a

social establishment or institution: the professional ballet and inclusive creative dance classes are positioned within the public sector, the line dancing class and salsa club are situated within social clubs, the Highland dancing class is based within a private dance school, the dance activities within the primary school, are situated within arguably, the most institutionalised setting of all. This focus reflects the nature of settings considered in other sociology of dance studies including private ballet schools, national ballet organisations, public clubs, social community settings and universities (i.e. Doane, 2010; Dryburgh and Fortin, 2010; Heiland et al, 2010; Pickard, 2012; 2013; 2015; Turner and Wainwright, 2003; Wade, 2011).

'Reality' is under-theorised in *The Presentation of Self*, a statement that could be viewed as an omission of Goffman and a weakness of his dramaturgical framework, and as a key strength, allowing the researcher to reach their own interpretations based on findings uncovered, shaped by the very particular situations and circumstances discovered. The previous chapter understood realities as existing as a necessary situation (professional ballet class), dual aims (inclusive creative dance class), a single desired aim (salsa club), conflicting states (line dancing and Highland dancing class), and a mandatory experience (primary school). The case study findings demonstrate firstly, the nature of the realities that existed, and secondly, through the patterns of interaction unearthed, how each reality was sustained. Reality is the key construct in this study by virtue of its positioning as a cornerstone of the dramaturgical model and through the flexible readings of social reality that Goffman's (1959/1990) model allows for. Yet certain realities, linked to the case studies were to a certain extent either 'known', or could be surmised, based on the greater context that I had already experienced. One cannot disengage from their inherent 'stock of knowledge' (Schütz, 1967) and in each case, initial understanding morphed into further investigation, specifics and particularities as the research progressed, with conclusions reached based on 'careful selection from a multitude of facts' (Goffman, 1974, p.558). As Green (2001) points out, there is a danger that data can be reconfigured to 'fit' within a particular theoretical

framework. I note where discrepancies and challenges of using Goffman's (1959/1990) model arise, have been surprised by certain findings, and here, concerning the concept that constitutes both a starting point and an end point of the research, search through my preconceptions. One anecdote to recount, relates to my first year PhD progress review, where I was asked whether I personally viewed Zumba as a dance practice and how a possible bias may shape the approach of the research. The question saw me want to understand what I truly thought, and more significantly, seek and understand the opinions of my future research participants.

Concerning the professional ballet class, the overarching reality was less one that was discovered, and more an understanding that could (to a certain degree) be reached by any member of the public with an interest in professional ballet. Professional ballet is hard work with the aim of an ever-increasing standard of performance. The case study most closely reflecting this one in terms of the situation read was the primary school. The reality within the company ballet class was born of professional necessity but within the primary school, the dance reality moved one step further in the sense that it was driven by legislation, rather than by art and audiences. Within the inclusive creative dance class, there was a greater impression of a less certain reality being uncovered: the dual foci of inclusivity and dance were made apparent by the class behaviours and context; what was further revealed concerned the concrete aim to promote both, and how each supported and challenged the other. Reality also took the form of an aim within the salsa club as dancers strived for an experience that they felt to be 'authentic' and 'embodied', shaped by external experiences and conceptions of what a salsa experience 'should be'. Entering the line dancing class, I had preconceptions as to the most likely social demographic (white, female, aged 50 and over) that would be present, and the likely motivations for individuals to participate (linked to increasing health and wellbeing). However, uncovering the conflicting sense of derision and pride felt by key members of the class for line dancing practice constitutes one of the most exciting findings of the study. A 'reality' characterised by two conflicting sets of attitudes was

also reflected in the Highland dancing class. Again, entering this setting, I had understood that competitive solo Highland dancing is highly regulated and physical to perform, but the original knowledge gained related to the impact that the practice had on the social experience of learning and teaching.

The above account of the realities reveals the part played by preconceptions and 'fact' and leads me to note two further points: that use of Goffman's conceptual approach can reveal little that is startling new as the focus is squarely on the 'here-and-now' and Smith's (2006) assertion that 'both actual and depicted reality [may be] interpreted in terms of a single reality' (p.62); a sentiment that resonates with how academic findings are presented across disciplines and domains. Concerning the latter point, my reading of reality may be concerned with more macro states and situations in the unearthing and presentation of cohesive findings, but I also acknowledge that each individual inhabits and shapes their own 'reality'. Returning to the former point, similar criticism is levelled at existing sociology of dance research which promulgates habitus as a state of inertia through readily explaining all dance behaviours in habitual terms, yet Pickard (2012) demonstrates its active role in vocational ballet and Wainwright et al's (2006) tripartite distinction of individual, institutional and choreographic habitus explains how dancers move between ballet styles and companies. There exists a need to take Goffman's (1959/1990) own advice and understand that '[s]caffolds [in the form of concepts], after all, are to build other things with, and should be erected with an eye to taking them down' (p.246). My undertaking of this 'deconstruction' to understand further, the two-way relationship between patterns of social interaction and varying types of participatory dance activity and practice, unfolds in the subsequent sections.

### **3. 'Performances' across the Case Studies**

Goffman's (1959/1990) reading of performance, described as 'all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his [sic] continuous presence before a particular set

of observers and which has some influence on observers' (p.32) as a starting point, allows for a multitude of interpretations as to the nature of that performance to be made. Chapter Two introduced the argument that performance can be read as both a social and dance entity, embodied and interwoven: a proposal that constitutes both an opportunity to apply the dramaturgical model to dance research and a natural expansion of Goffman's framework based on the theatrical metaphor that it employs. Susan Melrose (2003) unwittingly reflects the stance of a Goffmanian enquiry, through emphasising that 'our writing will always be "about performance"' (p.4 cited in Jackson, 2005, p.26). Yet, interest in using a dramaturgical approach to unearth particular social phenomena heightens when non-verbal and paper presentations are considered: '[d]ance is the classical illustration of the argument that performance cannot be understood merely as a text' (Turner and Wainwright, 2003, p.270). The centrality of the dancing from the previous chapter is here further interwoven into Goffmanian performances conceptually. Given the place and role of 'performance' in Goffman's works, the concept has been extended in other studies (i.e. Robinson's (2007) proposal of 'cyberperformers' in an analysis of individuals in cyberspace). Throughout this chapter and the next, I explore further how dancing can be interpreted as social impressions intentionally and unintentionally, consciously and unconsciously given. Micro social interaction within the dancing is inherent to the performances shared and given: in the form of a smile bestowed, a sentiment briefly shared and acknowledged as eyes lock for a moment, a reassuring squeeze of the hand as a tricky movement is negotiated.

Goffman himself equated the concept of performance with 'fully bodily presence' (Pinch, 2010, p.420) and labelled it as the 'primordial real thing' (Goffman, 1983, p.9). '[E]very performance becomes a form of kinesis, of motion, a decentering of agency and person through movement' (Denzin, 2003, p.136). Gardner and Martinko (1988) (citing Schneider, 1981) define the three forms of impression management as 'verbal self-presentations', 'nonverbal behaviours' and 'artifactual displays' (the latter linked to props, setting and physical appearance) (p.331). The second of these terms envelops the idea of dance

behaviours. Interestingly, scholars undertaking their own Goffmanian studies conclude that impression management is unlikely to be involved in activities that are 'purely expressive', 'overlearned ritualised interactions' and where the individual is 'absorbed' (Gardner and Martinko, 1988, p.324): a stance vehemently disagreed with in the current study.

'Expressive', 'ritualised' and 'absorbed' are all terms that resonate with a description of dance but where dancing is concerned, certain emotional and expressive impressions felt internally through kinaesthesia, proprioception and synaesthesia, are expressed externally through shared moments of micro social interaction. There is a second point to consider concerning the cultivating or giving of a certain social impression. Individuals choose to dance a particular dance type to feel something innate and personal and to say something to others. Jackson (2005) has a wonderful way of demonstrating this interwoven binary, using the *pirouette* position of *en dehors* (outward) and *en dedans* (inward) to show how the dancing danced conveys something both intentional (the dance and social narrative being portrayed), and unintentional (a sensation within). Information is taken in and dance is expressed out (Jackson, 2005). Within all of the case studies, to differing extents, participants were communicating their greater cultural and social tastes by the type of dance that they practised and their relationship with it. Hogan (2010) cites a study by Lewis et al (2008) which looks at content and presentation of social media accounts, discovering that 'musical tastes are not a backstage but rather are a front' (p.360). Following a Bourdieusian approach, Turner and Wainwright (2003) take the standpoint that 'appreciation of dance as performance is itself an embodied aesthetic of taste that presupposes interest not disinterest' (p.270). Within the current study, the participants presented a front particular to the type of dance they were practising i.e. ballet dancers (disciplined), salsa dancers (extrovert), Highland dancers (physically strong), and were shaped by macro opinions and understandings of what dance is or should be (within the inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class and the primary school in particular).

The notion of dancing as a performance in the sense that a certain social impression is being given should not be a unique one. The need to impress and perform is an inherently human action. As Goffman (1959/1990) states

[w]hatever it is that generates the human want for social contact and for companionship, the effect seems to take two forms: a need for an audience before which to try out one's vaunted selves, and a need for team-mates with whom to enter into collusive intimacies and backstage relaxation (p.201).

Where a performance is intentional, the performer is actively and consciously deciding upon their presentation rather than re-enacting unconsciously what is expected of them. Following on from this point, the 'thinking dancer' (a particularly apt term to describe the researcher as dancer), 'is a tautology: dancing and thinking are not separate activities' (Duerden and Fisher, 2002, p.10 cited in Jackson, 2005, p.34). This point is particularly significant in explaining *why* I danced and *how* I danced across the case studies. I danced because I wanted to enjoy the movement, to appreciate the sensations that it produced, and to establish a sense of rapport with my research informants. Jackson (2005) recounts the view of Matthew Hawkins (1999) that having an in-depth and practical understanding of one dance type can equip the performer to transfer this knowledge to another. I have what could be thought of as considerable knowledge and skill in only two dance types (ballet and Irish) but having a concrete understanding of the potential and limitations of my own movement, and the accepted and expected social interaction within and outwith that movement, allowed me to perform contact improvisation, salsa, line dancing, Highland, ceilidh and Zumba. Thus, more appropriate still, is to view my presence as Foster's (1997) 'hired body', one that was able to use current and previous dance experience even if I could only replicate 'movement [and behaviour] as surface gloss' (Jackson, 2005, p.33). Such an exploration is necessary owing to the role I played in discovering, interpreting and presenting the findings through the dramaturgical tradition, as dance research is 'intellectually mediated via external (third person) received knowledge' (Alexander, 2003, p.19 cited in Jackson, 2005, p.26). The

theme of micro social interaction within the dancing, shaped by kinaesthesia, is subsequently illustrated further below through exploring the concept of 'teams.'

#### 4. 'Teams' across the Case Studies

Although much of Goffman's focus in *The Presentation of Self* is on individual or one-to-one interactions, the role played by 'teams' in the dramaturgical framework is prominent and in the current study, pivotal. The need for persons to be 'accessible, available, and subject to one another' (Goffman, 1963, p.22) is at the very heart of the interaction order. The most basic need for teams derives from the argument that '[s]uccessful performances are usually staged not by individuals but by teams who share both risk and discreditable information in a manner comparable to a secret society' (Goffman, 1959/1990, pp.75-75). A link is once again made with the hidden dance worlds alluded to in the title of this study.

Within a dance context, there exists a need for people to aim to dance either the 'same' way or in a 'similar' fashion, for a particular visual picture to be formed and experience to be given. Riverdancers perform in a 'perfect' line, fulfilling a need to rhythmically beat out the taps at the precise moment. The Masaai dance, *Adumu*, requires young warriors to all retain a narrow posture while exerting a powerful vertical jump, never allowing their heels rest on the ground. The *corps de ballet* in companies around the world perform the famous Kingdom of the Shades in *La Bayadère* in unison, creating an ethereal glow. Within the dance world, there also exists literal formation team dancing such as Modern Square Dancing. Less obvious but closely linked to the above point is the argument that physically dancing together as a team, aiming for a visual whole derived from an impression of uniformity, promotes a sense of social dramaturgical loyalty and discipline.

Within the world inhabited by the professional ballet class, artistic and administrative staff united to present a certain company image to the general public. Within the inclusive

creative dance class, the team sought as a whole, to promote the activity as both inclusive and technical. The line dancing class had a core team of instructor and committed beginners revealed by the intrusion of other persons such as tourists (and myself as researcher). A series of sub-teams were uncovered within the salsa club as dancers of different types promoted their own style, although, again, a whole club team was revealed to be in existence when 'others' entered. Teams were a significant concept in the Highland dancing class owing to two opposing groups being in existence. The primary school featured the most institutionalised teams within the study; teachers and pupils with the former group featuring 'lead performers': defined by Goffman (1959/1990) as 'the star, lead, or centre of attention' (p.103).

Variables that determine whether a situation necessitates a Goffmanian team performance have been drawn together by Gardner and Martinko (1988). They include firstly, the need to promote a certain image of an organisation and secondly, the requirement to abide by group norms to carry out work that is necessary. Formation of a team is also the result of a desire to work together, united by a common bond and lastly, teams can be the result of individuals feeling coerced into taking part and supporting what is understood to be a common aim. Taking each point at a time, the institutions, organisations and venues involved in the current study are viewed as requiring a certain professional image to be supported and protected, most obviously involving the organisations within which the professional ballet and inclusive creative dance classes were set. The salsa club, line dancing class, Highland dancing class and primary school dance activities are viewed as events that were 'programmed' within their respective venues, thus this need for organisational promotion is diminished. White and Hanson (2013) demonstrate how a corporation can also be viewed as a 'self', defined as a 'loose coupling between interactional practices and social structures' (Goffman, 1983, p.11). A need to promote a particular corporate image can be seen amid other sociological dance studies: for example, Wainwright et al (2006) explore the difficulties and necessity in

retaining institutional habitus, in the form of a particular ballet style, for a certain visual image to be displayed on stage.

Concerning the second point, all of the case studies to differing extents and for varying motivations, required a team to carry out the work at hand. Within the daily class, the ballet dancers danced without making physical contact with one another, but the standard was maintained and pushed by the presence of the company as a whole and interestingly, a similar argument is made for the line dancing class and amongst the older participants in the Highland dancing class. The participants involved in the inclusive creative dance class, salsa club and primary school had an additional requirement: they needed other bodies to actually dance their practices.

Spaces within the relevant studios, classrooms and club floors were temporal and transient supporting Ross' (2007) assertion that what we exist in are effectively 'sense-regions', allowing performers to move with fluidity between simultaneously existing front and back stages, characterised by the interaction taking place. Highland dancers whispering in a corner of the studio effectively carved out their own back stage at that moment in space and time. Across the case studies, the action of dancing necessitated the need to be close with another dancer, providing ongoing opportunities for people to interact, and as Goffman reminds us: 'The physical structure of an encounter itself is usually accorded certain symbolic implications... Physical closeness easily implies social closeness' (Goffman, 1967, p.107). Within the ballet class, dancers in close proximity to one another at the *barre*, quietly swapped rueful smiles when a particularly tricky *adage* exercise was called for. The primary school children were holding hands and whirling one another round, greeting the next group of three to dance with during the 'Dashing White Sergeant'. The inclusive creative dance class in particular, which drew extensively upon contact improvisation, necessitated physical closeness and trust.

The third point concerns the desire to work together in pursuit of a common aim. This is the aspect that is most overt in the presentation of the case study findings in shaping realities and the role of teams played a particularly significant role in the line dancing and Highland dancing classes as conflicting desires were in existence. The actions and interactions of the inclusive creative dance, line dancing, salsa club and older Highland participants is viewed as an opportunity to promote the activities as 'serious leisure' rather than as a trend: defined as the 'systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling' (Stebbins, 1992, p.3). Another reason for the prominence of this third point in the current study relates to the voluntary nature of four of the case studies. Although friendships existed outside of these settings, the majority of participants only interacted when dancing together and committed to regular and sustained participation. Referring to the context of sport, Heikkala (1993) explains how:

Sport is not forced labour; it must and does include a strong voluntary flavour. Significantly, the will to do better must also carry a strong internalized feeling of a 'need' of discipline and conformity to the practices necessary for achieving the desired goal (p.401 cited in Wellard et al, 2007, p.88).

The final factor relates to an expectation that one is expected to 'join in', and of course, within certain case studies, individuals were literally required to dance to earn their wage. I felt an expectation from the participants to take part across the case studies, irrespective of whether I actually danced, or the extent to which I danced and felt that my dance performances 'fitted.' I needed to both pre-consider and spontaneously be able to amend my manner and appearance; my language, dress, facial conversations and body language, within and across the case studies as they progressed. In addition, through drawing on imaginative combinations of previous dance experiences, I appreciated the lengths to which my body could be pushed and my ability to copy the dancing around me. The memory that most readily comes to mind concerns my attempts to follow and replicate a four-step Highland Sword dance with arms, legs and swords all flailing and flying, as I aimed to watch

the other participants out of the corner of my eye while conveying to the teacher, Anne, some level of competency.

Additional points to Gardner and Martinko's (1988) framework to consider include the length and frequency of interaction and the social demographics involved. Interactions are sustained differently depending on whether the performers in question are strangers meeting for the first time, or long-term acquaintances, colleagues or friends, with the latter being the dominant groupings in the majority of case studies. Goffman (1959/1990) argues that 'reciprocal dependence' (p.88), rather than friendship, is the key factor in the creation of a team. However, existing close bonds of friendship that existed within and outwith a particular dance setting, in particular the inclusive creative dance class and line dancing class, inspired a great sense of 'dramaturgical loyalty'. Certainly it is possible to see from the current case studies how sustained interaction over time (often shaped by growing friendship) cements a team together as sociability between individuals' increases. Social familiarity also reflects a familiarity with format: The majority of dance activities involved unfolded in a pre-established format, and were performed in an oft-repeated familiar set sequence of movements: heightening artistry, enjoyment and assimilation into a team, both for dance participant and the researcher as dancer.

Bourdieu (1990) talks about the need to gain a 'feel for the game' in relation to gaining and enacting a habitual understanding of the behaviours likely to allow an individual to progress within a particular social domain. Conversely, Goffman (1959/1990) talks about the 'information game' that is played (p.20). When people meet for the first time, there exists a split second, often unconscious, where the individual draws upon clothing, facial expressions, manner, tone of voice, content of conversation, posture, anything and everything, to form as much understanding as possible. As Goffman (1959/1990) explains, with an appropriate movement image:

When the interaction that is initiated by 'first impressions' is itself merely the initial interaction in an extended series of interactions involving the same participants, we speak of 'getting off on the right foot' and feel that it is crucial that we do so (p.23).

The current study certainly made me more aware of the voyeuristic role that I was playing: I could be described as a 'lurker gleaning useful copying skills by observing "support group"-style interactions that focus on members' feelings' (Ross, 2007, p.322). As an outsider coming in, with the label of 'researcher' in five of the settings, I was particularly aware of people gauging my experience from how I moved, and my own self-consciousness when dancing, and was particularly gratified when positive comments about the way that I danced was made.

One final point made by Goffman, which is not a 'requirement' for a team performance but which is emphasised by the sociologist as assisting one to take place, concerns shared social demographics. All of the case studies were defined by a certain demographic: the majority of ballet dancers were white, aged between 20 and 35, with only two dancers originating from Scotland; the majority of the participants of the inclusive creative dance class (including clients, support workers, teachers and volunteers) were white and aged over 30. The participants of the line dancing class were almost all white, female, aged over 50 and from Glasgow; with only a handful of exceptions, the salsa club dancers originated from outside Scotland; the teacher and Highland dancers (with the exception of one participant) all originated from Scotland and there was a profusion of 'Mc' and 'Mac' surnames within the class; within the primary school, naturally the majority of research participants, the pupils, were all under the age of 12. However, such an explanation only goes some way in explaining how I was able to assimilate myself, when I did not wholly reflect any of the above demographic groupings. Recounting my experience of observing and dancing within the Highland dancing class in Chapter Three, I highlight the importance of muscle memory as a type of Goffmanian vocabulary of fronts to draw upon in feeling comfortable to move. In

addition, of course, the value of a friendly and open social manner should never be underestimated.

## **5. 'Roles' across the Case Studies**

Within other sociological dance studies, 'roles' are a reference to the literal parts played on stage, the move from professional ballet dancer to 'character roles', and parts that are modelled on, and inspired by, particular dancers (Wainwright et al, 2006). Goffman's concept of roles is viewed as a compound of 'setting', 'personal front' and 'front' (Whiteside and Kelly, 2016) (the framework presented in Chapter Three). In this section, I begin with exploring how actual job titles and positions reflected certain Goffmanian roles and interrogate the latter.

Within the current study, I was interacting with individuals fulfilling the actual positions of artistic director, ballet master, dance class teacher, instructor, primary school teacher, primary school pupil, and external dance specialist. With reference to the dramaturgical framework, Gardner and Martinko (1988) make three key points. Firstly, individuals inhabiting a particular role 'learn cognitive scripts' (p.328) to interact as expected with their audiences. Secondly, individuals embodying a particular role inherit the set of characteristics associated with it. Finally, individuals have little control over the understanding that an audience already has of their particular background and reputation (where persons are known to each other). Thus, roles are inextricably linked to the existence of fronts and as highlighted in Chapter Two,

[w]hen an actor takes on an established social role, he [sic] usually finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.37).

There are certain roles within the current study which were already imbued with a particular sense of status: ballet dancers are seen as fulfilling this part in the eyes of the general public, and within a ballet company itself, this sense of awe is inspired by the artistic director. By drawing on Goffman (1959/1990), we can understand that certain roles are naturally pervaded with a sense of 'specialness':

[I]n the case of some statuses dramatization presents no problem, since some of the acts which are instrumentally essential for the completion of the core task are at the same time wonderfully adapted, from the point of view of communication, as means of vividly conveying the qualities and attributes claimed by the performer. The roles of prizefighters, surgeons, violinists, and policemen [sic] are cases in point. These activities allow for so much dramatic self-expression that exemplary practitioners – whether real or fictional – become famous and are given a special place in the commercially organized fantasies of the nation (pp. 40-41).

The relevant persons can act with dramatic realisation; they can make their role clear and evident to their audience. As Khudaverdian (2006) noted, female ballet dancers chose to keep their hair in a bun when walking down the street, signifying (if their posture and figure did not convey this for them) the nature of their professional life. An artistic director is not only imbued with great responsibility, there is a sense of the thrilling about the role; consequently, it was not unsurprising to see the personality of Grant come through in the ballet case study and the particular brand of black humour that he employed. In contrast, other roles and practices required over-communication for an impression of specialness of status to be conveyed. Kate, within the line dancing class, constantly reiterated the responsibility that she felt as instructor and during interviews, employed dramatic idealisation in a quest to highlight 'the distinction between something being the case and someone wanting something to be the case' (Manning, 1992, p.41). The need to foster the impression that line dancing was something special necessitated the over-communication of that opinion (Goffman, 1959/1990).

'Role distance' is the central strategy by which individuals both embrace certain parts and momentarily relinquish their role to communicate to others that this is just one 'side' to them (Pinch, 2010). The role that most wholeheartedly embraced a part played concerns the 'director', the dominant position in the current study, overtly featuring in five of the case studies where an authority figure was present. Within the professional ballet class, Grant was 'director' both in name and dramaturgical nature. Within the class he was responsible for leading the unfolding episode but also had a greater responsibility for the company derived from his title of [artistic] director. Within Pickard's (2012) study, the part of teacher is so imbued with symbolic status that young dancers generally only spoke when prompted to do so or in privacy after class. Significantly, how I interacted with my informants, was shaped by whether I was communicating with a teacher or those they were teaching. Following years of experience in classical ballet and Irish step dance classes, I naturally fell back into the part of student or participant and was far more at ease with those I could consider my peers.

The framework of Goffmanian roles, including 'imposters' and 'informers', provides a means to understand the place and actions of key individuals across the case studies. Yet the focus on, and labelling of, distinct parts as presented in *The Presentation of Self*, has led to criticism that the individual becomes reduced 'to a series of apparently unconnected roles' (Tanner and Timmons, 2000, p.979). Another challenge faced in critiquing and deciphering roles, concerned the sociologist's overly black and white language and narrow vision in explaining how individuals with certain positions are driven to perform in interactional settings. For example, an 'imposter' is someone 'who did not have the right to play the part he [sic] played, that he was not an accredited incumbent of the relevant status' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.59). An 'informer' is someone 'who pretends to the performers to be a member of their team, is allowed to come backstage and to acquire destructive information, and then openly or secretly sells out the show to the audience' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.145). Goffman's interpretations act as starting points for understanding the placing of particular

individuals in specific case studies, yet there exists a need to 'subtleise' their linguistic definitions in the context of my findings.

Roles uncovered within the professional ballet class included 'training specialist', 'confidante' and 'go-between'. Within this context, the former is defined as someone privy to working with the ballet dancers on a daily basis, possibly over a long period of time, and thus is constantly viewing someone who is constantly learning and perfecting their performance, rather than working with 'someone engaged in the clumsy and embarrassing process of becoming' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.157). Confidantes 'are persons to whom the performer confesses his [sic] sins, freely detailing the sense in which the impression given during a performance was merely an impression' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.158). Within the ballet class, I noted dancers informing ballet master Robert, of varying injuries and concerns that they had and although confessions were perhaps not made 'freely', communication was voluntarily made and advice sought. A link is also made in the current study between confidante and go-between as the same ballet master embodied both. Robert acted as a 'conduit' between dancers and management; an uncomfortable positioning that reflected a tension between his dual aims (to gain the confidence of both groups). In contrast to the other case studies, the interactional model of the professional ballet class, as presented in the previous chapter, is shaped by the framework of roles played. Although the primary school constitutes the 'other' key institutional setting in the current study, I argue that it is the all adult set-up of the ballet class which necessitated that multiple parts were played. The omission of a named 'confidante' and 'go-between' from the other case studies is not to say that individuals did not embody and fulfil those functions, but within the ballet class, interaction between Robert, and the dancers, bound up in a two-way need for respect, made its existence evident.

The theme of complexity between roles was also a key characteristic of the inclusive creative dance class. Fraser, the class teacher, also danced and performed with the class and was viewed in the position of 'informer' owing to the duty of care he had for the clients.

The students on placement, Gary and Ekaterina, wrestled with their fixed status of guest when they would have welcomed the opportunity to teach. The support workers and volunteers (the former group in particular), present as both dance participants and support professionals, faced the greatest challenge in the sense that they struggled with controlling the visual dance performance that they were giving. As Goffman (1959/1990) explains, conflict of roles is normally avoided through the segregation of audiences; 'by audience segregation the individual ensures that those before whom he [sic] plays one of his parts will not be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting' (p.57). Within the Highland dancing class, we saw how Rose tried to embody the role of teacher/director during Anne's absence and was subsequently viewed as an 'imposter' by the younger girls in the class. In contrast, within the line dancing class, the long-term participants taking on additional director-like duties were not viewed in this way as they were effectively 'ordered' to do so by the instructor, Kate, in front of everyone: thus, their move up the class hierarchy was approved and engineered. Within the salsa club, the most technically brilliant and flamboyant dancer, Jasper, was not considered an 'imposter' because he was not pretending to be someone that he is not (Goffman, 1959/1990). As Goffman (1959/1990) explains, the audience is more concerned with 'whether or not the performer is authorised to give the performance in question... [than] with the actual performance itself' (p.66). Jasper's impressive background of former champion ballroom dancer was idealised and in lieu of a director figure in the setting, viewed as a role model to admire and the 'perfect' partner to dance with. As Goffman recounts, '[s]omething will glitter or smoulder or otherwise make itself apparent beyond the covering that is officially worn' (1974, p.298). The calibre of Jasper's salsa performance on the dance floor shone through.

As a final aside, it is significant to note that the professional ballet and inclusive creative dance classes emerged both as the case studies where a certain organisational image needed to be presented and the settings where the most distinct frameworks of roles were unearthed in the maintenance of that image or reality.

## 6. Micro Concepts across the Case Studies

[M]ost of the time, we interact in a cosy conspiracy as if everyone knows what they are talking about, can remember the names of those who they're talking to, and has an appearance and presence which is pleasant and unexceptionable (Miller, 1995, n.p.).

This may be an actual, desired, or surface reality but it certainly is not a constant one. This final section preceding the chapter summary focuses on those micro concepts that reveal how a seemingly perpetual state of affairs is constantly maintained, re-negotiated, and upheaved. Unearthing and interrogating the smallest of Goffman's terms, many of which constitute a 'break in character' on the part of an individual, reveals that a multitude of realities exist (Scheff, 2010, p.193). The role of constant and countless small acts of rebellion are recognised. Often the mechanisms and strategies shaping a reality are two sides of the same coin; they both support and challenge situations and states of being. For example, sanctioning what could be viewed as slight misbehaviour in a school class, a child shouts loudly during a Zumba jump sequence, both reveals that control is momentarily lax and represents the mechanism by which control is retained through not allowing the situation to escalate through over-action.

### 6.1. *'Soothing and sanctioning'*

The role of the director within a particular scenario is to bring 'back into line any member of the team whose performance becomes unsuitable. Soothing and sanctioning are the corrective processes ordinarily involved' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.102). Within the ballet class, both Grant and Robert engaged in 'soothing' the dancers through creating a private backstage space within the studio to give individual feedback, and 'sanctioning' through allowing autonomous actions to take place. The latter strategy constituted a way of

recognising and respecting that the dancers were individuals with specific needs, concerns and personalities, although, obviously, instances of sanctioning so-called autonomous behaviour and action were observed across all the case studies. For example, within the Highland dancing class, participants quietly huddled together and talked about school and boyfriends when waiting for their turn to dance, and within the primary school case study, children chatted and engaged in playful behaviour under the watchful eye of their class teachers. Yet within the professional ballet class, sanctioned autonomy had a vital and distinct part to play in sustaining a hard-work reality supported by mutual respect between ballet staff and dancers, and the actions themselves particularly stood out in a setting where habitual behaviour is the norm, and has been the focus of previous study. Sanctioned small-scale independent actions and performances, such as leaving the *barre* mid-exercise to stretch, or choosing to carry out a *grande battement* exercise with a lower leg height, taking place within a climate of control, inspired continued 'dramaturgical loyalty' to the ballet profession through an understanding that allowance of such actions was being made in the space. The vast majority of exercises performed at the *barre* (approximately the first 30 minutes of class), and to a lesser extent in the centre, displayed a lack of uniformity as dancers individualised their social and dance performances. I suggest that the majority of autonomous actions were accepted and sanctioned because they were *within* the dancing; for example, one *fouetté* exercise I observed saw some dancers end the performance with an exaggerated flourish and smiles on their faces. Here, as elsewhere, '[t]he dramaturgical lens focuses on... those things that often remain unnoticed in everyday life, such as tacit or unspoken rules that guide behaviour (Paolucci and Richardson, 2006, p.29). Waksler (1989) argues that 'Goffman's "self" acts, putting to rest the spectre of overdeterminism' (p.3, original emphasis). Manning (2005) explains that

Goffman considered dramaturgical action as a form of strategic interaction. Dramaturgy should therefore be understood as goal-directed, instrumental action. It is a general term for one of the ways by which, alone or in concert with others, people seek to bring about certain ends (p.7).

As concluded previously, within the professional ballet class, there existed an ongoing quest to maintain a 'working consensus' (Goffman, 1959/1990) between the authority figures in the class, dancers and pianist, to sustain the necessary hard-work reality.

From the spectrum of activities included in the current study, I theorise that 'soothing and sanctioning' plays a role where a certain type of activity in a particular social setting is unfolding. Within the inclusive creative dance class, positive feedback was freely given to bond individuals fulfilling particular contradictory roles together. Within the primary school, with the exception of animated praise consistently drawn upon and given by the external dance specialist, this strategy was not a key feature as the need for control and discipline was too great and the class teachers were already cast in a particular part with the concrete front to go with it. However, where the teacher is working with adults rather than children and aims to gain respect, mitigate a tense situation, or to heighten the enjoyment of a particular activity, soothing and sanctioning is more likely to be seen. Given the voluntary nature of four of the case studies, these would be the expected strategies to employ, yet its most powerful role as a hidden shaping force, was conversely, within the professional ballet class. To summarise, the other case studies did not resemble the same 'high stakes' (a culture of control within a professional context), thus it might be suggested that the role played by soothing and sanctioning autonomous actions did not have the same significance in shaping the realities elsewhere.

## **6.2. 'Scenes', 'shop talk' and 'high signs'**

Within interactional settings, punishment is administered to 'individuals who do not live up to the rules of polite interaction... for such rules are functionally necessary for social reality to be kept alive' (Collins and Makowsky, 2005, p.238). 'Treatment of the absent' and 'uncomplimentary terms of reference' were key strategies adopted in the current study by

team members in response to a threatened reality, where and when it was felt that criticism could be given without undue repercussion: namely, in the line dancing class and salsa club. Both physical settings were spaces where 'inopportune intrusion' took place. Contrasting with the other case studies, the line dancing and salsa club activities were situated within 'open spaces' in the sense that there were no prerequisites to entering and participating. Therefore both settings involved 'other' attendees, described in a disparaging manner as 'tourists' and 'rolling beginners' (Kate), and 'townies' (Janet). In addition, within the salsa club, certain female dancers took advantage of the noise and bustle and the 'sense-regions' (Ross, 2007) operating within, to point out to me and each other, with a warning glance, the dangers of male 'grinders.'

In contrast to conversation taking place *about* 'other' groups and individuals, more direct communication, in the form of 'informal cues' and 'high signs' were directed *to* the grinders, tourists and rolling beginners themselves, which 'initiate[d] a [new] phase in a performance' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.178). Kate curtly told Ben to 'shut up' in front of the whole line dancing class; female salsa dancers disrupted and stopped dances with muted angry faces. It is interesting to note that I was not really privy to incidents of 'shop talk' and 'treatment of the absent' in the other case studies. From this conclusion, I can infer firstly, that within the other settings, there were spaces that were even more concretely 'back stage', for example management meetings and evaluation sessions, that with my limited team status, I could not be privy to, and secondly, that the more social nature of the line dancing and salsa club practice allowed for more concrete criticism to be voiced.

The greater the upset caused, the more the interaction can be viewed as a 'scene' : an incident that 'occur[s] when team-mates can no longer countenance each other's inept performance and blurt out immediate public criticism of the very individuals with whom they ought to be in dramaturgical cooperation' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.205). Janet and Maggie

'screw[ed] up [their] social courage and decide[d] to "have it out"' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.205); when their male partners caused them physical pain, anger or embarrassment. Within the Highland dancing class, the scenes made by Anne, and incidents created by the younger participants, even more concretely shaped and revealed the reality at hand. Firstly, the actions of the latter group revealed and resulted in the creation of two teams (Goffman, 1959/1990). Secondly, Anne's reaction of creating a 'scene(s)' can be read as an act of desperation and frustration linked to a deep concern with the practice's regulated nature. Significantly, the role played by discrepant actions (un-identified as such) can be discerned within other ethnographical and sociological dance studies. The example below demonstrates how the implications of dressing incorrectly within a Lindy Hop setting fractured a greater reality in existence:

Prior to our own dancing, we watched Jason, a member of the Downtown Lindy Hoppers, and his dance steps were dazzling. For this crowd, however, just dancing was not good enough. Ted looked to Michael and said, "do you see this?" motioning toward the dance floor, shaking his head in disappointment. "Clips," said Michael, referring to Jason's use of clip suspenders to hold up his pants. "Big faux pas," Ted added (Doane, 2006, p.96).

### **6.3. *'Derisive', 'destructive' and 'dark'***

Closely linked to the interactions explored above, is the more subtle concept of derisive collusion; the more delicate means by which the reality at hand can be protected. Within the line dancing class, led by Kate, the core team at times produced knowing looks, fixatedly ignored the discrepant (dance and social) performances given by those intruding (the tourists and rolling beginners), and threw crude insults back at them. As Goffman (1959/1990) demonstrates, 'a team can treat an individual as if he [sic] were not present... doing this as a pointed way of expressing hostility to an individual who has conducted himself [sic] improperly' (p.152). 'Derisive collusion', which 'typically involves a secret derogation' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.183) occurred between Kate and the committed line

dancers owing to the presence of participants that were not welcome. Given the conflicting sentiments that members of the core team expressed to me, I can infer that the committed line dancers were reading certain actions made by the intruders as born from the latter group's sense of embarrassment with doing the activity, prompting defensive responses. A more positive form of collusion was also apparent through the interactions of tact and teasing. The action of accepting or welcoming teasing provided new performers with the opportunity to prove to the existing team that they could 'take a joke' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.211), irrespective of whether they were feeling comfortable or not in doing so, thereby displaying a sense of 'dramaturgical discipline'. Within the line dancing class, the strategy of smilingly 'teasing' was increasingly tested and applied by Kate towards certain participants, including myself. Each time I was addressed as 'ballet Beth', I communicated my enjoyment of the attention, even while feeling a slight sense of uncomfortableness with the label that I had been given.

I also benefited from team collusion. Following on from the above discussion, I was welcomed into various teams across the case studies, both through being identified as an audience who was considered interested and sympathetic by virtue of my researcher status and through replicating behaviour and etiquette that I knew would be accepted and welcomed. Team members realigned their actions as I interacted across the case studies: on my third consecutive visit to observe the professional ballet class (and once it had been ascertained that I was not a casting director in answer to a dancer's query), I was smiled at and spoken to. Aidan winked at me broadly during *pliés* after switching sides at the barre to now face me sitting with my back against the long mirror. During the lunch break of the inclusive creative dance class, participants made space for me at the table, and invited me to sit and eat with them. Within the primary school, individual teachers confided in me, with lowered voices and crossed arms, their worry that what they were teaching was not really dance. This form of collusion was assisted by my ability to access various traditional back stage spaces across the case studies, including the green room, toilets and changing rooms.

Such examples highlighted above can be viewed as 'slippages', moments of relaxation, where my research informants demonstrated that I was gaining their confidence and vice versa; part of the game of interaction. In return, I 'played my part': I smiled back at the professional ballet dancers, thanked the creative dance participants for inviting me to join them, and responded sympathetically to the 'confessions' of the primary school teachers. However, collusion did not always take the form of assimilating me into the greater team. Within the line dancing class, Kate and the participants aimed to collude with me and 'get me on their side' through derogating others (with a focus on the decision to line dance, technical ability, and body image) in their class. As Goffman (1959/1990) notes, derisive collusion 'occurs most frequently, perhaps, between a performer and himself [sic]' (p.184).

'Destructive information', defined as details that would 'discredit, disrupt, or make useless the impression that the performance [prioritising reality] fosters' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.141) can be viewed as a constant spectre at the shoulder of desired realities. Performers communicate their 'understanding that the show [they are] maintaining is only and merely a show' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.168). Uncovered by the research but unsaid within the studio, was the knowledge that Anne and the older girls had concerns with the regulated nature of Highland dancing and its potential repercussions concerning the popularity and evolution of the practice. In contrast, within the line dancing class, although derogatory sentiments about the practice were openly expressed to me by the core team, the concerns were of a very different nature; the Highland dancers were concerned with the very future of the dance form; the line dancers were largely worried about how non-line dancers judged them for performing grapevines and beating their heels. Yet within both settings potentially 'destructive information' was kept in check through restricting the audience that the detail was shared with. Within both settings, the desired reality was maintained through the ability of the relevant performer(s) to

be taken in by his [sic] own act, convinced at the moment that the impression of reality which he fosters is the one and only reality. In such cases the performer comes to be his own audience; he comes to be performer and observer of the same show... It will have been necessary for the individual in his performing capacity to conceal from himself in his audience capacity the discreditable facts that he has had to learn about the performance (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.86).

One way to contain possible leakage of destructive information is through the holding and keeping of secrets. Goffman's (1959/1990) definition of strategic secrets rather neatly sums up the accepted overall aim of dance performance, and ballet in particular, which 'demonstrates the illusive, transcendent image of perfection to an audience' (Pickard, 2012, p.39). Strategic secrets refer to the 'intentions and capacities of a team which it conceals from its audience in order to prevent them from adapting effectively to the state of affairs the team is planning to bring about' (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.141). Within a dance context, the overall end aim is to conceal physically and socially how difficult the dancing is, whether this is keeping quiet about injuries in class, or struggling to understand a six-step Sword Dance. However, strategic secrets can morph into dark secrets where facts exist 'which are incompatible with the image of self' that an individual or team presents to their audience (Goffman, 1959/1990, p.141). Dark secrets can both protect (while they are kept) and destroy (when they are revealed), the reality at hand. White and Hanson (2013) note that dark secrets are a greater concern when they have resulted from a permanent rather than an episodic condition. Within the current study, there is an example of a dark secret actually being maintained through audience collusion. Primary school class teachers aimed to keep hidden that what they were doing was not really dance, yet the dark secret was maintained as the pupils already seemed to understand this: '[A]t moments of crisis for the performers, the whole audience may come into tacit collusion with them in order to help them out' (Goffman, 1959/1990. p.225). This penultimate section of the chapter resonates with the overall theme of the current study; the notion of the hidden.

## 7. Summary

Following on from the presentation of the case study findings, this chapter delved into the Goffmanian concepts that form the sociologist's dramaturgical framework, and illuminated their meaning in the context of the current study. I began with the more overarching terms of reality and performance; seeking to explain how the former can be understood in terms of aims, desires and experiences. The means by which ongoing phenomena was created and maintained was through the performances given by individuals, singularly and collectively: the conscious and unconscious power and intention behind interwoven aesthetical, social and technical performances; the crafting of bodies in the air, conversations had, and body language adopted. Interpreted through Goffman's more micro concepts, such actions and interactions are immensely powerful: strung together, they form a cornerstone of everyday living, and within the dance worlds explored, revealed something portent about the realities of each.

The key contribution of the current research to sociology of dance study and the greater context of dance studies is rooted in its demonstration of how dramaturgical theory gives rise to an interpretation of the greater picture or realities of particular dance worlds, and, crucially, the very patterns of micro social interaction, within and outwith the dancing, that underpin particular findings. Other sociology of dance studies can both be produced and read with a dramaturgical eye. Such an approach recognises that significance lies behind an expression shared between locked eyes or an extra pressure felt between two palms. A dramaturgical focus can also elucidate the workings of other sociological theories: most notably in an ethnographic dance context, those of Bourdieu and Foucault. How does a particular Bourdieusian 'dance' habitus manifest? What role is played by the literal and dramaturgical director in the daily classes? Is a Highland dancing body docile? What power is conveyed in choosing to end a *jeté* exercise in the centre with a flourish of the arms? How people interact, for example with a particular accent and vocabulary, may be significantly

linked to structural social factors inherent to childhood, education and upbringing, but a recognition of the array of communication strategies in existence demonstrates how the playing field may be levelled and reveals the measure of control that individuals have in their surroundings. In contrast to Bourdieusian and Foucauldian approaches, a richer array of concepts is available, and there exists the means to understand behaviour that is imbued with agency. Goffman can both explain how habitual performances are formed and actions that do not appear to fit under that label. Other versions of the script are available.

Contrasting with the direction followed in the structure of this chapter, Goffman's approach is bottom-up rather than top-down; a focus that also guides the place and role of the researcher, uniting dramaturgical study with a reflexive approach. Goffman's dramaturgical work is intensely reflexive with a cemented focus on how individuals and groups of individuals seek to control and respond to the impressions that they create to a particular audience. However, Goffman undertook his hypothetical and practical research, wearing the scientist's white coat and did not reflexively consider his role or that played by other researchers within a methodology with the purpose of critiquing social interaction. Although reflecting the scientific approach to fieldwork at the time (Gronfein, 2002), such an approach seems rather extraordinary given the focus on unfolding observations and the power of the researcher to influence and shape the everyday life being witnessed. Conversely, I literally undertook the current research wearing the dance tops and pants, colourful dresses, jeans and t-shirts, ghillies, high heels and trainers of my research informants and, throughout the data collection and analysis, reflexively examined my positioning within each of the case studies with a sense of hyper-awareness.

This approach has sharpened my understanding of the design and fluid meaning behind many of Goffman's concepts, allowing for an expansion and amendment to be made for dance research, particularly with regards to realities and performances. Through taking a Goffmanian dramaturgical approach, the current study contributes to the trajectory of

ethnographic sociology of dance scholarship by expanding further upon the significance of micro interaction, contributing new ways of reading sociological dance theory, and uniting a focus on the dancing with the researcher as a reflexive force; thus, a case for Goffman's dramaturgy in practical dance research is made.

## 6. REALITIES OF PARTICIPATORY DANCE IN GLASGOW

### 1. Introduction

As Manning (2005) argues, Goffman's (1959/1990) framework can be used with one of two key aims in mind: 'Dramaturgical analysis can either be extended empirically by using dramaturgical ideas in new settings or conceptually by extending new terms' (p.8). As the first known study to employ Goffman's (1959/1990) model to interrogate the microsociology of a wide range of participatory dance activities and practices, this project more obviously constitutes an example of the first of Manning's aims. Less overtly, however, although the project does not introduce 'new terms', it does constitute a conceptual expansion, primarily through viewing entwined dance and social interactions as 'performances' to uncover the greater realities which characterise participatory dance settings.

Participating through dancing in all but one of the case studies, I was familiar with many of the social settings in which I found myself, and with many of the dance practices that I took part in, during the data collection. Complementing the familiarity felt in the face-to-face field of dance was an ease with reading and using Goffman's key text, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. According to Lemert (1997), reading and using Goffmanian theory results in

a shudder of recognition.... The experience Goffman effects is that of colonizing a new social place into which the reader enters, from which to exit never quite the same. To have once, even if only once, seen the social world from within such a place is never after to see it otherwise, ever after to read the world anew. In thus seeing differently, we are other than we were (pp.ix-xiii).

However, Raffel's reference to the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's warning that 'a picture held us captive' (Wittgenstein, 1958, 48e cited in Raffel, 2013, p.172) highlights 'how easy it is to start from undeniably true experiences and yet still confuse ourselves by deriving false pictures of what these experiences indicate' (Raffel, 2013, p.172). Goffman is primarily

concerned with how realities are constructed (Girdwood, 2010) and, as evidenced in the preceding analyses and discussion, the findings all centred on the construction of reality in the various dance settings: the natures of which were shaped through both a tense and complementary blend of individual and structural actions and situations. Returning briefly to Chapter Two, Goffman's general approach (including his model of dramaturgy) has been criticised for its overwhelming focus on face-to-face interaction and the 'fluid transient "encounter"' (Gouldner, 1971, p.379), while being praised for its ability to connect 'the dynamics of individual behaviour with the structures of stratification and organizations' (Johnson Williams, 2001, p.360). However, Goffman's framework (1959/1990) is also characterised by a second binary that lies beneath the pillars of individual autonomy and societal structures: realities are also shaped and problematised by simultaneously existing sincere and false performances given by individuals.

The succinct presentation of the diverse findings in Chapter Four, many of which generate new lines of discussion in dance scholarship, utilised Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy and the case study model. Chapter Five interrogated the very Goffmanian concepts used, primarily through drawing the case study findings and reflexivity together, and situating the whole within sociology of dance scholarship. I now conclude through first exploring the broader roles played by kinaesthesia, humour and embarrassment, followed by an interrogation of Goffmanian morality. Finally I consider the binary of structure and agency, and the existence of dance and social hierarchies in shaping the study. As I subsequently demonstrate, though each case study has resulted in new insights, each case can also be viewed as a starting point for further exploration: as with Goffman's own studies, research that uses a Goffmanian approach 'in its very nature is in process and thus necessarily incomplete' (Waksler, 1989, p.2).

## 2. The Role of Kinaesthesia

'[T]he kinaesthetically experienced dance form is for the dancer what the visually perceived dance form is for the spectator' (Hamby, 1984, p.44). The aim of this short section is to succinctly cement the role of the kinaesthetic, as a positive force shaping an internal experience, and as a factor, already discussed, that plays a central role in inspiring performers and teams to engage in 'dramaturgical loyalty' in their social interactions.

Uniting the realms of philosophical aesthetics and 'lived experience', the pioneering Best/McFee dichotomy characterises aesthetics in dance, as opposed to other movement activities such as gymnastics, as the result of intentionality in the production and form of the movement, framed by 'life-issues' (Best, 1974; McFee, 1992). The performance, experience and presentation of dance 'allows us to experience the finer shades of feeling, [...] refining [...] those concepts under which those feelings are experienced, and under which those experiences are characterised' (McFee, 1994, p.40 cited in Pakes, 2003, p.142). Pakes (2003) demonstrates how McFee

show[s] how dance is distinctive, firstly as a form of human action and secondly as an object of aesthetic and artistic interest. According to McFee, dance is a form of intentional human action, governed by reason, in which we take aesthetic rather than purposive interest; that is, we look at dance for its own sake, in terms of its intrinsic aims and values, not because it is the means to achieving an externally defined goal... This is not an external goal imposed on dance from the outside, but an internal dynamic characteristic of art as such (p.142).

The difficulty of capturing and describing internal experiences by ethnographic and phenomenological means has been a central focus of dance studies (Burt, 2009; Desmond, 1997; Jackson, 2005), but through linking the overt and visual dance performances given with Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, observations concerning the role of kinaesthesia have been drawn. In addition, having previously experienced, or experienced within the case studies, the types of movement being performed, allowed me to note how my

enjoyment (or otherwise) of performing the movements affected my part in the various social interactions that unfolded. This was most apparent within the salsa club where the syncopation of the hip movements, the merging of physical and auditory rhythm, the lights, colour and close physical contact with another human being served to shape the nature of social behaviours in the research process. My behaviour – the way that I smiled and talked with my partner – was shaped both by my being guided, spun and whirled about, and through watching the dancing of other couples.

As explored previously, as with the salsa club, within the inclusive creative dance class, the kinaesthetic sensation created and experienced was to some extent reliant on another human being. Contact improvisation has been described as a dance practice in which the ‘impetus for motion stems entirely from the moment of improvisational immediacy. Although dancers learn methods of safe physical response to these impulses, contact’s essence is all about riding the waves of unexpected partner movement’ (Davies, 2008, p.44). Davies (2008) explains how

[u]nlike ballet, which Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull claims “emphasizes sight as the primary process of artistic conception, perception, and kinesthetic [sic] awareness” (272), contact’s aesthetic disorientation places greater emphasis on the shared flow of energy than on the still, photographic stage image (p.45).

This ‘shared flow of energy’ was a theme of both the salsa and inclusive creative dance class case studies; however, the highly social nature of the salsa club, the pulsing music, and the colourful and whirring bodies meant that in contrast to the inclusive creative dance class, a smile was almost permanently on my face when salsa dancing. The more serious business of negotiating shared movement, without a conventionally conceived ‘leader’, and through being in a studio rather than a club setting, shaped the way that I interacted with, and interpreted the movement.

Within the present study, the salsa club was the most overt example of attendees seeking a reality that constituted a desire to engage in escapism, a dominant theme in the salsa dance literature (Bosse, 2008; Skinner, 2008). The animated, colourful and frenzied nature of this setting contrasts with the other 'social dance' practice considered in the current study: the line dancing class. In the latter case, however, a positive experience derived from the dancing was still discerned: participants performed in rows, they most often had 'their' place within the line, denoting their level of experience, and there is something comforting in dancing on one's own (in the sense of having no physical contact), yet as part of a coordinated and visual whole. I took pleasure in turning, performing grapevines, pointing my feet in a set sequence when, once a dance had been mastered, I could continue to perform on a sort of auto pilot, allowing some disengagement between mind and body, and giving the former some time out. The regularised nature of line dancing promoted a safety in numbers approach: being a 'cog in the wheel' permitted escapism of a different, less urgent and overt kind. As Kate, the line dancing class instructor, emphasised, and to repeat an earlier quote, there is significance in the repetitive nature of line dancing: 'Everything's repeated. You drive the same way, you dance the same way'. The repetitive nature of line dancing needs to be taken into account to understand the kinaesthetic and thus, social experience, enjoyed by participants. There was very much a sense of dancing, literally, as a team. This transferred to socially interacting as a team. Having performed the easier and more intermediate dances, I was better able to kinaesthetically understand the experiences enjoyed by the ladies dancing the more advanced dances – and why so many people stayed to watch them, and aspired to perform them.

The significance of dance movement that, by its very nature, is repetitive was also evident within the professional ballet and Highland dancing classes, and in the primary school. The boisterous nature of ceilidh dancing transcended the formal institutional setting as did the children's equating of dance with physical actions such as spinning and jumping. The

constant motion of setting to, spinning and clapping had the potential effect of causing the pupils (and myself) to constantly shout and laugh, had the class teacher not controlled this behaviour. The kinaesthetic sensation experienced within the ballet and Highland dancing classes reflected the uniformity of the line dancing class (for example, each dancer has 'their' place at the *barre*; *barre* work is performed as a class). There is also something reassuring in settling into a *plié* exercise (the first exercise of both classes): a change in the mind-set and in the body occurs. In the words of Goffman (1959/1990), these exercises constitute 'moments [where] one can detect a wonderful putting on and taking off of character' (p.123); a process that is not limited to engaging in the more codified dance practices. Although this alteration is both felt internally and is externally displayed, kinaesthesia plays a primary role in causing this transformation to occur. My social behaviour altered, and to significant extent was shaped by, the physical movement that I was performing and feeling, or in the case of the professional ballet class, watching and feeling. Within the Highland dancing class, the steps and dances performed, and which characterise and constitute the practice, made one feel brave and powerful. The rigid posture necessary, the straight legs, upright arms, splayed fingers resembling 'antlers', and the extreme turnout all served to give one a feeling of invincibility when dances and sequences were 'hit'. Doing the dancing and feeling the exact and powerful nature of the movement sensation gave me a greater understanding of how and why the teacher and older participants felt so protective of the practice.

Kinaesthesia was a shaping force that operated on multiple levels throughout the present study, both as an internal motivator and one that demonstrated and inspired dramaturgical cooperation and loyalty. Dancing within the case studies to unearth the patterns of social interaction within, allowed me to reconcile two contrasting natures of dramaturgy and dancing, through considering together the social and dance performances unfolding. To return to an earlier quote, as Manning (2005) explains, 'Goffman considered dramaturgical action as a form of strategic interaction. Dramaturgy should therefore be understood as goal-

directed' (p.7), which contrasts somewhat with the definition of dance explored previously as 'dance for its own sake... [not] the means to achieving an externally defined goal (Pakes, 2003, p.142).

### **3. The Function of Humour**

Paolucci and Richardson (2006) explain the ability of humour to 'poke through the thin sleeve of official reality' (p.33): '[H]umour disturbs our "definition of reality"' (Hall et al, 1993, p.2 cited in Paolucci and Richardson, 2006, p.30). Owing to the creative and independent nature of the movement being performed, the theme of humour, often ironic in nature, took a more overtly central role in shaping the reality within the inclusive creative dance class, than in the other case studies (such as the 'black comedy' discerned as being employed in the professional ballet class). Utilising Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model revealed the concept to be a central one, encouraged by the teachers leading each class. In contrast to the professional ballet class, where it was used as a tool in social interactions, ironic humour was both spontaneously embedded into, and consciously choreographed, within the dancing in the inclusive creative dance class.

Within the class, humour was used and observed in a variety of ways: to take ownership of disability ('Fraser leapt into Nathan's electronic wheelchair and rather demonically whizzed round uttering beeping sounds' (observation session)), and to communicate that it was ok to not be a 'real' dancer ('when asked to make a shape, volunteer, Lawrence, calmly stood up and crossed his arms. "That's a great shape!" exclaimed Fraser' (observation session)).

Humour was also a tool for bonding all participants, including myself as researcher, together:

During the massage section, volunteer, Lawrence and clients, Duncan and Archie, all sat behind one another in a row, massaging the shoulders of the person in front of them. It made for quite a humorous picture with Lawrence teasingly saying "do it better, you're not listening are you?" – prompting jokes about him being a hard taskmaster (observation session).

'Humor's appeal to exaggeration can produce cognitive dissonance between our experience of everyday life, the content and logic of a joke, and the competing and opposing values of the larger society' (Paolucci and Richardson, 2006, p.31). Macionis (1998) situates humour in the Goffmanian world though noting that '[t]o "get" humor, members of an audience must understand the two realities involved enough to perceive the incongruity' (p.98 cited in Paolucci and Richardson, 2006, p.30). Within the inclusive creative dance class, the use of ironic humour acted as a bridge between the actual dance ability of the support workers and volunteers, and the dance ability that they wished they had; they used irony to acknowledge their limited but improving capabilities, while the teachers used humour to reassure and include them within the class.

Humour constituted a real force not only within the professional ballet class and inclusive creative dance class, but in less overt ways, across the case studies. For example, within the salsa club, I drew on humour to apologise for mistakes made, for hitting my partner in the face with my hair and for stepping on his feet. Within the line dancing class, banter between the instructor Kate and the regular participants distinguished this team of participants further from the tourists and 'rolling beginners'. However, the case studies where 'saving face' was of greater importance are noteworthy for the absence of humour observed. The primary school class teachers and Anne, the Highland dancing class teacher, did not use humour as a primary communication strategy, a fact that may be linked to their feeling a need to maintain a certain front to learners who routinely threatened, or had a greater potential to threaten, their 'director' role.

Paolucci and Richardson (2006) argue that humour, as a central element of everyday life, is under-theorised in Goffman's work; certainly within the current study, I found it difficult to link the importance of friendship, a crucial instigator and result of humour in case study settings,

to *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. However, this observation is linked to pre-existing arguments: a) that Goffman's (1959/1990) model pays limited attention to group actions (Girdwood, 2010) and b) overwhelmingly focuses on the place of negative (rather than positive) emotion in everyday life (Scheff, 2003). There exists the potential for further exploration of the role played by humour and irony in shaping Goffmanian realities, through exploring the wish on the part of participants engaged in that reality to demonstrate their loyalty to it.

#### **4. The Feeling of Embarrassment**

Just as 'humour' was a force particularly present within the salsa club, professional ballet, inclusive creative dance and line dancing classes, a second social construct, that of embarrassment, played a central role in the latter two and in the primary school case study, establishing a relationship between humour and embarrassment. In each case, the potential for embarrassment was linked to a concern that the dance performance given or demonstrated was at odds with the reality being sought. Yet, dance scenarios aside, embarrassment is a potential outcome of every interaction. Goffman argued that 'embarrassment had universal, pancultural importance in social interaction' (Scheff, 2003, n.p):

Face-to-face interaction in any culture seems to require just those capacities that flustering seems to destroy. Therefore, events which lead to embarrassment and the methods for avoiding and dispelling it may provide a cross-cultural framework of sociological analysis (Goffman, 1956, p.266 cited in Scheff, 2003, n.p).

Dance within primary school education is controlled by expectations wrought by a number of stakeholders: colleagues, pupils, parents and education officials, guided by the dominant perceptions of dance as an artistic, aesthetic, creative, exhausting, exotic, and technical

practice (to be explored further in this chapter). A need for confidence is closely tied to a desire to avoid feeling embarrassed. According to Heath (1988), embarrassment

lies at the heart of the social organization of day-to-day conduct. It provides a personal constraint on the behavior of the individual in society and a public response to actions and activities considered problematic or untoward. Embarrassment and its potential play an important part in sustaining the individual's commitment to social organization, values and convention. It permeates everyday life and our dealings with others. It informs ordinary conduct and bounds the individual's behavior in areas of social life that formal and institutionalized constraints do not reach (p.137).

This description of embarrassment reveals how institutional forces shape a teacher's need to preserve their personal front, and within the primary school this morphed into the need to control the unfolding dance scenario: we saw previously how the naturally raucous nature of ceildh dancing had the potential to over-excite the pupils, necessitating the need to exert more control than might be necessary in another learning scenario. As mentioned by (Waksler, 1989), Goffman did not work with children and the omission of children as performers in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* means that we do not know how Goffman understood and interpreted the power imbalance intrinsic to social relationships between adults and children. Nonetheless, the approach he developed is, as Waksler (1989) states, 'potentially applicable to all societies' as '[c]learly all societies possess face-to-face interaction, non-verbal conduct and language' (p.11). As we have seen, the actions contributing to managing the expected reality within the primary school were not limited to the teachers, and the need to manage potential embarrassment extended to pupils: the children also reacted to, and felt the need to give a certain impression of what they thought 'dance was', primarily to myself (as a new audience) and to their peers.

Scheff (2003) identifies 'embarrassment' as a central Goffmanian concern: '[M]ost of Goffman's treatment of feeling concerns embarrassment, and less prominently, its two cousins, shame and humiliation' (n.p.). Yet, although Goffman was rare amongst sociologists

for considering emotions as a shaping force (Scheff, 2003), he restricted himself to the force of negative feelings in shaping impression management. Concerning the power of embarrassment, the possibility exists that its dominance within Goffmanian thinking, has been to the detriment of other, both positive and negative, situations and scenarios.

## **5. Understanding Morality with a Goffmanian Approach**

The theme of negativity continues in this section as we move from the place of emotion in the greater Goffmanian approach, to the mechanisms central to his dramaturgical model. Within the line dancing class, the instructor, long-term and regular participants sought to create and be part of a reality in which the technique of line dancing was valued, even though back stage, they communicated their dissatisfaction with it, and revealed that they shared many of the perceptions they ostensibly sought to change. Likewise, within the Highland dancing class, the teacher and older participants sought to maintain and protect the regulation and physicality of the dance practice in the face of rebellion from the younger participants, but admitted certain sympathies and concerns with reference to the future of the dance practice outwith the class. In each case, the same reality was largely supported front stage during observations and contradicted back stage during interviews.

Goffman's frame defines 'the performer, as the person who is granted special and exclusive permission by the audience to present a drama' (Manning, 2005, p.5). However, Goffman (1959/1990) argues that '[t]he "true" or "real" attitudes, beliefs, and emotions of the individual can be ascertained only indirectly, through his [sic] avowals or through what appears to be involuntary expressive behavior' (pp.13-14), leaving the reader or 'user' of his framework to discern what constitutes 'involuntary expressive behaviour'. If we take interviews to be a space where unconscious 'avowals' are made, interview data played a significant part in understanding each of the contradicting realities inherent within the line and Highland dancing case studies.

Without the interview data, this research could only have extensively employed the notion of 'as if' in the primary front stage performance spaces; I would have had to rely solely on my ears and eyes to draw conclusions about people's beliefs and opinions based on their actions and interactions. Waksler (1989) further explains the concept:

In the face of the fact that sociologists cannot know what is in the minds of others, some strategy must be developed if sociologists are to make sense out of interactional data. The strategy of analyzing behavior "as if" it were intentional allows sociologists to focus on "how" things are done, the "how" being the same whatever the underlying motivation (p.9).

Without the data gained backstage the only observable 'intentional' actions that I could have witnessed would be situated within the primary performance spaces.

Waksler (1989) highlights the point made by Messinger et al (1965) that Goffman does not recognise that '[i]n everyday life people do distinguish between "reality" and "just an act" (Waksler, 1998, p.6). Raffel (2013) argues that Goffman does not demonstrate how we 'regularly act falsely' but rather, how 'in many of our interactions we do not feel what we are conveying is real' (p.177). Therefore, performers can be aware both of when they are giving 'sincere' or 'cynical' performances (Goffman, 1959/1990). However, this study did not seek to fully deconstruct this distinction: what is significant is that the distinction exists. I did not point out to the teacher and participants from the line and Highland dancing classes that they were expressing different stances front stage and back stage or seek to critique their understanding of their contradictory actions. Goffman (1959/1990) provides the defence:

While we could retain the common-sense notion that fostered appearances can be discredited by a discrepant reality, there is often no reason for claiming that the facts discrepant with the fostered impression are any more the real reality than is the fostered reality they embarrass. A cynical view of everyday performances can be as one-sided as the one that is sponsored by the performer. For many sociological issues it may not even be necessary to decide which is the more real, the fostered impression or the one the performer attempts

to prevent the audience from receiving. The crucial sociological consideration, for this report at least [*The Presentation of Self*], is merely that impressions fostered in everyday performances are subject to disruption.... We will want to ask, "What are the ways in which a given impression can be discredited?" and this is not quite the same as asking, "What are the ways in which the given impression is false?" (p.72).

In other words, the dramaturgical metaphor is not employed in the present study to seek a single and supposedly 'true' reality but to interpret the multiple, simultaneously existing discrepant realities that are in existence, which together build up a more complete picture of the everyday interaction under investigation in a given setting. Within each of these case studies, certain roles, actions and behaviours are being enacted and adopted not only because of the particular social and dance setting that they occur in, but in relation to the specific contexts and people that characterise the interaction. As the researcher, I participated in this drama, by modifying my own behaviour, acting in a way that I thought would be most acceptable for the setting that I was in. I often experienced a deep sense of relief on the train home after classes, because I was no longer feeling the need to 'act' in a specific way: such 'acting' is both possible and necessary precisely because of the different realities and settings that individuals are constantly moving between and within.

Of course, this reasoning also highlights how participants in the current study were able to modify their behaviour in the different spaces, strengthening Goffman's view of performers as 'regularly manipulative' (Waksler, 1989, p.8). Within Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model there is no space for the audience member or observer to encounter a truly sincere performance as 'the sincere [is] not just possibly but inevitably naïve since their [performers] form of behaviour is, by Goffman's definition, a case of being 'taken in' by someone, namely themselves' (Raffel, 2013, p.170).

Yet taking this approach to heart is 'sociologically irrelevant' (Waksler, 1989, p.8). 'What counts is not whether men are moral but whether they seem moral to others' (Gouldner,

1970, p.383 cited in Raffel, 2013, p.164). 'Whether or not individuals manipulate the expressions they give and give off and the impressions they convey to others, setting the problem as an empirical rather than a moral one is a more promising route to sociological understanding' (Waksler, 1989, p.7). At root, this study is seeking empirical rather than moral understanding.

## **6. Societal Control and Individual Autonomy within the Case Studies**

A central criticism of Goffman's approach relates to its overriding concern with unfolding micro-interactions: realities are constrained by the immediate impression management taking place and the impact of larger ideas and contexts in shaping social actions and behaviours are given limited attention in his own works. This approach is reflected in the presentation of the case studies in Chapter Four: focus is on the interactions taking place within the setting, rather than the impact of structures outwith. At the same time, however, the literature reviews undertaken for each of the case studies overtly guided the data collection by shaping the focus of interviews and observations, setting the stage for each analysis to be conducted within a wider cultural and historical context (taking as a starting point the dance practice in question, with the exception of the primary school where social setting took precedence, see Appendix 1). The asymmetry traditionally associated with a Goffmanian approach is here further counteracted by a specific focus on the existence of societal structure and individual agency in my reading of the relevant literature attached to the case studies.

An exercise looking at the nature of the dance practice and its context in each case study, speculating where each case might be placed on a spectrum between structure and agency, reveals not only a placing for each one, but also the existence of a binary between dance practice and social setting. To reiterate, the case studies are the professional ballet class, the inclusive creative dance class, the line dancing class, the salsa club, the Highland

dancing class and dance in primary education (comprising of ceilidh dancing, 'creative' dance, Zumba and street dance). Taking dance practices first, we can observe that the nature of the practice in each study shapes their potential positioning: owing to the rigidity and technical level of performances given, ballet can be viewed as the most 'structured' dance practice, but it is joined at that end of the spectrum by Highland dancing. Line and salsa dancing both have vocabularies attached to them and are further defined by set dances (line) and a range of accepted styles (salsa). As I will shortly explore, all four may also be said to have a 'global' and 'glocal' presence. Street dance is defined by a certain style and moves, if not by complete dances, ceilidh dancing is characterised by set dances and steps to perform while Zumba is guided predominantly by various forms of Latin dance. The very term 'creative' dance suggests a certain fluidity and freedom in the repertoire of movements performed. Social settings included studios that constituted a site of professional work (ballet class), fully equipped vocational or professional level studios (creative and Highland classes), a social community space (line dancing class), a *bona fide* nightclub (salsa dancing), and an institutional pillar of society: the primary school (within which a myriad of dance activities were situated). Based on social setting, I might posit the salsa club case study as the most 'autonomous' activity as the space was not only open to general members of the public but the range of activities which took place included a mixture of dancing, drinking, talking and watching. When dance and setting are brought together in the analysis of the case studies examined, some combinations provoke a distinct tension. For example, ceilidh dancing is usually performed at informal celebratory late-night social events, yet the kinaesthetic and social experience of doing ceilidh dancing, when performed within a school, was strongly inflected by the institutional setting: the kinaesthetic experience was curtailed by the expectation to 'behave'. A second example is creative movement in a space that is designed for vocational training with all the trappings of *barre* and mirrors; the focus on autonomy and interpretation of movement contrasted with the equipment present, which was clearly designed to facilitate conformity of performance. During the inclusive

creative dance class we were only instructed to use the mirrors once (during the guest technique class) and never used the *barres*.

### **6.1. Globalisation, glocalisation and codification**

The literature demonstrates that ballet, Highland and salsa dancing are dance forms that are global, glocal and codified, to varying degrees. As explored previously, the sociology of ballet literature very much focuses on the ethos of strict discipline in the ballet world, characterised by a top-down approach, and this focus on structure is evident in the wider literature on the dance practice. The ballet studio is a highly-structured site: the classical ballet doctrine is characterised by its own lexicon and a requirement for technique to be performed in a certain fashion (Johnston, 2006). As Daly (1999) states 'dance classicism is an ideology devoted to tradition and to hierarchy of all kinds' (p.112). Van Dyke (1992) goes one step further to state, '[i]n a sense, the ballet ethic can be viewed as a systematic removal of individuality by teaching conformity to an imposed idea' (p.114). The aesthetics of ballet are honed and protected by pedagogical techniques: traditions of classical ballet training have barely evolved since the mid-19th century; the standard training is almost entirely teacher-led, giving the student little opportunity for dialogue, dissent or autonomous expression (Morris, 2003). Ballet constitutes a global and 'glocal' dance form due to its geographical spread and enduring popularity: the practice 'has surfaced in enough places to convince us of its significance as a global (intercultural, though not universal) phenomenon' (Wainwright et al, 2007, p.320). Dancers and management move between companies (Turner and Wainwright, 2003) and ballet companies are constantly performing one another's work (Wainwright et al, 2007). As a global force, ballet practice has shaped individual styles of ballet performance and practice in the studio: ballet teachers face the difficulty of 'producing a stylistically uniform and regimented *corps de ballet*' (Wainwright et al, 2006, p.545). Styles and systems (Cecchetti, RAD, Vaganova, and so on) which differ

from the dominant one danced in a particular locality are viewed as mistaken variations (Morris, 2003); evidence of the 'local' of 'glocal' ballet practice.

Stylistically linked to ballet is Highland dancing, with the former playing a prominent part in the history and development of the latter (Newton, 2012). As with ballet, the precise nature of Highland dancing, the steps and set dances, necessitates a highly disciplined environment. Boards and associations, primarily the SOBHD, wield considerable power in stipulating exactly what should be learnt in class and how it should be performed in competition, and this extends across the globe: wherever the Scottish diaspora exists, Highland dancing may be found in the form of Highland Games, championships and competitions, private syllabus classes and exams. Yet, in contrast to ballet practice, Highland is immersed in symbolism and rooted as an expression of one nation: Scotland. In contrast to the other case studies undertaken, the Highland dancing class interrogated is situated in its country of origin and in contrast to the ballet and salsa case studies, the 'glocalisation' aspect (reflected in the link to a derogatory 'Scottishness' uncovered) can act as an external and apparently negative force in shaping the realities within. This state was also replicated in reverse in the line dancing case study: Glasgow is not an 'original' site of line dancing, and it was global rather than glocal associations (for example, the link established between 'rednecks' and Country and Western music (Neal, 2007)) that negatively influenced perceptions of the activity.

As illustrated by the literature interrogating salsa within various countries and continents (Bosse, 2008; García, 2008; 2013, Pietrobruno, 2002; Skinner, 2007; 2008; Urquía, 2005), salsa dancing has been characterised as 'a transnational practice' (Pietrobruno, 2002, n.p.). Within the salsa club case study, in particular, the tension between structure and agency can be subsumed in a tension between the global and the glocal. Glasgow is not a 'lived' location of salsa, but salsa within the city is shaped by global expectations and perceptions that extend to technical performance, social etiquette and ethnic heritage. As Bosse's (2008)

study uncovered, there is a supposed intrinsic link between ethnicity and ability to salsa dance that dancers performing outside the genre's sites of origin are acutely aware of:

When I do see Cubans dancing, I feel then that they just move in a totally different way and it's amazing to watch, it's like "oh God, no matter how hard I try, I'm not going to move like that" (Maggie, salsa dancer in current case study).

In the Western world, salsa dancers in a specific location learn a particular salsa style from a particular teacher based at a certain salsa school, thus revealing a genealogy of control and development (Skinner, 2007). The salsa style that an individual dancer performs shapes the perceptions that their fellow salsa dancers have of them: a perceived dance hierarchy reflects and constructs a social hierarchy (García, 2008; 2013). Yet, as Bosse (2008) amply illustrates through drawing on the Bourdieusian concept of habitus, the movement itself exerts control over its performer. Adopting 'the movement dialect of another cultural group' (Bosse, 2008, p.49), in this case, in the context of salsa, is difficult, if not impossible, to do. However, the very fact that one can call oneself a salsa dancer, gives a certain impression: individuals are arguably conscious of the status to be gained, as the place of salsa has developed from being a colonial representation of the exotic Latin 'other' in the Western world (Lundström, 2009) to a communicator of cultural taste and worldliness (García, 2008; Skinner, 2007; Urquía, 2005).

## **6.2. *Existence of a hierarchy***

Ballet, Highland and salsa dancing have all been situated in the field of dance as practices that are global, glocal and codified. Their positioning represents the forces that shape the dancing, motivations and perceptions attached to both these and 'other' dance activities and practices. Ballet practice in particular produces dominant images and associations linked to aesthetics, technical ability and standard, nurturing a common belief that a) certain dance types are more valued than others on account of their performance and heritage and b) that

there is a 'right' way to dance and one must give a certain technical performance, to be viewed as a 'dancer'.

Concerning inclusive dance, the literature has revealed a sense of discomfort with the relationship between dance performance and disabled dancers, rooted in notions of aesthetics, judgement and spectatorship. This uneasiness is replicated in the use of a variety of labels, with inclusive, integrated and mixed-ability dancing all existing as terminology (Dey 2003; Helfenbaum, 2009; Kaufmann, 2006; Nonhebel, 2007; Zitomer and Reid, 2011). To return to a quote provided earlier, this state of confusion extends to the purpose of people with disabilities dancing:

On the one side, disabled dance is seen as therapeutic – the relationship between body and dance is unproblematic, dance is an 'opportunity' for disabled people to discover themselves as 'whole' and 'able'... On the other side, disabled dance can be seen as performance: challenging dominant notions about 'suitable bodies' (Kuppers, 2001, p.29).

Dance is a visual experience for the spectator, and Kuppers (2000) argues that spectators cannot separate the disability from the dancer. Dominant notions of 'what dance is' shape perceptions of what disabled dancers are capable of doing and even what individuals should be doing: hence the dominance of 'creative' dance and contact improvisation as the main performance mediums rather than the more codified forms of dance. Contact improvisation, in particular, is not only considered to have limited codification (in terms of vocabulary), but is a practice that is often performed on a horizontal, rather than a vertical line. There exists an associated connotation that dance performed on a horizontal plane is less deserving of respect in Western culture where ballet (perceived as the ultimate 'vertical' dance form) still reigns supreme (Kuppers, 2000); '[w]ithin Western cultures, prone bodies usually connote a lower status' (Davies, 2008, p.46).

Participants taking part in the line dancing class were also aware of how their practice is perceived externally. Negative perceptions of the practice are tied to the origins of line dancing as performed by supposedly working-class 'rednecks' (Neal, 2007), and, in addition, the group of people most associated with the activity (as was the case with this case study) are white females aged 50 and over: attitudes to line dancing are tainted with ageism. The pursuit of line dancing outside its original context has also been presented as a 'trend', as reflected by the decision of scholars to only include long-term attendees in research on the activity (Keogh et al, 2009; Nadasen, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the literature affords limited consideration to the attraction of line dancing itself – the steps, the movement and the kinaesthetic enjoyment of the experience – with the majority of studies focusing on the physical and psychological benefits of taking part. Key motivations unearthed in the literature revolve around the need or wish to keep fit, reflecting wider social expectations that one should aspire to be a healthy and thus, viable member of society.

Within the primary school, class teachers derived validity when teaching dance from their position as an authority figure and through maintaining control in the institutional setting, (MacLean, 2007, Rolfe; 2001; Wilson et al, 2008), rather than from the content and nature of the dance (a myriad of activities and practices) that they taught. A lack of confidence was compounded by what were considered ambiguous teaching guidelines, insufficient curriculum time and poor training (Wilson et al, 2008), time constraints, and a lack of subject knowledge (Connell, 2009). Within primary education internationally, dance is accorded low priority subject status, as dictated from 'above' in educational guidelines and implied by a curriculum that characterises dance as a 'fun' and 'healthy' activity, rather than a serious means of aesthetic and creative expression (Bamford, 2006; Bergmann Drewe, 1996; Courtney and Park, 1981 cited in Russell-Bowie, 2010). Dance within primary education was unconsciously shaped both by the perceptions held by individual teachers and pupils, and structured according to the formal education context within which it was situated.

A hierarchy of dance structured primarily on the processes and structures of globalisation, glocalisation and codification is not the only legitimate approach in existence, yet this consideration demonstrates the external perceptions that shaped the more micro realities of the dance activities and practices relevant to this study.

## **7. Summary**

In 2001, Scheff argued that Goffman's 'work sought to demonstrate, each time anew, the possibility of overthrowing cultural assumptions about the nature of reality' (p.5); this is an aim of the present study, reflected in the findings unearthed and presented. Complementing a primarily broad sociological approach, this chapter followed on from the previous conceptually thematic focus of the previous chapter, through further considering the relationship between Goffman and kinaesthesia, and the two key social constructs of humour and embarrassment, and the place of Goffmanian morality. Subsequent discussion focused on the place of structure and agency tied to the dance practice and social setting of each case study, and an exploration of a greater hierarchy in existence, shaped by globalisation, glocalisation and codification.

Cementing further the application of Goffman to discern hidden and multiple interpretations of dance realities, a consideration of findings from the line dancing class and the Highland dancing class represented two sides of the same coin. Within the line dancing class, instructor and long-term participants sought to change dominant perceptions of their practice; in contrast, within the Highland dancing class, teacher and long-term participants sought to maintain dominant perceptions of the practice. Within both settings, their actions front stage reflected this aim, although concerns and discrepancies with this vision were communicated back stage. Discussion revolving around these two case studies in particular, highlighted both a central criticism and a strength of Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical framework: people are 'tricky, harassed little devils' (Gouldner, 1970, p.380), a reality that

some scholars are unwilling to accept, yet it is the very existence of, and intersection between, discrepant realities that proves to be of such interest. Through interrogating contradictions, as explored in the above section, a deeper reality is revealed.

However, Goffman (1959/1990) himself urged caution concerning the use of the small-scale dramaturgical metaphor, warning that 'all the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify' (p.78), and, to repeat a quote given in Chapter Two, urged scholars not to 'characterise our own society as a whole with respect to dramaturgical practices' (p.237). Yet, as Waksler (1989) argues, '[t]he only valid test of the universality of Goffman's claims and their articulation with macrosociological concerns rests with their application and the resulting confirmation, refutation, or revision' (p.12). As with Goffman's own presentations, the current study may be taken as 'a beginning point rather than an ending' (Waksler, 1989, p.16).

## **8. Conclusion: The Hidden Dancers: A Goffmanian Analysis of Participatory Dance Activity and Practice in Glasgow, Scotland**

This final section summarises the current research, the principal explorations and findings made, by returning to some of those topics and key words embedded in the title of the thesis. I start by considering the significance of the various places and spaces involved in the study before moving on to look at the notion of 'what constitutes dance, what constitutes a dancer'. Next, the focus turns to specific benefits and challenges encountered through framing the data gathered within Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy. I move on to examine the notion of participation in conjunction with the binary nature of 'activity' and 'practice'. Lastly, I examine the role played by the physical setting of Glasgow in both delineating the boundaries of the present study and shaping the patterns of social interaction unearthed within it. I end with a focus on the applicability and generalisability of findings before highlighting future lines of inquiry.

My previous exploration of the notion of 'hidden' (see the Introduction) focused on the groups of dance participants included in the study, defined, in part, by the 'closed' organisation and institutions that they danced within. The use of Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy added another layer of understanding to the study with the inclusion of fixed back stage regions within, such as changing rooms, green room and staff room, and the notion of overtly conscious and covertly unconscious (dance and social) performances and realities. As I have emphasised, having access to these spaces not only contributed to my being embedded as a team member, but the data collected in the different front and back stage spaces revealed contrasting realities that have been hidden both from public perception and from previous studies. This latter, more abstract, definition of 'hidden' reflects lines of inquiry that necessitate further exploration, as brought to the fore by analysis of data collected and framed within Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy: most notably, that line dancers derive significant value from the technical practice of the activity, and that the evolution and popularity of Highland dancing may be negatively affected by the highly regulated nature of the practice. Both of these key findings have been shaped by participants engaged in these practices striving for legitimacy in the wider field of dance. Notions and perceptions of 'what constitutes dance, what constitutes a dancer' have emerged as key factors shaping impression management across the case studies in the construction of certain realities. In the context of the present study, the practice of ballet and what it represents (technique, culture, artistry and tradition) played a part in challenging and defining aspirations of 'what dance is' or should be within the inclusive creative, line, Highland and primary school case studies – that is, almost all the other case studies. Within the inclusive creative dance class and primary school, I have noted the concern expressed by support workers, volunteers and class teachers, that what they danced and taught was at odds with the reality aimed for. Within the salsa club, the desire for a certain dance experience took precedence over the heteronormative etiquette and needed to be negotiated in a space where competing salsa styles were in existence.

Reflecting the approach taken by key sociology of dance studies explored in Chapter Two, (i.e. Dryburgh and Fortin 2010; Pickard 2012; 2013; 2015; Wainwright et al. 2005; 2006; 2007), this study applied a sociological framework to ethnographic data collected from dance settings. Although discussion was driven by data and framed using Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy (rather than seeking data to 'fit' Goffmanian theory), this study made comprehensive use of the concepts and mechanisms of the framework. The approach reaped a number of benefits and unearthed certain challenges, both to this study and to wider sociology of dance study. Within the context of this research, there is a sense of having tested Goffman's (1959/1990) model to its limits. The project provided the opportunity to analyse the model's robustness to real-world applications. In particular, Goffman's lack of attention to considering the place of friendship as a social force and his lack of experience in working with children, affected the applicability of his framework to certain case studies where these issues were key features (namely, the inclusive creative dance class, line dancing class and primary school case studies). There is also some uneasiness in reconciling ethnographic fieldwork involving groups (and groups within groups) of dance participants, which resulted in a veritable mass of interview transcripts and sets of field notes, to hypothetical dramaturgical concepts that focus on isolated encounters involving on average two or three people. Thus, the approach adopted was to note single behaviours and actions, and through the grounded coding frame created and the application of Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model to key themes unearthed, understand how realities in each setting were constructed. Both the overall coherence and cohesiveness of the framework, and the specific dramaturgical concepts (explored extensively in Chapter Five) presented in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, shaped the current study.

The application of the model has heuristic value: the stand out feature of the dramaturgical framework is its emphasis on, and means to analyse, the face-to-face microsociology of a wide range of interactional settings. More specifically, the central theme unearthed by the

model centred on the nature of realities: how they were constructed, supported and fractured. As illustrated by the key findings of the study, this project, through its application of Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical framework, has brought new information to light as the result both of the analysis itself and the way that these cases offer a critique of the framework. The ways in which dance participants engage in activity and practice, dramatically highlighting or hiding certain facts in order to confirm or challenge the values of that community, was better understood by adopting Goffman's tools. Attaining honorary team member status gave me the means to seek out underlying patterns of behaviour and social interaction across the case studies. Comparison of behaviours exhibited between the front stage and back stage regions accessed, gave an added dimension of understanding as the interchanging nature of roles in different regions became apparent. The current project also constitutes an expansion of Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy through situating the researcher within the framework to reflexively consider the role that was played in the data collection process, viewing social interaction as produced by entwined performances in a literal dance sense as well as the intended social sense, and, in particular, instigating a new line of enquiry linking the internal kinaesthetic experience given to the resultant social behaviour.

The synopsis in Chapter One introduced my readings of the terms 'participatory', 'activity' and 'practice' bound up in the notion of dance 'events.' Consideration of 'events' that encompass both activity and practice also reflects that great sociological binary, societal structure versus individual agency: dance 'activities' are most obviously controlled from outside and above. Performing dance practice, in contrast, is most obviously an internal and kinaesthetic sensation: agency is gained from, and enacted within, the movement. As pointed out previously, dance scholars have criticised sociological studies that ignore the agency of dance by focusing overwhelmingly on structure (Dodds, 2012). In the present study, Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy reveals how those case studies that the literature and dominant public perceptions would suggest are particularly controlled by

structure (represented by globalisation, glocalisation and codification) were also shaped significantly by individual agency, the most obvious example being the professional ballet class. The centrality of the dancing was also fore fronted within the methodology. Firstly, the case studies were selected through the creation of a framework based on dance form, genre and type. Secondly, a series of literature reviews examined the history, trajectory and culture of the specific dance practices involved. Dance is not a single entity, but made up of contrasting forms (Nieminen, 1997). Lastly, I, as researcher, danced within all but one of the case studies, allowing my own kinaesthetic experiences to feed into data gathered.

All of the case studies considered were set within a three-mile radius, situated within the city of Glasgow, Scotland. Dance activities and the practices within them operated side by side, sometimes literally where studios were placed next to one another, sometimes less obviously within the same building, street or part of the city. Glasgow is rich in dance opportunities: as mentioned previously, over 80 separate dance activities and practices were unearthed during the initial mapping exercise of this geographical area (detailed in Appendix 2), ranging from tea dances at the local leisure centre for senior citizens to body conditioning at a private dance school as part of the vocational training offered. These two examples serve to illustrate the variety of case studies that could have been taken and are waiting to happen. The research location set within Glasgow was primarily used as a tool to constrain and contextualise the boundaries of the project. Yet, the city played a more overt role in some case studies than others. Within the professional ballet class and salsa club, the location of Glasgow serves to illustrate the features of these global practices that are embedded or emulated wherever they are performed. Concerning the line dancing and Highland dancing classes, globalisation has both allowed negative connotations of the dance practice from its site of origin (line dancing), or within the site of origin (Highland dancing), to shape the realities within.

The limitations that arise from the case study approach (Chapters Three and Six) and from

the use of Goffman's (1959/1990) dramaturgical model (Chapters Two, Five and Six) have been discussed. As a result of the number of case studies, data gained in the form of quantity of interviewees and observations was limited. In addition, the research methods adopted for each relied to a certain extent on my own dance ability, social skills and understanding of etiquette in each setting. The actions made, behaviour communicated and presentations that I gave, affected the nature of the data obtained. For example, as I was unable to dance as part of the professional ballet class, data relating to the back stage arena (the changing room) was not obtainable. In addition, I was unable to establish a relationship with the dancers that I was observing and interviewing to the same degree as the other case studies. Thus, the overall cohesiveness of the study is perhaps challenged. The other anomaly to highlight is the covert observation adopted in the salsa club, where participants were unaware of my attendance in the dual roles of researcher and dancer. On the other hand, the combination of methods drawn upon for each case study was carefully tailored to the nature of the setting under investigation, and the ethnographic approach adopted gave me the flexibility to adapt my role as necessary. In addition, as a research project informed by constructivist ontology and a realist epistemology, the findings were seeking to unearth and represent one possible interpretation based on empirical data gained and framed by Goffman's (1959/1990) model of dramaturgy, rather than make definitive truth claims.

Concerning the generalisability of findings based on 'theoretical inferences rather than statistical representations', Kelly (2007a, p.288) argues that the existence of certain fronts facilitates the generalisability of findings from Goffmanian studies: 'What are often thought to be unique, spontaneous and individual are often expected, obligatory and staged' (Whiteside and Kelly, 2016, p.24). However, this argument does not take into account the sheer variety of spaces, places, and people that can be brought together in any given scenario: an issue reflected by the current study. Therefore, it seems prudent to suggest that findings from the various case studies can be generalised to varying degrees. Findings from the professional ballet class may be applicable to professional ballet classes operating elsewhere, simply

because it is plausible to believe that similar support systems (and the autonomy within them and challenges facing them) exist in other companies and schools. The interpretations made in the salsa club that revealed a tension between conflicting salsa styles, heteronormative behaviour and etiquette may likewise be applicable to other Western sites. Concerning the remaining case studies, it is difficult to say with any certainty the degree to which the results are generalisable, as to a much greater extent they are tied to the very specific spaces (private dance studio, school, community venue) and places (Glasgow) where the activity is taking place. This possibility, however, creates exciting sites for further dance exploration and scholarship. Do other inclusive dance activities reflect similar patterns of social interaction to deliver the twin aims of integration and increased standard of dance performance? Do instructors and participants of other line dancing classes feel protective of their practice and wish to change dominant public perceptions? Are there other Highland dancing classes in Scotland where the regulated nature of the practice has such an impact on the social interaction within the activity? Do class teachers in other primary schools take such initiative in ensuring that opportunities to dance are provided?

Although each case study generated specific findings, all revolve around the social and dance experience of participants – the realities within. The approach taken marks a departure from the current trend in ethnographic sociology of dance explorations in several ways. Firstly, the study presented is not restricted to the professional and vocational ballet or contemporary dance worlds, through its inclusion of a wider range of activities, practices and ages and standards of participants. Secondly, the adoption of another sociological model not widely used in dance scholarship provided the means to unearth the more local issues, themes and topics inherent in participatory dance, through viewing performances in a literal dance sense as well as in Goffman's social sense. Finally, this study drew on the researcher's own dancing body as a means both to access and reflect upon the data gathered, situating the study squarely within dance scholarship.

'To dance is human' (Hanna, 1979). Sociology of dance as a discipline of study should encompass a wide range of dance activities and practices, and draw upon sociological theory and research methods that are best suited to the dance and dancing under investigation. This interdisciplinary study has demonstrated the value of adopting a Goffmanian, rather than a Bourdieusian or Foucauldian approach, to investigate through ethnographic means a broad range of participatory dance practices and activities. The majority of people who dance are not striving to be professional dancers, and sociological value should be attached not just to investigating the working or student dancer, but to *all* dancers, dance activities and practices taking place in society. Understanding and participating in the performances being given and the realities being sponsored – *joining* the dancing – provides an opportunity to understand more fully, the 'how' and 'why' behind a central societal action that makes us human.

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### *Films*

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## **8. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Case Study Literature Reviews**

##### **1. The Professional Ballet Class**

###### **1.1. *Role of Globalisation***

Globalisation is a key theme within studies produced by Wainwright et al (Turner and Wainwright, 2003; Wainwright et al, 2006; Wainwright et al, 2007) and the process of globalisation is of particular interest to the professional ballet class as a force shaping a training regime that has seen minimal change since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Morris, 2003). Ballet can be viewed as an international and intercultural phenomenon (Wainwright et al, 2007) and its multifaceted positioning has led to greater stress being placed on dancers both physically and emotionally (from the demands of performing conflicting ballet styles and from touring) (Turner and Wainwright, 2003). Wainwright et al (2006), in particular, explore the role of the 'figure of authority': ballet dancers, staff and choreographers move with fluidity between countries and companies as they learn, rehearse and tour one another's work (Turner and Wainwright, 2003). Thus, an ongoing difficulty for company ballet teachers is to produce a stylistically uniform *corps de ballet* (Wainwright et al, 2006).

Wainwright et al (2007) argue that it is the cultural capital of particular ballet staff that allows choreographic habitus to be formed, and cemented, and the repertoire performed in a certain style gives a particular company distinction in the field of ballet. The authors cite Fay (1997) to explain that such an action is necessary in the face of protecting a greater

institutional habitus challenged by the 'other' style(s) of guest artists. Companies are constantly in competition with one another, and this competition feeds into the daily class. Dancers need to be technically 'correct' in adhering to the style of a particular company, yet versatile enough to mould their bodies to the work of external teachers, choreographers and repertoire.

## **1.2. Authoritative Training**

A number of sources have focused on the existence and impact of 'the hierarchial "teacher-centred manner"' (Salosaari, 2002, p.23) adopted in ballet teaching (Johnston, 2006; Morris, 2003; Salosaari, 2002), with Johnston (2006) exploring the lack of private student speech, Morris (2003) focusing on the regulation of ballet styles and the lack of pedagogical change, and Salosaari (2002) considering and championing the agency of the ballet dancer in effecting change in ballet tradition. Wainwright et al (2006) develop a specific concept from the training that takes place in the studio, labelling the process as 'schooling habitus': 'The ballet coach literally inscribes the steps onto and into the bodies of the next generation of dancers. Ballet is based on the production and reproduction of this generational artistic embodiment' (p.540).

Traditional authoritarian ballet pedagogy is high on structure and expectations, but low on teacher warmth and responsiveness... Within this teaching style, students are expected to be seen and not heard; not to speak unless spoken to. Students should think, but dare not speak, lest they be seen as troublesome or disruptive (Johnston, 2006, p.3).

Morris (2003) argues that accepted training methods (shaped by training that is stylistically informed) continues to be dominated by the teacher, resulting in a loss of agency and creativity on the part of dances and dancers. This tradition has resulted in a reluctance to recognise and nurture the existence of different ballet systems and choreographic styles,

resulting in a stagnation of the dance form and a loss of artistry on the part of individual dancers (Morris, 2003). A wariness of change results in the dominance of technique over artistry and prevents dancers 'from recognising the differences between the codified and the choreographed movement' (Morris, 2003, p.19).

Johnston (2006) is concerned with the lack of private speech as a tool within vocational training, arguing that 'speech and actions necessarily form an inseparable alloy in the development of higher mental functions and abstract intelligence, which include ballet and choreography' (p.3). Johnston (2006) emphasises the relationship between the language of ballet and the role of the teacher; the latter guides the internalisation and understanding of the former through demonstration. Dancers also learn from observing one another: '[t]herefore, the intermediate stage in learning ballet is observation rather than articulation through speech' (Johnston, 2006, p.6). Johnston (2006) argues that limited use of internal speech negatively impacts upon student cognition and, consequently, the professional dancer's life. There exists the likelihood, that when dancers first join a professional daily class, they are doing so following years of training in a similar environment where 'private speech' as a tool has not been utilised.

Reflecting these findings, a change from an authoritative to a holistic training regime is underway in the field of ballet production, in response to a need to improve the learning ability and experience of vocational dancers (Dixon, 2005; Johnston, 2006; Wootten, 2009), to progress the dance form (Glasstone, 1977), and to decrease the frequency and severity of injuries (Brinson and Dick, 1996). As Dixon (2005) argues in her exploration of the use of Topf technique (TT) in the ballet studio, '[b]allet, or indeed any other dance style, should never solely be about the attainment of physical goals and quantity, but about discovery, knowledge and quality' (p.76). However, as Wootten (2009) has stated: '[t]he historically autocratic teaching model of Western concert dance provides both student and teacher with

the comfort of expected ritual and outcomes' (p.122). The overriding sentiment attached to professional ballet is the need for perfection; the result of challenging emotional and physical demands, embodied through a daily ritual of class, rehearsing, touring and performance with constant feedback a central tool for both maintenance and progression (Kassing and Mortensen, 1981).

### **1.3. Agency and Autonomy**

A number of authors have made reference to the closeted world of the professional ballet dancer (see for example, Johnston, 2006; Turner and Wainwright, 2003; Wulff, 1998), linking this 'cloistered existence' (Johnston, 2006, p.10) to the rigorous and demanding training and touring schedule. As emphasised previously, sociology of ballet studies have focused on the structural forces surrounding the vocational and professional dancer. For example, the decision to dance when injured, is shaped by the collective support, spirit and pressure of the company (dancers and staff, including medical staff) (Turner and Wainwright, 2003), training from a young age 'engages the young dancer in embodying the discipline of ballet and in developing a particular belief in a performing body' (Pickard, 2012, p.25). In addition, and as explored above, dancers engage in limited autonomous behaviour in the ballet class setting through suppressing their 'private [internal] speech' (Johnston, 2006). The sentiment that structural control is dominant characterises the literature explored above. However, within the greater sphere of dance studies, there exists a growing body of work focusing on the lived agency of the professional ballet dancer.

Katz Rizzo (2014) has explained that as a result of their stereotypically negative portrayal in the literature, ballet dancers, as a group, are traditionally fearful of taking part in scholarly research. She went on to explain that in the past, professional dancers rarely engaged in postsecondary education that was not vocational in nature and found it challenging to articulate, and explain, their role and purpose in the field of ballet. Therefore, Katz Rizzo

(2014) argues that the most useful works exploring the lived experience of professional dancers are produced by those scholars who have first-hand experience of this world as a practitioner (i.e. Pickard, 2012; 2013; 2015). The 'insider' has a greater ability to communicate and to ask the right questions, resulting in a very different approach to undertaking research in this area (Katz Rizzo, 2014).

Kolb and Kalogeropoulo (2012) focus on the pleasure inherent in ballet activity, arguing that

the notion of pleasure in ballet has been neglected in scholarly research which criticises ballet for its negative impact on the physical and mental health of dancers, its authoritarian teaching methods and its trivial aesthetic that objectifies the female body and perpetuates the construction of stereotypical gender roles within a patriarchal society (p.107).

Drawing on ethnographic data and the theories of sociologist Roger Caillois, the focus on 'multiple types of pleasure associated with ballet dancing as a key motivational factor and rationale for participation' (p.107), is to be commended. However, for the purposes of this research, it is significant to note that Kolb and Kalogeropoulo's (2012) paper considers the pleasure of amateur rather than professional ballet dancers.

Casey (2012) considers how the performance and choreographic approaches of Anna Pavlova and Albertina Rasch reflect American feminist thought in the early twentieth century. Casey (2012) reconstructs the 'ballet corporealities' of the two pioneers by drawing upon archival documentation. A previous feminist study, the doctoral thesis produced by the same scholar (Casey, 2009), is concerned with ballet history in the studio and views 'forms of ballet discipline as both enabling and constraining modes of self-fashioning' rather than 'as an inevitable producer of dancer docility' (n.p.). Highly interdisciplinary in nature, the study draws upon 'the fields of dance studies, feminist history, feminist theory, performance studies, and critical theory, [to analyse] the problems and possibilities created by rewriting feminism into a seemingly unfeminist artistic practice' (Casey, 2009, p.4.).

#### **1.4. Summary**

This review focuses on training within the professional ballet studio through considering key themes impacting upon the social world within; the process of globalisation in creating on-going pressure to perfect technique and versatility; the link between dominant authoritative methods adopted and the calls for change that have been made and lastly, the existence of individual agency within the profession. Ballet practice is most frequently represented through dichotomous images of pain and injury, and beauty and romance, yet, as highlighted by Kolb and Kalogeropoulo (2012), there is a need to recognise the existing agency and enjoyment of dancers. However, literature that explores the agency of the professional dancers (Casey, 2009; 2012; Kolb and Kalogeropoulo, 2012) focuses on the female dancer necessitating a need to explore autonomy performed by both male and female dancers within the ballet studio.

## **2. The Inclusive Creative Dance Class**

### **2.1. Role of contact improvisation**

The literature cited in this review focuses predominantly on contact improvisation and creative dance, reflecting both a wider perception that disabled dancers do not or cannot perform more codified forms of dance such as ballet, jazz and tap, and the narrow opportunities that are available for them to study these genres. Many professional inclusive dance companies including AXIS Dance Company and Candoco Dance Company use contact improvisation techniques and the adoption of these techniques is common among inclusive dance companies (Davies, 2008). Davies (2008) interrogates the history and employment of contact improvisation within integrated dance settings to argue that

[d]ancers with disabilities have often used contact improvisation as a tool for the negotiation of physical difference... Mixed-ability dance engages ['contact's egalitarian'] impulse at the levels of spectatorship, partnering, and movement aids in order to make revisionist social statements about art and ability (p.44).

In addition, contact improvisation has proved invaluable as an educational aid to non-disabled teachers and choreographers working with dance participants with a range of physical disabilities (Davies, 2008), owing to the inherent flexibility of the approach. Contact has been credited with creating 'a [level] playing field for disabled dancers' (Davies, 2008, p.44), and for challenging those engaging with the form through its necessity for 'physical honesty' (Davies, 2008, p.47).

## **2.2. *Aesthetical performance and spectatorship***

The experience of spectatorship is characterised by 'a hierarchical distinction between performers' skilled bodies and audiences' amateur bodies' (Kuppers, 2000, p.122). An obvious comparison between non-disabled and disabled dancers' bodies is made through illustrating the unquestioned aesthetical stereotypes of ballet that privilege vertical alignment and posture together with a sense of weightlessness (Kuppers, 2000). Spectatorship is a dominant theme in the inclusive dance literature (Cooper Albright, 1997; Benjamin, 2002; Kuppers, 2000; 2001; Whatley, 2007) and Davies (2008) explains the attraction:

[D]ance, unlike other forms of cultural production such as books or paintings, makes the body visible within the representation itself. Thus when we look at dance with disabled dancers, we are looking at both the choreography and the disability. This insertion of bodies with real physical challenges can be extremely disconcerting to critics and audience members who are committed to an aesthetic of ideal beauty (p.60).

Kuppers (2000) talks about the 'hypervisibility of the disabled body... [disability] becomes the mastersign of identity, overshadowing all other identities' (p.124). Therefore, 'the disabled

performer [can never be] “just” a (supposedly generic) performer’ (Kuppers, 2000, p.124).

Yet,

[W]hat is performance if not an invitation to gaze? Stage representation usually implies a desire to be looked at, a quality that makes it attractive to those seeking an audience. What makes disability performance different in this respect is a desire to be seen that incorporates an equally important need for control over the context and politics of the gaze (Davies, 2008, p.59).

According to Cooper Albright (1997) ‘watching disabled bodies dancing forces us to see with a double vision’ (p.58 cited in Davis, 2008, p.60); both the dance and the disability are apparent to the audience. Davies (2008) expands upon this argument, labelled the ‘two-tiered version of actualist performance’ (p.60), arguing that the ‘whole point is to see art and impairment as equal contributors to the overall aesthetic’ (p.60) and criticises Cooper Albright (1997) for assuming that spectators are unable to spectate in this way. Davies (2008) draws on the work of Garland Thomson (2001) to argue that both art and disability necessarily shape the experience of the spectator and cannot be, and should not be, separated: ‘Whereas the gaze takes into account its object’s entirety, the stare focuses solely on the object’s site of disablement’ (p.59). Yet, as Kuppers (2000) points out: ‘[s]uddenly, the sharing with the dancer’s distress, effort, pain, exhilaration or ecstasy is no longer given... We do not know what it means to move in that body’ (p.31). This concern should not just be applicable to people without disabilities but to audience members with differing disabilities; the audience member cannot ‘know what disabled bodies are capable of doing on stage’ (Davies, 2008, p.56). The issues surrounding spectatorship in dance revolve around the aesthetic performance given: what it is thought disabled individuals *should* be performing, i.e. creative dance, and what it is believed they *cannot* perform, i.e. ballet.

In their empirical study interrogating the perceptions of non-disabled children of the dance capability of their peers with disabilities, Zitomer and Reid (2011) discovered that pre-

participation, the dominant themes were 'can't walk/can't dance, passivity and different' (p.137). Drawing on the theory of ableism, a belief that disabled people are inferior within society, Zitomer and Reid (2011) explore how the existence of a wheelchair in a dance setting indicated an 'inability to walk and therefore inability to dance.... individuals with disabilities [were positioned] as patients needing treatment' (p.145). Within the research setting, non-disabled children involved in the study were observed physically manipulating the children using a wheelchair, to help or even make them dance. As the study progressed, the changing perceptions of the non-disabled children of 'what constitutes dance' affected their understanding of who *could* dance and *how*. '[A] change [occurred] from conceptualising the body as a whole engaged in dance primarily on the feet, to isolated body parts dancing and incorporating movement at different levels' (Zitomer and Reid, 2011, p.147). Following the period of participation, the previously dominant themes morphed into 'can't walk/CAN dance and different because-equipment' (Zitomer and Reid, 2011, p.148). Zitomer and Reid (2011) also consider the importance of learning through movement, and link this key concept of dance epistemology to the notion of conceptual change, citing Barron (2000) to explain:

[C]onceptual change is considered as change in concepts used for communication and problem solving or an increase of shared participation amongst community members. The conceptual change process suggests that group members have an equal opportunity to contribute to the learning process, share a common goal and work in collaboration (p.138).

A second study (Whatley, 2007), looking at university-integrated dance education operating within a framework of spectatorship, produced a similar conclusion. Whatley (2007) identifies five viewing strategies observed within the technique class: 'Passive Oppressive', 'Passive Conservative', 'Post-Passive', 'Active Witness' and 'Immersion'; by the end of the research participation period staff and students were engaging more with the latter two. Non-disabled students initially perceived their peers with disabilities as unable to demonstrate dance ability and artistry, however, following the nine month period of integration; non-disabled students

viewed the wheelchair as a tool for facilitating dance and re-evaluated their perceptions of 'what constituted dance'. Although the research methods of questionnaires and open discussions are used in Whatley's (2007) study, the 'voices' of her respondents make a minimal appearance: an issue that Whatley (2010) expanded upon:

Although the research that led to those categories was conducted directly with disabled dancers who gave voice to their own experiences, by proposing a categorization of viewing strategies, I assumed a privileged and non-disabled position for the viewer. I thus inadvertently positioned the disabled performer as other (p.42).

Quinlan and Bates (2008) explore three contrasting spectator strategies in relation to Heather Mills' participation in the television series 'Dancing with the Stars' as suggested by perceptions displayed in the media; the 'supercrip' (a term employed to describe someone who has excelled in spite of their disability), the 'sick role' and the 'sexualised disabled body'. The resulting and relative perceptions can view a disabled individual as simultaneously able to overcome their disability if he or she perseveres hard enough, using their disability to 'get out of' being a useful member of society, and unable to enjoy fulfilling romantic and sexual relationships. Quinlan and Bates (2008) cite Chenoweth (1993) to highlight that women with disabilities face a "double strike": being a woman and being disabled' (p.22). One can also argue that disabled female dancers face a 'triple strike', given that '[t]he female dancing body is often the object for a traditional, "patriarchal" reading of femininity' (Quinlan and Bates, 2008, p.73).

### **2.3. Summary**

Literature on inclusive, integrated and disabled dance revolves around the themes of aesthetics and spectatorship and contact improvisation technique. Of particular interest to the current study is the realisation that the majority of ethnographic studies are not shaped

by the 'voices' of dancers with disabilities and other relevant personnel including teacher, support workers and volunteers, focus on professional rather than amateur settings (Whatley, 2010), and focus overwhelmingly on dancers with physical rather than learning disabilities (highlighting a preoccupation with aesthetical performance).

In common with the conclusion drawn concerning the professional ballet literature, inclusive dance is almost exclusively viewed as either educational, an act of advocacy or both. Little attention is paid to the enjoyment, embodied and lived experience that shape inclusive dance settings.

### **3. The Line Dancing Class**

#### **3.1. *Physical and psychological benefits***

'Dancing is a mode of physical activity that may allow older adults to improve their physical function, health, and well-being' (Keogh et al, 2009, p.1), however, the greater extensive literature focusing on older adults engaging in physical activities is generally restricted to the physical benefits perceived (Nadasen, 2008). Further omissions have been highlighted: Keogh et al (2009) argue that this body of literature neglects healthy older adults and Gavin and Myers (2003) argue that few empirical studies investigating the link between psychological and physical benefits for older adults and engaging in dance activities have been produced.

A study conducted by Nadasen (2008) investigating whether the physical activity of line dancing leads to an increase in social activity (and thus, associated health and wellbeing benefits), concludes that 'line dancing enabled these women to expand their repertoire of social activity, leading to positive reinforcements such as further community involvement,

charitable work, inclusion in national sports events, self-expression, and personal development' (p.329). Nadasen (2008) argues that

what distinguishes line dancing is its multifaceted impact at the personal, social, and community levels. It is hard to imagine that women would feel comfortable making fools of themselves in a church group or even at an old age club. Line dancing therefore offers a mechanism for social activity that is at once creative, offering opportunities for self-expression, and a springboard for further social and community involvement—cementing social relationships, building support structures, and contributing to charitable initiatives (p.339).

The impact of line dancing plainly goes beyond the immediate and short-term social and physical benefits, yet the motivations linked to precisely why participants choose to join and then continue to engage in line dancing, and why the activity is linked to a particular demographic, have not been fully explored.

### **3.2. *Dominant demographic***

A number of scholars emphasise that line dancing is predominantly popular amongst older women (Gordon et al, 2001; Nadasen, 2008), who are 'Caucasian, in their mid-60s, relatively healthy, and physically active' (Gavin and Myers, 2003, p.123). Interestingly, Gavin and Myers (2003) also note in their comparative study between line dancers and tai chi attendees that the former group are more likely to be older and single and less likely to have completed the equivalent of further and higher education in the UK, and link their findings to other studies produced on community exercise courses (citing Ecclestone et al, 1998; Myers and Hamilton, 1985; Stewart, 2001). Factors suggested by the data gathered by Nadasen (2008), and which link this social group to engagement in line dancing, include their relative ease in 'making fools of themselves' (p.337), the fact that a partner is not necessary, that women are more sociable by nature, and that they feel safe in the class setting.

An uncompromising link has also been suggested between the dominant social group associated with line dancing and the type of music traditionally played in the activity setting: '[C]ountry music is square, unhip, gangly, and hopelessly out of touch with contemporary middle-class youth culture. Even worse, country music is decidedly working-class in its cultural connotations' (Neal, 2007, p.556). 'Country music remains, of course, an overwhelmingly white genre' (Sanneh, 2005, n.p. cited in Neal, 2007, p.558) and Neal links the music genre to 'rednecks':

[A] term historically synonymous with rural, lower-class whites who were aggressively ignorant, uncouth, and lawless and showed no particular ambition to become otherwise... When they needed to unwind, rednecks generally ripped around in their gun-racked, jacked-up pick-ups, dipping snuff, chucking their empty beer cans out the window, and playing country music loud enough to wake the dead and deafen the living (Cobb, 2005, p.226 cited in Neal, 2007, p.558).

Neal (2007) concludes that, owing to the inextricable links between the music genre and associations of attitude, class and race, country music has, unsurprisingly, not appealed to a more diverse audience.

### **3.3. *Motivation for line dancing***

Key social and physical factors that contribute to the decision to both join and continue to engage in line dancing activity include the fact that you do not need a partner, as previously mentioned (Gavin and Myers, 2003; Nadasen, 2008), previous positive experience in dance (Keogh et al, 2009) and the nature of the activity that promotes progression through the learning of particular steps and sequences (Gavin and Myers, 2003). Keogh et al (2009) cite Connor (2000), Lima and Vieira (2007) and Wikstrom (2004) to argue that

dance might allow older adults to maintain a connection to everyday life because it encourages fun and enjoyment and promotes social interaction, a sense of

community, appreciation of aesthetics and continued health, physical activity, and mobility (p.3).

Nadasen (2008) discovered that 'enjoyment, exercise, and fun' (p.339) constituted the key reasons in deciding to take up line dancing. In a related study, the social aspect was central to the line dancing experience, as illustrated by an interviewee's quote: 'I just go for the social part of it. I am not interested in being a good line dancer' (Gavin and Myers, 2003, p.135). Indeed, in comparison to tai chi attendees (featured also in Gavin and Myers', 2003 study), 'line dancers were significantly more likely... to report friendship/social reasons or fun/ enjoyment as their primary motive for joining' (p.130).

Gavin and Myers (2003) profile the attendance patterns of adult beginners engaging in line dancing with the aim of identifying factors that have an impact on both initial enrolment and continued participation, concluding that the latter was the result of past experience, current expectations and a link perceived between simplicity of movement and ease of learning. Gavin and Myers (2003) cite Dishman (1994) to emphasise the importance of confidence and self-efficacy in undertaking exercise activity: people want to know or belief that they can gain a sense of achievement. This latter factor is significant for its link both to the dancing and the manner of the teacher instructing. As Nadasen (2008) discovers, there is a cemented link between the potential for an increase and sustainability in social activity, and the personality and manner of the teacher or instructor. Nadasen (2008) further cites Paulson's (2005) conclusion and perhaps unwittingly draws on Goffmanian terminology, to argue that 'the instructor creates a certain social reality for the participants' (p.340). Gavin and Myers (2003) also acknowledge the importance of both the instructor and long-term participants in supporting beginners, citing Yan and Downing (1998) to emphasise the need for the teacher to demonstrate both the enjoyment that can be gained from the activity as well as the necessary steps. Hence, this figure of authority can also conversely affect the experience of participants through giving instructions too quickly, infrequently or quietly,

leading to anxiety about falling behind (Gavin and Myers, 2003). Yet, the line dancing activity also needs to be challenging enough for participants to enjoy a sense of achievement and perseverance (Gavin and Myers, 2003).

Nadasen (2008) also noted that the line dancing participants felt that their expectations had been met and the experience resulted in a sense of energy and enjoyment; participants in the current study entered the line dancing space with a sense of what reality they were going to join. This conclusion is also reflected in Gavin and Myers' (2003) earlier study, which linked the meeting of a certain expectation and reality to low drop-out rates in the short term. Gavin and Myers (2003) discovered that complete beginners had a higher drop-out rate in comparison to those with previous experience and this latter group were more likely to have an acquaintance or friend already within the class: participants had an idea of the likely experience and they possibly remembered certain steps and sequences, resulting in higher levels of confidence going into the activity (Gavin and Myers, 2003).

Several studies have made a point of including only long-term line dance participants in their studies (Keogh et al, 2009; Nadasen, 2008), noting that short-term attendees are a characteristic of the activity, thus supporting the notion that line dancing is viewed as a trend that may or may not be 'in fashion' (Gavin and Myers, 2003; Keogh et al, 2009; Neal, 2007). As Gavin and Myers (2003) citing Ecclestone et al (1998) have highlighted, older adults may adopt sporadic attendance patterns as they try different activities in a quest to find one that suits their particular needs, often leaving and returning to the same one more than once. Many older adults leave an exercise activity after a period of six months (Nadasen, 2008).

### **3.4. Summary**

As noted from the literature interrogated, line dancing is predominantly viewed as a physical and social activity that promotes health and well-being. However, of particular relevance to

the current study, 'what distinguishes line dancing is its multifaceted impact at the personal, social, and community levels' (Nadasen, 2008, p.339). Key themes unearthed with relevance to the present study include: the importance of the dance practice itself (through a limited focus in the literature) and the role of the instructor and participation patterns in constructing a certain dominant reality (through their inclusion in the literature).

#### **4. The Salsa Club**

##### **4.1. *Hierarchy of movement***

Arguably, the global reach of salsa means that there is no single 'authentic' salsa dance style in existence (Pietrobruno, 2006). However, as Pietrobruno (2006) argues: '[T]he exotic appeal of salsa outside of its sites of originality is, nonetheless, founded on the truth—or perhaps the illusion—that a genuine dance can be reproduced' (p.2), reflecting an overarching concern with authenticity linked to the various salsa styles in existence, and ultimately to the presence of particular movement hierarchies. These hierarchies are a recurrent theme in the literature, as we shall see.

Urquía (2005) explores how different styles of salsa dancing are re-negotiated in London salsa clubs through using Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'cultural capital' and conducting observations and interviews with dancers, musicians and teachers. The current dominance of the New York style leads to the conclusion that the level of technique performed is of greater importance than performing a style linked to the origins of salsa (i.e. Cuban salsa). An ethnographic approach is also taken by Pietrobruno (2002) to highlight how Montreal's salsa dance teachers legitimise the salsa style they teach by referring to either ethnic credibility or movement style as superior to others, mirroring Urquía's (2005) conclusion. The approach taken by these salsa teachers is in reaction to Montreal as a non-'lived' location of salsa dancing: all the styles taught originate elsewhere. Varying dance styles reflect different

markers of authenticity (movement versus origins) and tension arises from the different ways in which these are promoted: the overall aim of Pietrobruno's (2002) study is 'to contrast how the discourse of authenticity and origins is either invoked or rejected by instructors' (n.p.).

Bosse (2008) explores the cross-cultural nature of salsa dancing through an account of the workings of a salsa dance formation team in Illinois and uses Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' to highlight the difficulty in adopting 'the movement dialect of another cultural group' (p.49), as well as focusing on the reasons why participants may want to try to do so. Bosse relates this thinking to participants' understanding of what 'real' 'exotic' salsa looks like and feels like to perform, and a wish to express and unleash a 'Latin soul' (p.58). Latin American heritage was viewed as essential to obtaining virtuosity in salsa dancing and performance of a hybrid salsa-ballroom style of movement signified the dancers involved as 'inauthentic' salsa dancers owing to 'other' dance training (Bosse, 2008): the resulting movement aesthetics adopted represented the development of 'a new kind of salsa dance... among non-Latino, upper-middle-class' (Bosse, 2008, p.61).

García (2008; 2013), considers how the construction and existence of a social hierarchy, is reflected in, and results from, a movement hierarchy in Los Angeles salsa settings: dancers need to perform a style of movement disassociated with Mexican migrant labour. 'The exoticised Caribbeanesque Latina/o' is polarised by 'the labouring Latina/o migrant' (García, 2013, p.125).

#### **4.2. *Process of Globalisation***

As illustrated by literature located across varying countries and continents (for example, Bosse, 2008; García, 2008; 2013, Pietrobruno, 2006; Skinner, 2007; 2008; Urquía, 2005), salsa dancing can be characterised as an international phenomenon. Skinner (2007) cites Febres (1977) to explain that the

globalisation of salsa teaching and merchandise shows that salsa has become a cultural product, one navigated by cosmopolitan artists and musicians, one replying on an international market economy and the existential needs of the public with time on their hands (p.488).

Two key themes characterise salsa dancing as a product of globalisation; the presence of salsa dancing located in a range of countries and continents, distinguished by local styles, performance levels and social rituals, and the very concept of cosmopolitanism as a motivating factor to engage in the activity.

Skinner (2007) argues that 'globalisation has led to the global export of salsa as a leisure pursuit' (p.495) in a study examining how salsa dancing is reflected in particular cities where it is performed, in Belfast, Hamburg and Sacramento, labelling them as 'segregated', 'multicultural' and 'cosmopolitan' respectively. Skinner (2007) cites Hannerz (1996) to argue that 'the globalization of salsa has not resulted in its homogenization. Local particularities and individual reactions, particularly in terms of dancers' emotions, are how this global export is being received' (p.485). Holton (1998) sociologically refers to the merging and intersecting of the global with the local as 'glocalisation' (p.16 cited in Skinner, 2007, p.496).

Urquía (2005) draws on Peterson and Kern's (1996) argument that higher social status is not associated with 'highbrow culture', but rather to broad taste which displays a greater range of cultural awareness. Peterson and Kern (1996) call such eclectic consumers 'cultural omnivores' (Urquía, 2005, p.387). Within Skinner's (2007) study, many of the salsa dancers and teachers in the various urban locations may be defined as 'cosmopolitan[s]... a "symptom" of globalisation!' (p.496).

Cosmopolitans are modern-day *flâneurs* who are comfortable walking the capitals' boulevards and flying short- and long-haul flights. They are skilled entrepreneurs and artisans with cultural *savoir faire* and metacultural interests—

“a willingness to engage with the Other” as Hannerz (1992: 252) phrases it (Skinner, 2007, p.496).

This particular theme of coveting and displaying a cosmopolitan attitude is also evident in García’s (2008) study; concerning the non-Latina/o engaging in salsa dancing: ‘Their social class and respectability outside the club... will not likely be negatively affected by a temporary brush with the exotic or lower classes. On the contrary, they may gain cultural capital because of their knowledge of “other” cultures’ (p.210).

#### **4.3. *Dance and Social Membership***

In order to gain membership, literally and socially, to a salsa dance activity, one must know where the oft hidden salsa club operates, abide by heterosexually defined etiquette, support the ongoing existence of the event through regular attendance, and adopt a friendly and social persona within the salsa setting (Skinner, 2007; 2008). These latter two factors in particular, relate to small self-defined ‘salsa communities’ (Skinner, 2007); ‘a loose and flexible grouping of dancers who recognise each other by sight and name... and refer to themselves as members of “the salsa community” – as opposed to... other dance “communities”’ (p.490). Members of this ‘community’ can comprise of locals and migrants; the latter group aiming to recreate the ‘every night life’ of their home (Delgado and Muñoz, 1997 cited in Skinner, 2007, p.490). A salsa community can also be discerned by the genealogy surrounding it; participants learn a certain salsa style from a particular teacher, who learnt their particular style and methods from their teacher and so on (Skinner, 2007).

García’s (2008) ‘choreography-based ethnographic’ (p.199) study is concerned with ‘salsera homosociality’ in non-dance spaces such as cyberspace, the bar, and bathroom. She defines choreography as a ‘set of culturally situated codes and values regarding gestures, movements and speech through which identities, and thus social memberships, are

configured' (García, 2008, p.199). The focus of the research is on the formation and mechanisms of sociability between female salsa dancers, shaped by notions of gendered mobility, Latina-ness, and femininity as classed and racialised (García, 2008).

[S]ince club choreographies re-inscribe a structure in which men are supposed to ask the women to dance, women enter the clubs under the scrutiny of men who learn to identify, exclude, or discipline women who perform attributes of the "wrong" kind of Latina-ness (García, 2008, p.200).

Mirroring a later study (García, 2013), García (2008) identifies the twinned social and dance hierarchies in existence in a Los Angeles salsa settings, that situates LA style salsa at 'the top'. In response, the Latinas 'renegotiate the terms of their club participation, passing their knowledge on to other women' (García, 2008, p.204), on how to compete with the 'other' social group (non-Latinas) for male partners.

#### **4.4. Motivation of Escapism**

Escapism as a motivational force strongly reflects the wish to adopt another identity – not necessarily 'Latin' in nature. Skinner (2008) draws on Leslie Gotfritt's (1988) paper which 'proposes that women dancing can be an act of resistance, a moment of romanticism, a space for the realization of fantasy or nostalgia' (p.68), to explore the motivations and experiences of protestant and catholic women salsa dancing in Belfast, a 'wounded city' (Schneider and Susser, 2003, n.p. cited in Skinner, 2008, p.67). Skinner (2008) talks about the opportunity for female participants as salsa followers, with lessened responsibility in the dance partnership, to experience a 'sense of absence or floating and "flow"' (p.74) on the dance floor.

Bosse (2008) demonstrates that the Illinois participants involved in the salsa dance formation team

did not choose to dance Latin dances because they were ultimately desirous of a Latin American ethnicity. They desired to construct for themselves an alternative sense of self that they perceived to be more “vibrant” or “alive,” more physically integrated, and more sexually attractive (p.60).

Bosse (2008) further explains that preconceptions of Latin American ethnicity cultivate a certain desirous identity. This understanding is closely linked with Lundström’s (2009) study, which looked at the hybrid identities adopted by Latina teenagers living in Sweden, as shaped by the place of Latin culture in the Western world. Lundström (2009) draws on colonial and race theories to juxtapose ‘Latino masculinity as “macho” and “sleazy”’ with the ‘the Latina figure as “hot” and “spicy”’ (p.709), noting that the latter concept contrasts sharply with ‘the self-image of (white) Swedishness as gender equal and modern’ (p.709). In particular, Lundström makes reference to Gargia Bhattacharyya’s (2002) argument that dominant Eurocentric reading of world history established a link between ‘foreignness’ and the exotic. Lundström also draws upon Aparicio and Cha´vez-Silverman’s (1997) notion of ‘tropicalisations’ which means ‘to trope, to imbue a particular space, geography, or nation with a set of traits, images, and values’ (p.8 cited in Lundström, 2009, p.714), to explain the dominant imagery and representations of Latin cultural traits in the Western world. In addition, Bhattacharyya’s (2002) concept of ““partial recognition” constitutes an important aspect of exoticism’ based on some shared cultural similarity (Lundström, 2009, p.716): ‘Exoticism assumes some partial knowledge on the part of the fantasist – without at least some obvious tropes to construct the narrative, there is no fantasy to be had’ (Bhattacharyya, 2002, p.110 cited in Lundström, 2009, p.716).

#### **4.5. Summary**

In contrast to other forms of Latin dance (for example, rumba, samba), salsa dancing has attracted considerable attention in the literature, reflecting its global dominance. The key

themes of movement hierarchy, globalisation, membership and escapism reflect the breadth of salsa styles, behaviours and motivations surrounding the salsa club case study. A key finding from this review of the literature, and one that is of particular interest to the present study, is the established link between salsa practice and the location of the activity; highlighting the importance between a particular practice and place.

## **5. The Highland Dancing Class**

### **5.1. *Highland dancing literature***

Scott (2005) argues that the last century saw numerous attempts to contribute to the limited body of work on Highland dancing. However, the sources drawn together and reviewed in Scott's (2005) PhD thesis focusing on competitive solo Highland dancing, have a limited relevance to the current case study and in any case 'are regrettably modest when compared to the extent of solo dancing activity in Scotland' (Scott, 2005, p.23). Indeed, Scott's (2005) literature survey was forced to the level of including undergraduate and masters dissertations (Anderson, 1989; Macaffer, 2002; Witta, 1982) which looked at a range of topics including the absence of the dance practice from the formal Scottish education curriculum (Anderson, 1989), the evolution of the Scottish reel (Macaffer, 2002) and stabilisation and standardisation as characteristics of Highland dancing (Witta, 1982).

Works cited by Scott (2005) detailing instruction and information relating to Highland dances include George Douglas Taylor's (1929) *Some Traditional Scottish Dances*, and D.G. MacLennan's (1950) *Traditional Scottish Dances* building upon Francis Peacock's (1805) *Sketches Relative to the History or Theory but more especially the Practice of Dancing*. Scott's (2005) review moved on to consider the key ethnographic text, Tom and Joan Flett's (1964) *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, described as 'a landmark in terms of the history of

Scottish dance' (p.24) and focusing on social dancing in Scotland before the First World War. However, the interviews and observations extensively conducted throughout Scotland were 'not done under the auspices of academic research, but rather [they] grew out of a passion for investigating early dance history and for mining the precious knowledge which was deep in the living memory of their informants' (Scott, 2005, p.24). Focus is on the dances and the context within which they are performed, rather than on the individuals dancing them. In particular, no analysis of the data collected took place (Scott, 2005). A second volume (Flett and Flett, 1996) aimed to focus on the historical background to and specific instructions for, a breadth of styles and complete dances collected relating to Scottish solo dance culture (Scott, 2005). Significantly for current day Highland dance practice, the key impetus for its production was an 'increasing scepticism about the stylised modern form of country and Highland dancing' (Flett and Flett, 1996, p.viii cited in Scott, 2005, p.26). 'Their work might be considered the first extensive research into the Scottish dance tradition' (Scott, 2005, p.27). A second work contributing to exploration of the origins and preservation of Scottish dance, with a particular focus on Highland dancing, is Emmerson's (1972) *A Social History of Scottish Dance: Ane Celestial Receptioun*, aimed to produce 'a synthesis of the cultural and social history of Scotland with dance at its centre' (p.1 cited in Scott, 2005, p.27).

However, the sources explored above have limited relevance to the Highland dancing case study due to their primary focus on documentation, exploration and preservation of steps rather than on the surrounding social and cultural context, and the lack of ethnographic data obtained and analysed.

The most relevant study to the present case study is Scott's (2005) own study. The primary aim of the PhD project was to 'investigate the development of and changes within the practice of Scottish competitive solo Highland dancing' (Scott, 2005, p.iv) and was achieved through a written and video ethnography incorporating the voices of dancers, judges,

parents and teachers. Three key themes emerged from analysis; 'aesthetic judgements, dancers' musicality, and dancing as sport' (Scott, 2005, p.v). Scott's (2005) project revolved around

themes of rules and regulation as well as authenticity in style and the dominance of the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (SOBHD). Themes of enjoyment, expression, innovation and sport also arose, as did comments on the future stability and development of the tradition (p.33).

Literature related to Highland dancing is sporadic and broad in nature and, perhaps surprisingly for a topic rich in social themes and topics (for example, identity, nationalism, authoritative training), has attracted minimal scholarly investigation. This situation contrasts with the literature garnered by Irish dance.

## **5.2. *Irish step dancing literature***

Key interrelated themes that are explored in relation to Irish step dancing include the diaspora, globalisation, identity, discipline and standardisation (Casey, 2002; Foley, 2001; 2011; Hall, 1996; 2008; Leonard, 2005; O'Connor, 2013; Wulff, 2005; 2007). The latter three themes are particularly relevant to the Highland dancing studio.

Two publications consider the global impact of performance Irish dance shows (for example, 'Riverdance', 'Lord of the Dance') with Casey (2002) focusing on their appeal to the Irish-American population in facilitating an opportunity to engage with 'Irishness', and Foley (2001) exploring the ways in which Irish step dance (performance and competitive) reflects issues relevant to the Irish nation on a local, national and global level. This latter study notes the symbiotic relationships that exist between dance schools, the shows and their audiences. The trajectory of Highland dancing practice has not resulted in large-scale touring productions, but the rules and regulations that govern the learning and teaching of

Irish dancing, which result in these global shows, are rooted in a similar disciplinary environment, and Foley (2001) explores the link between the governing body, An Coimisiún, and the regulation and standardisation of Irish dancing. To some extent, there is a sense of performance Irish dance having turned a complete circle. Mulrooney's (2006) work includes interviews with ex-Riverdancers who speak about the show and competition dancing in negative terms, reflecting on the lack of artistic freedom.

Such commercial shows are possible because of the existence of Irish dancers moulded by the competition format. Hall (1996) is concerned with the uncompromising existence of competitive Irish dancing and takes as the key analogy of its manifestation, the rigid posture and arm positions adopted. Irish dancing is a cultural, historical and social construction borne from three central factors: the activity of dance within physical education, the process and formalisation of competitive dance, and a nationalist ethos (Hall, 1996). The intersection between them is what makes Irish dancing 'Irish'. However, Hall (1996) emphasises that it is 'the marriage of competitive requirements and nationalist assumptions which produce the official world of Irish dancing' (p.89). Themes of authority, control and authenticity have resulted in the narrowing artistry of Irish dance (Hall, 2008). Hall (1996) draws upon Durkheimian tension between individual and society to explain the nature and role of a competition format that maintains control through handing out both punishments and rewards.

In contrast to Highland dancing literature, Irish dancing is closely twinned with Irish history, through the link between the cementation of Irish cultural identity and colonialism, and the context within which The Gaelic League and An Coimisiún were created (Foley, 2011). In contrast

[r]eliable evidence concerning origins and early development is scarce and scattered; in the general neglect of Scottish culture which has prevailed, until recently, in all four Scottish universities, Highland Dancing has been largely

ignored by learned men, and as yet little or no serious research has been done. There is an opportunity here for academic investigation which, it is to be hoped, they will not fail much longer to exploit (SOBHD cited in Newton, 2012, p.1).

However, both dance forms were 'orchestrated' to a certain extent and Newton (2012) explores the role played by non-Gaels, key individuals such as the MacLennan brothers and associations such as the SOBHD in constructing a single competitive Highland dancing practice from the folk form (with all its variations) that it is derived from.

### **5.3. Summary**

The themes of regulation, standardisation and lack of innovation, bound up in themes of 'Scottishness' and tradition, impacting upon both the artistic evolution and preservation of the dance form were central to Scott's (2005) work and shape the current Highland dancing case study. The review of the literature both suggests the topics likely to impact on the social performances and realities uncovered in the Highland dancing class and reveals the dearth of research that has focused specifically on the practice and in particular, on contemporary Highland dancing taking place in Scotland, paving the way for new lines of enquiry to be explored.

## **6. Dance in Primary Education**

### **6.1. Factors affecting a willingness to teach**

The majority of literature looking at the theme of confidence in formal dance teaching is centred on the experience of the trainee or student primary class teacher: studies have taken place in Scotland (MacLean, 2007), England (Rolfe, 2001), and Australia (Russell-

Bowie, 2010); with an additional study considering the experience of PE class teachers teaching dance in English secondary schools (Connell, 2009).

MacLean's (2007) paper explores the journey to teaching dance in Scotland from the perspective of 85 undergraduate trainee teachers and by employing questionnaires and conducting semi-structured interviews, reaches the same conclusion as Rolfe (2001) that the main factors positively affecting student confidence are previous dance experience, teacher training, and the practical placement. The latter opportunity is particularly significant as

in the context of a specific classroom, students' knowledge of both 'what' and 'how' to teach is developed by the authentic activity of teaching dance. There is no separation between 'knowing', or the theory of teaching dance, and 'doing', or the classroom context in which it is used (Rolfe, 2001, p.169).

Factors noted as having an adverse effect on confidence include not having enough opportunities to teach dance, class resistance to learning, concerns about pupil enjoyment, familiarity with dance content, a lack of ability to assess dance, and the perceived link between dance and femininity (as expressed by male teachers and students) (MacLean, 2007). Significantly for the current case study, MacLean (2007) employs Goffman's (1959; 1971) construct of 'face' to explain the need for student teachers to present themselves in a confident way to their pupils, and makes explicit the link between this necessity and how its success or otherwise impinges upon confidence to teach dance. The focus on the 'I' in the data also reveals that the trainee teacher's sense of identity was crucial to producing and maintaining their confidence.

An additional study within Scotland by Wilson et al (2008) notes that teachers' concerns about teaching arts subjects included what were seen as vague and unhelpful teaching guidelines, insufficient curriculum time and inadequate teacher training, coupled with a belief that they were not 'someone who could "do" art, music, drama or dance' (p.41). Fractions

within the teaching team were also unearthed by as head teachers felt that certain teachers were unwilling to engage in training in subjects in which they had a lack of personal confidence, interest or experience (Wilson et al, 2008).

Connell (2009) utilises surveys to solicit the views of dance practitioners (dance specialists, PE teachers, dance artists) teaching dance in secondary schools in Yorkshire in order to explore their perceptions of the value of dance and their own capabilities. In common with related studies (MacLean, 2007, Rolfe, 2001) factors cited as negatively impacting upon teacher enthusiasm and willingness to teach dance include time constraints and a lack of subject knowledge. However, Rolfe (2001) highlights the role played by positive support and feedback from existing class teachers in increasing trainee teacher confidence and a second study, (Russell-Bowie, 2010), concerning trainee teachers teaching dance in countries outwith the UK, highlights the importance of an individual's nationality and background, noting that citizens of certain countries were more likely to experience dance as part of their cultural upbringing.

Themes arising from the above discussion are exacerbated by the fact that there exists a lack of role models within both primary and secondary schools to inspire dance teaching (Green et al, 1998), creating a vicious circle effect.

## **6.2. *Underrepresentation within curriculum education***

Despite the strong acknowledgement and belief in the value of dance education, a persistent theme in the literature concerns the underrepresentation and inadequate teaching of dance in the primary classroom. Both within and outside the UK, literature has supported the notion that the challenge of teaching dance has led to its exclusion or limited inclusion (Russell-Bowie, 2010), and although the arts have a fixed place in the curricular guidance, teaching is

rarely considered to be effective (Russell-Bowie, 2010); a situation that resonates in Scotland (MacLean, 2007).

This devaluation of dance is reflected in the quality of teacher training dedicated to arts subjects: resonating with the discussion in the above section, concern has been raised that too little time and understanding is provided (Wilson et al, 2008). Education changes brought about by successive UK governments puts increased importance on key curriculum subjects, leading to the perception that arts subjects are of minimal significance, a view that is reflected in the status of dance within schools. Within Wilson et al's (2008) study, teachers reported difficulties in finding sufficient curriculum time to teach arts subjects and expressed concern that they were treated as a 'reward', or as an activity for the more difficult pupils to be engaged with.

Almost twenty years ago Sanderson (1996) investigated the concerns that saw the designation of dance as a purely physical subject in the National Curriculum of England Wales, and its role and place, through soliciting the opinions of PE teachers, policy makers and dance specialists (but not pupils). Although Sanderson (1996) demonstrates the rationale behind the teaching and learning of dance within PE (through focusing on its inherently physical nature and the fact that creative endeavour often plays a part in PE), she argues that essentially dance does not 'belong' with the subject due to its aesthetic and non-competitive nature, and the need to include social, historical and cultural aspects inherent to dance. However, the author argues that if dance were to be placed with the other arts subjects (within the UK, an action that has only taken place in Scotland), teaching challenges would remain because each art form has its 'vocabulary, symbol system and syntax' (Sanderson, 1996, p.59). Both Sanderson (1996) and Connell (2009) recommend the training and employment of specialist dance teachers within formal education; a strategy evident within the present case study.

### **6.3. Value within curriculum education**

As Wilson et al (2008) cite Downing et al (2003) to explain, although pressure exists on teachers to concentrate less on arts subjects, particularly within England, this situation has also resulted in schools protecting and making explicit the value of arts teaching. Teachers value the creativity inherent to arts education (Byrne et al, 2003; MacDonald et al, 2006; Wilson et al, 2008); although within dance this has also impacted upon teacher confidence as noted above. Connell's (2009) respondents associated dance education with the 'composite elements of dance: actions, space, dynamics and relationships' (p.122). Literature has also suggested that the learning and teaching of dance is positively used for other purposes such as improving concentration for the study of other academic subjects and for the attainment of life skills (Russell-Bowie, 2010). Dance education is also valued for instilling citizenship values (Carr, 2004) and promoting social inclusion and pupil confidence (Karkou and Glasman, 2004). As MacLean (2007) concludes

there is an expectation that creative dance involves pupils in a process that draws on their emotions and ideas in a way that allows communication of the inner self as they develop creative movement responses to a given task (p.99).

### **6.4. Summary**

The above survey demonstrates the differing bodies of scholarly literature (dance teaching in primary schools, in secondary schools, within and outwith Scotland, within and outwith the UK) relevant to a case study concerned with dance education in Scottish formal education. However, the dominant themes arising from the spectrum of sources similarly revolve around teacher confidence, the value and de-valuation of dance in primary education, and the impact of external and internal perceptions of dance as a subject. Of particular interest to the current case study, the review reveals both the lack of input from school pupils in

ethnographic studies and a lack of focus on how teachers actually *do* deliver dance education, rather than the concerns and barriers they face in doing so.

## Appendix 2

### Dance Activities and Practices in Glasgow City Centre and South Side (Spring 2012)

1.	6-Beat Swing Class (private tuition)
2.	6-Beat Swing Workshop
3.	Aerial Dancing (private tuition)
4.	Aerial Dancing Workshop
5.	Aerial Hoop Class
6.	African Movimiento Class
7.	Aqua Zumba Class
8.	Argentine Tango Class
9.	Argentine Tango Dancing
10.	Balboa (private tuition)
11.	Balboa Workshops
12.	Ballet Class
13.	Ballet Graded Class
14.	Ballet Summer school
15.	Ballet Vocational Training
16.	Ballet Workshops
17.	<i>Barre</i> & Stretch Class
18.	Belly Dancing Class
19.	Bharatanatyam Class
20.	Big Band Dances
21.	Blaze Body Conditioning Class
22.	Blues Dancing (private tuition)
23.	Blues Dancing Workshop
24.	Body Jam Class
25.	Burlesque Class
26.	Capoeira Class
27.	Ceilidh Dancing
28.	Cha Cha Cha Class
29.	Charleston Class (private tuition)
30.	Charleston Workshop
31.	Club Dancing
32.	Columbia/ Hip-Hop Class
33.	Commercial Dance Class
34.	Conditioning Regueton-Movimiento Class
35.	Contemporary Class
36.	Contemporary Workshops
37.	Creative Movement Class
38.	Creative Movement Training
39.	Creative Movement Workshops
40.	Cuban Rumba with Folklore Class
41.	Cuban Salsa Class
42.	Cuban Salsa Dancing
43.	Cuban Salsa Drop-In
44.	Cuban Timba Class

45.	Dance Aerobics Class
46.	Dancercise Class
47.	Egyptian Belly Dancing Class
48.	Glasgow Swing Dances
49.	Higher Dance
50.	Hip-Hop Class
51.	Irish Class
52.	Jazz Class
53.	Jazz Technique Class
54.	Le Roc Events
55.	Level 3 Diploma in Dance Instruction (DDI)
56.	Level 4 Diploma in Dance Education (DDE)
57.	Lindy Hop Class (private tuition)
58.	Lindy Hop Workshop
59.	Line Dancing Class
60.	Line Dancing Night
61.	Modern Dance Graded Class
62.	MTV Class
63.	Musical Theatre Class
64.	Musical Theatre Summer School
65.	Peace & Jam PRO Drop-In
66.	Physical Theatre Class
67.	Physical Theatre Workshops
68.	Pointe Class
69.	Pole Dancing (hen parties)
70.	Pole Dancing (own practice)
71.	Pole Dancing Class
72.	Regueton-Movimiento Class
73.	Rock 'n' Roll Dancing Class
74.	Rock 'n' Roll Dancing Night
75.	Salsa Timba Class
76.	Samba Class
77.	Social Dancing
78.	Street Dance Class
79.	Swing Class
80.	Tai Chi Class
81.	Tango Class
82.	Tap Class
83.	Tap Graded Class
84.	Tea Dance Class
85.	Urban Workout Class
86.	Yoga Class
87.	Zumba Class

## Appendix 3

### Invitation to Institutions, Organisations and Venues

Mobile: 07947162044  
E-mail: B.Whiteside@rcs.ac.uk

15<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Dear ...

I am a PhD student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland conducting a study on the sociology of participatory dance. The study is set in a localised area of Glasgow and a key part of my research is looking at how social structures such as age and gender, and social interactions such as dress and conversation, characterise different dance activities and practices.

In order to do this effectively, I need the help of institutions where participatory dance takes place. I am writing to ask if ... would consider assisting me in the research. The nature of the involvement would see me firstly, attending and observing events that take place at the school that involve dance (for example, dance in P.E. lessons) and secondly, inviting a small number of pupils and a representative of the school to speak with me about their own views on participatory dance activities and practices. This would take place between January and June 2013 at a time suitable for ...

I have applied to join the PVG Scheme and have previously successfully gone through the Disclosure Scotland process.

It is my belief that this participatory dance project will be a valuable study as the majority of research in this area of dance focuses on vocational and professional ballet and contemporary dance. I hope that this project will begin to redress the balance.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself at the details above. If you would prefer to direct your queries to my principal supervisor, Dr Stephen Broad can be contacted by emailing [s.broad@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:s.broad@rcs.ac.uk) or by telephoning 0141 270 8329.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Bethany Whiteside

## Appendix 4

### Case Studies Undertaken: Dance Form, Social Setting and Sector

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Dance Form</i>	<i>Setting</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Children/ Adults</i>	<i>Standard of Dance</i>
Professional ballet class	'Concert'	Working studio	Public	Adults	Professional
Inclusive creative dance class	'Concert'	Working studio	Public	Adults	Amateur
Line dancing class	'Social'	Community club	Private	Adults	Amateur
Salsa club	'Social'	Nightclub	Private	Adults	Amateur
Highland dancing class	'Sport'	Private studio	Private	Children and adults	Amateur and vocational
Dance in primary education	'Sport'	Primary school	Public	Children and adults	Amateur

## Appendix 5

### Involvement Schedule: Observations Conducted

#### Professional Ballet Class

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Role</i>
15.04.13: 10-11.15am	Observer as participant (Overt)
16.04.13: 10-11.15am	Observer as participant (Overt)
17.04.13: 10-11.15am	Observer as participant (Overt)
18.04.13: 10-11.15am	Observer as participant (Overt)
19.04.13: 10-11.15am	Observer as participant (Overt)

#### Inclusive Creative Dance Class (split into two on the same day)

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Role</i>
06.03.13: 10.30am-12pm and 1-2pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
13.03.13: 10.30am-12pm and 1-2pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
20.03.13: 10.30am-12pm and 1-2pm	Participant as observer/ Observer as participant (Class entered into a rehearsal period) (Overt)
27.03.13: 10am-12.30pm	Participant as observer/ Observer as participant (Overt)
03.04.13: 10am-12.30pm	Participant as observer/ Observer as participant (Overt)

#### Line Dancing Class

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Role</i>
19.03.13: 7.30-9.30 pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
26.03.13: 7.30-9.30 pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
02.04.13: 7.30-9.30 pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
09.04.13: 7.30-9.30 pm	Participant as observer (Overt)

16.04.13: 7.30-9.30 pm	Participant as Observer (Overt)
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#### Salsa Club

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Role</i>
01.08.13: 10pm-12am	Complete participant (Covert)
08.08.13: 10pm-12am	Complete participant (Covert)
05.09.13: 10pm-12am	Complete participant (Covert)
12.09.13: 10pm-12am	Complete participant (Covert)
29.09.13: 10pm-12am	Complete participant (Covert)

#### Highland Dancing Class

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Role</i>
19.01.13: 4.15-6pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
26.01.13: 4.15-6pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
02.02.13: 4.15-6pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
09.02.13: 4.15-6pm	Participant as observer (Overt)
16.02.13: 4.15-6pm	Participant as observer (Overt)

#### Dance in Primary Education

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Role</i>
30.01.13: 9.30-10am (Scottish ceilidh dancing taught in class)	Participant as observer (Overt)
12.03.13: 9-9.30am (Whole school Zumba session)	Participant as observer (Overt)
14.03.13: 9-9.30am (Whole school Zumba session)	Participant as observer (Overt)
24.03.13: 9.30-10.30am (External dance specialist with P5 class)	Observer as participant (Overt)
24.03.13: 2-2.35pm (Dance taught by class teacher to P1 class)	Participant as observer (Overt)

01.05.13, 9.30-10.30am (External dance specialist with P5 class)	Observer as participant (Overt)
24.03.13: 2-2.35pm (Dance taught by class teacher to P1 class)	Overt Participant as observer (Overt)

## Appendix 6

### Ethnographic Research Methods Adopted

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Observer Role</i>	<i>Interview Type</i>
Professional ballet class	Observer as participant (Overt)	Expert interviews Ethnographic interviews
Inclusive creative dance class	Participant as observer Observer as participant (Overt)	Expert interviews Ethnographic interviews Semi-standardised interviews
Line dancing class	Participant as observer (Overt)	Expert interviews Ethnographic interviews Semi-standardised interviews
Salsa club	Complete participant (Covert)	Ethnographic interviews Semi-standardised interviews
Highland dancing class	Participant as observer (Overt)	Expert interviews Ethnographic interviews Semi-standardised interviews
Dance in primary education	Participant as observer Observer as participant (Overt)	Ethnographic interviews Group interviews Semi-standardised interviews

## Appendix 7

### Example of Field Notes

#### Highland Dancing Class, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2013, 4.15-6pm

This class is the first of five that I will be attending to explore social interaction in the Highland dancing class. The class is situated some way (2 miles) from the city centre and is based in one of the more challenging areas of Glasgow as listed in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The class is hosted by a private dance school and the building is tricky to find; I noticed a sign high above and then had to dip under an arch on the street to go through the front door. Entering the school filled me with a strange sense of *déjà vu*. There was a small reception area with doors leading off to two changing rooms, each with a sign on them, stating 'Girls here – please knock before entering.' Are there no male pupils in any of the classes? But what really stood out was the smell. Slightly musty and reminiscent of the smell that hit me several times a week in the school I attended as a child and teenager. Rose, who I had met previously when I came along to talk to the principal about my research, greeted me and told me to pick a changing room. The changing room was nice and warm (contrasting with the wintry rain outside) with a heat lamp situated above. I had checked with a Highland dancing friend (who is also a former champion) that an outfit of sports bra, longish black top, and long leggings was acceptable and she had leant me her ghillies to dance in (luckily they tie up the same way as Irish soft shoes). My hair was wound into a bun. I then double checked with Rose when I came back out (who I know participates in the class but also acts as receptionist for the first half of the day). She seemed to appreciate being asked and chuckled when I said that I was grateful that it wasn't a leotard only situation.

Parents started arriving and I was armed with copious copies of informed consent forms and participant information sheets. Having the time and space to explain my research was tricky as parents were tying shoes, children were racing upstairs (the studios are based above the reception area) and neither the class teacher or principal were present. However, the parents that I spoke with were happy to sign the forms and to take away further information that I had prepared about my project. I think they were reassured by the fact that I was dressed as someone who would be participating as a dancer, rather than as someone who would obviously be watching from the front. I was easier to identify and place. All the participants were white and most spoke with a Scottish accent. I also saw that there were three Mc's/Mac's on Rose's register. There was a great variety of ages as I found later. Nicola was 31, Rose was in her early twenties and Kitty was in her late teens (actually guessing the last two). Lydia told me that she was 14.

Held up by the paperwork, I entered the studio late, and was confused at one point as the studio for the Highland dancing class, is actually entered through another studio where a ballet class was taking place. I felt embarrassed circling round the sides but also found it interesting that the Highland dancing class was situated in an actual back space (Goffman, back stage), secondary to the more popular and populous activity of ballet. Entering this second studio, everyone (six participants in total, including Rose, all girls, of a mixture of heights and ages) were facing the barre doing a *plié* exercise. I was surprised by the small numbers in the class. I noted quickly what people were wearing. All the participants had dance wear on – leggings, t-shirts, hoodies. The younger girls had black cat suits on. Rose had a pineapple dance top on. Lydia wore a mulberry leotard (same shade as my RAD one

from the 90s) and ballet tights. Rose had her hair in a bun, the others had ponytails. I went quickly and quietly to the end of the row, glanced covertly to my left, and joined in. The teacher, who I knew was called Anne (although we hadn't met at this point), glanced at me as I crossed the room but did not waver from giving instructions. Anne was very well-turned out and well-spoken. Neat ballet pump shoes for teaching, comfortable trousers, smart top and cardigan (not dance wear). Nice necklace and her face was made-up. After me, another girl who looked to be one of the oldest, (who I found out after was called Nicola) came into class late and also went immediately to the barre and joined in. Anne kept moving between everyone at the barre, demonstrating exercises and steps. The *plié* exercise was followed by a *tendu* exercise (placing the feet in the five positions (of Highland, not ballet, although they are similar)) before we were all called into the centre. I made sure that I was at the back.

Exercises now undertaken included going into frogs legs and sitting in the straddle position and leaning over to reach your toes. We were loosely in two rows with the older girls at the front and the younger girls behind them (I sat with the younger girls) facing the floor to ceiling mirrors in front of us. We sat upright with legs extended in front of us and did 'good toes, bad toes', said out loud by Anne (another memory from my earliest ballet classes). We then went through the five arm positions (again Highland but similar to ballet) – Anne corrected mine. Rather disconcertingly, all of the *barre* and the exercises in the centre were performed to show tunes that were being blared from next door. The ballet class must have been replaced by another as I could hear tappers. Although this wasn't a problem once the bagpipes started blaring.

After centre exercises Anne went over to the music system and asked everyone to prepare for the 'Fling'. I saw people head to the opposite corner and start to look in various notebooks and converse with one another (I found out at the end that they were each checking their specific sequence of steps). Going over, I introduced myself to Anne and realised that my contact to date, the principal, had not informed her that I would be present. I quickly explained the project and my background and emphasised how, despite my lack of experience specifically in Highland dancing, I was eager to learn as much as possible. Anne seemed happy for me to be present and as the girls filtered back into the centre, I again went to the back. As everyone performed the 'Fling', people were ending at different times and doing slightly different steps. I knew that different steps were performed depending on level and skill and had learnt the easiest version from my friend and from youtube so was able to dance it. Anne said to Kirsty, 'do you not remember doing this last week? We really need to concentrate placing the foot on the back of the leg.' To the older girls, she said that she could see a definite improvement from last week.

After the 'Fling', the younger and older ones took it in turns to perform other dances with the younger children spending more time on the floor. The reason for this became apparent as the younger girls left first – roughly 5pm, 5.20pm, 5.40pm – in order of age so their dancing was prioritised in the first part of the class. People didn't talk when dancing, just when they were in the corner. In the corner, I asked Rose about the origins of the dances and she told me a story about a young boy who was hunting a deer but became enthralled with its beauty and replicated its antlers through dancing with his arms above his head. Between dances, people chatted in the corner in groups of twos and threes. Participants played on their phone, wrote in little notebooks, chatted, but it was all done fairly quietly. This seemed to be the norm and Anne didn't seem to mind. It maybe felt less intimidating when you were the one dancing – less of an audience facing you. Mary (the youngest) wanted to play with me.

At one point we returned to the *barre* and practiced half-backs? (check vocabulary) – they were like a type of *jetés* with both legs springing to the side with one beating on the back of the calf in between. Anne said 'can you do more. I know they are hard on your legs.' I did them and they were exhausting. Going through the series of steps and dances makes me realise that I need to do prepare more for next week. I found dancing through watching and copying extremely difficult – nothing was taught from scratch. Everything was rehearsed.

People already knew what they were doing. Anne rang out instructions and everybody seemed to know exactly what she was talking about.

During the 'Hornpipe', Anne told Rose 'you can omit that hop in the shuffles if you want – it doesn't have to be in but I prefer it that way.' (Evidence that there is a limited autonomy in performing the steps of the dance?). Anne also said at one point 'this is an easy step – where you can put a bit of character into it, to position the head over the foot.' (Evidence that creativity and artistry have a limited place?). Anne gave lots of verbal feedback, especially relating to the positions of the feet, also posture in this dance. I was looking out for use of imagery and metaphors in the teaching but did not hear any. Anne physically moved Lydia's foot at the beginning of the 'Hornpipe'.

One dance (I can't remember the name but I think a type of reel) was actually performed by Rose, Nicola and Lydia dancing together. The only dance in the class that didn't see dancers as solo performers. Lydia left the floor during the dancing of this dance and Anne called her back: 'please don't leave the floor.'

All dances began and ended with a bow but oral cues were sometimes ignored by Lydia. Lydia seemed bored, messed around with Hannah quite a lot before she left. Anne said at one point, 'I've spoken to you both before – please stop talking' and they did not seem to be embarrassed or ashamed. (Was this playing round due to boredom? Repetition of steps that they probably do each week? Lack of internal discipline?). There seemed to be quite a staid atmosphere in the space. The class is quite long. The actual studio also felt cold at times. Especially as people were taking it in turns to sit down and watch. But there was a fixed radiator in the room and another stand-alone one, although I'm not sure either were switched on. At one point, Lydia was complaining of a sore foot. Anne went over, asked what was wrong and Lydia replied that her toes/toenails hurt from the shoes. Anne said, 'You know what they say – dance through the pain. Rose suggested bathing it in hot salted water to prevent any infection. Anne told me at the end of the class (when only the older girls remained) that she was unable to wear soft-soled shoes anymore and could not teach in ghillies.

Following the 'Reel', only Rose, Kitty and Nicola were left in the space. Anne and Rose talked about preparing for a Championship in Aberdeen and what needed to be done. The older dancers seemed to respect Anne more than the younger ones. Anne asked Rose where they got to last time. Rose said 'I can't cope with the arms right now' and Anne agreed. Rose and Kitty look like the two strongest dancers in the class. Anne said to me at the end of the class that Rose was particularly helpful/great.

After the class, I followed Rose, Kitty and Nicola into the changing room (they went into the one that I had not used earlier – maybe that's for the younger girls). They asked how I got on and what I thought. I said that I felt incredibly tired and knew I would feel it tomorrow. A comment (and the truth) that I think they appreciated. Conversation was fairly quick as the school shuts up as soon as this class is out. Rose asked Kitty if she wanted a lift to a station in the south of the city. I saw Rose and Kitty turn left and head off before I turned right and started the trek back to the city centre.

## Appendix 8

### Framework of Interview Questions (for participants)

#### Highland Dancing Class

##### *Performing the practice*

How did you come to learn Highland dancing?  
How long have you been involved in Highland dancing?  
What do you particularly like about it?  
How would you describe Highland dancing?  
What feelings come from performing the movements?  
Do you take part in any other dance activities?  
Do you attend different dance classes here?  
What opportunity is there for creative development?  
What do you understand the origins of Highland dancing to be?  
Do you think that Highland dancing is still evolving or if it needs to evolve?

##### *The Social World*

Do you live locally?  
Are you Scottish?  
How would you describe relations within the class? How do people get on with one another?  
When do participants stop coming to class? Why do you think they leave?  
Does Highland dancing have an impact on life outside of the studio?  
Do you socialise with other participants outside of the class?  
What do friends and family think of Highland dancing?  
Do you think of Highland dancing as Scottish?  
Are you involved with Highland dancing outside of the class? How?

##### *Competition Format*

Do you view Highland dancing as more of a form of dance or of sport? Or both?  
How would you describe the atmosphere in class?  
What are the benefits of Highland dancing?  
Do you think there is an ideal Highland dancing body?  
Do instances of injury/ physical fatigue occur? How do you and others react?  
Do you perform at the Highland Games and other competitions?  
What is the main motivation to dancing at the competitions?  
What role do the SOBHD and other boards and association play?  
Do you feel that the standard of performance is increasing?  
Is there the opportunity to be a professional Highland dancer?

## Appendix 9

### Record of Interviews Held (excluding ethnographic interviews)

#### Professional Ballet Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Class teacher	Robert	06.05.13	RCS	40 minutes
Dancer	Emmanuelle	17.07.13	Venue	50 minutes
Dancer	Aidan	03.08.13	Venue	60 minutes
Dancer	Mary (two interviews)	19.04.13 and 29.04.13	Venue	35 minutes and 25 minutes

#### Inclusive Creative Dance Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Class teacher	Fraser (two interviews)	20.03.13 and 27.03.13	Venue	50 minutes and 30 minutes
Client	Ewan	27.03.13	Venue	15 minutes
Client	Lucy	20.02.13	Venue	15 minutes
Students on placement	Ekaterina and Gary (interviewed together)	02.04.13	Venue	30 minutes
Volunteer	Lawrence	20.03.13	Venue	30 minutes

#### Line Dancing Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Instructor	Kate (two interviews)	09.04.13 and 16.04.13	Venue	25 minutes and 25 minutes
Participant	Marlene and Pat (interviewed together)	02.04.13	Venue	15 minutes
Participant	Hamish	25.04.13	Via telephone	15 minutes
Participant	Betty	16.04.13	Venue	25 minutes
Participant	Jane	09.04.13	Venue	25 minutes

#### Salsa Club

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Participant	Maggie	09.09.13	RCS	50 minutes
Participant	Janet (two interviews)	08.08.13 and 05.09.13	Participant's home	50 minutes and 70 minutes

### Highland Dancing Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Class teacher	Anne	17.02.13	Local coffee shop	65 minutes
Participant	Rose (two interviews)	02.02.13 and 09.02.13	Venue	55 minutes and 50 minutes
Participant	Kitty	11.02.13	Starbucks, Buchanan Street, Glasgow	55 minutes
Participant	Lydia	02.02.13	Venue	15 minutes

### Dance in Primary Education

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Head teacher	Mrs Finan	15.05.13	Venue	60 minutes
Teacher	Mrs Hughes and Miss Gibbs	24.04.13	Venue	30 minutes
Teacher	Mr Patmore	01.05.13	Venue	35 minutes
Teacher	Miss Kendall	05.04.13	Via email	N/A
Teacher	Miss Roberts	17.04.13	Venue	20 minutes
P1 pupils	Simon, Katie, Raj and Farah	01.05.13	Venue	15 minutes
P3 pupils	Amita, Josh and Josie	01.05.13	Venue	20 minutes
P3 pupils	Ali, Moni and Liam	01.05.13	Venue	15 minutes
P5 pupils	Youssef, Yosra and Sarah	01.05.13	Venue	20 minutes

## Appendix 10

### Participant Information Sheet (Non-Vulnerable Groups)

#### **The Hidden Dancers: A Goffmanian Analysis of Participatory Dance Activity and Practice in Glasgow, Scotland**

##### *My study*

My name is Bethany Whiteside and I am a PhD student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. I am conducting a study that looks at participatory dance activities and practices which exist in particular areas of Glasgow and I would like to invite you to take part in the study. This sheet has been designed to give you information about my project.

##### *What I would like you to do*

If you are happy to volunteer to participate in this study then I would like to observe the dance activity or practice that you take part in. If you are happy to take part in an interview as well please let me know. We would have a discussion about different types of dance and the dance that you do. This talk would last for about 30 minutes to an hour and would be audio-recorded.

##### *Anonymity and Confidentiality*

Only I would have access to the notes that I would make in the dance event or session and to the recording of our interview. I would not pass this on to anybody and after my study has finished, this information would be destroyed. If I use any of the information in my study then you will remain anonymous; I will not use your real name.

##### *Refusal to participate/withdraw from the study*

You can refuse to take part in my study without giving any reason. If you agree to take part and then change your mind, you can withdraw from the study, again without giving any reason. There is no financial benefit for taking part in the study.

##### *To find out more about the study*

If you would like to ask any questions then please do contact me using the below details. Dr Stephen Broad is supervising my project and will also be happy to answer any queries which you may have.

##### *Contact Details*

Researcher: Bethany Whiteside, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
B.Whiteside@rcs.ac.uk, 0794 716 2044

Principal Supervisor: Dr Stephen Broad, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
S.Broad@rcs.ac.uk, 0141 270 8329

*Thank you for your time*





## Appendix 13

### Participant Information Sheet (Vulnerable Groups)

March 2013

#### My Project: The Hidden Dancers in Glasgow, Scotland

My name is Bethany Whiteside and I am studying dance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. I am currently doing a study about different types of dance and people who dance in Glasgow.

I would really like to join a dance event that you are taking part in and see what happens in the session.



It would also be really helpful if I could chat to you about the dancing that you do and what you think about it.

I would not use your name in any talking or writing about the study.

If we have a conversation about the dancing that you do, I would like to record it so that I don't have to remember everything that we say. If you decide that you don't want to talk to me about your dancing then we can stop the conversation.

You can say yes or no. It is up to you whether you take part.



I have designed a form for you to fill in and sign if you would like to take part.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact me at the below address or phone or email.



Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely

Bethany Whiteside

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
100 Renfrew St  
Glasgow  
G2 3DB

07947 162044  
B.Whiteside@rcs.ac.uk

## Appendix 14

### Informed Consent Form (Vulnerable Groups)

#### “The Hidden Dancers in Glasgow, Scotland”

**My name is Bethany Whiteside. I am a university student doing a study on dance in Glasgow. I have designed this form to ask you if you would be happy to take part in my study.**

Please could you tick the box for each point that you agree with.

1. I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet about Bethany’s study. I have had the opportunity to ask her questions.
2. I understand that I am choosing to take part and that I can change my mind at any time. I understand that I will not receive any money for taking part.
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used by Bethany in her study (for example in written work, presentations, talks).
4. I understand that I will remain anonymous in Bethany’s study and that my real name will not be used.
5. I understand that Bethany will store all the information that she collects securely.
6. I am happy for Bethany to observe a dance event that I am taking part in.
7. I am happy for Bethany to talk to me about the dancing that I do and to record the conversation.

---

Name of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature

---

Researcher

---

Date

---

Signature

(One copy of this form will remain with Bethany. The other copy will be handed to the participant for their own records).

**You can contact me and/ or my supervisor by email or by phone if have any questions.**

Researcher: Bethany Whiteside,  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
B.Whiteside@rcs.ac.uk, 07947162044

Principal Supervisor: Dr Stephen Broad  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
S.Broad@rcs.ac.uk, 0141 270 8329

## Appendix 15

### Example of Open and Axial Coding: Highland Dancing Class

<i>Open Coding</i>	<i>Axial Coding</i>
Lack of knowledge about history Focus on technique Stuck Regulated Pressure to perform well/ progress Limited autonomy Regimented Format Corrections/ criticism Discipline Explaining/ checking Defensive In the know Physically demonstrating Verbal instruction Limited creativity Repetition Praise Rebellious Solidarity Concentration Prepared for dance Unprepared to dance Limited artistry	Regulated
Motivation - pride of difficulty and investment Motivation - to perform Motivation - exercise More suitable for males Stamina needed Practice is different Practice is a sport (comparison with other dance types) Long-term commitment Highland dancing body Injury Pain and discipline Pain and respect (respect between ages)	Physically difficult
Defensive Only one in the family Comparison with Irish (resentment caused) Class situated within other dance types Comparison with other dance types	Misunderstood

<p>Out of fashion in Scotland/ more popular abroad/ with tourists  Link between age and waning popularity  Link with derogatory Scottishness.  Scottish people not interested  Confusion with Scotland ceilidh dancing  Is from Scotland  Misunderstood  Defensive  Highland dancing not a priority compared to other dance types</p>	
<p>Scottish ethnicity  Similar age  Small class  Prepared for dance  Helping one another  Admiration  Friendship  Play  Gender  Competition  Love for Highland dancing  Highland dancing is different  Respect for/ understanding between student and teacher  Taking teacher's side  Promoting/wanting creativity  Commitment outside the class  Proud of being Scottish  Highland dancing is Scottish culture</p>	<p>Close-knit community</p>

## Appendix 16

### Record of Participants: Observations and Interviews

#### Professional Ballet Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>
Ballet master	Robert
Dancer	Aidan
Dancer	Amelie
Dancer	Andrea
Dancer	Darren
Dancer	Emmanuelle
Dancer	Mary
Dancer	Orlando
Dancer	Sebastian
Dancer	Dave
Director/Ballet master	Grant
Pianist	Frank

#### Inclusive Creative Dance Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>
Class teacher	Fraser
Client	Albert
Client	Ewan
Client	James
Client	Julie
Client	Lena
Client	Lucy
Client	Minnie
Client	Nathan
Client	Sybil
Client	Tom
Guest teacher	Laura
Students on placement	Ekaterina
Students on placement	Gary
Support worker	Aliya
Support worker	Duncan
Support worker	Elena
Support worker	Paddy
Volunteer	Lawrence
Volunteer	Leila
Volunteer/Stage manager	Siobhan

### Line Dancing Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>
Instructor	Kate
Participant	Ben
Participant	Betty
Participant	Charlie
Participant	Debbie
Participant	Sheryl
Participant	Eloise
Participant	Hamish
Participant	Jane
Participant	Marlene
Participant	Pat

### Salsa Club

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>
Participant	Janet
Participant	Jasper
Participant	Maggie
Participant	Matt
Participant	Ryan

### Highland Dancing Class

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>
Class teacher	Anne
Participant	Hannah
Participant	Kitty
Participant	Lydia
Participant	Nicola
Participant	Rose
Participant	Kirsty

### Dance in Primary Education

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>
Head teacher	Mrs Finan
Teacher	Miss Gibbs
Teacher	Miss Kendall
Teacher	Miss Roberts
Teacher	Mr Patmore
Teacher	Mrs Hughes
P1 pupil	Farah
P1 pupil	Katie
P1 pupil	Raj
P1 pupil	Simon
P3 pupil	Ali

P3 pupil	Amita
P3 pupil	Josh
P3 pupil	Josie
P3 pupil	Liam
P3 pupil	Moni
P5 pupil	Sarah
P5 pupil	Yosra
P5 pupil	Youssef
External dance tutor	Aisling