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Exploring Embodied Masculinities

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Dancing Gender:
Exploring Embodied Masculinities

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Abstract

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Within popular culture we have recently witnessed a proliferation of male dancers. This has been spear-headed by the success of the BBC television program Strictly Come Dancing. The current cultural fascination with dance provides a stark contrast to traditional discourses in England that position dance as a female activity, with men's participation frequently associated with homophobic stigma. We therefore have a context in which multiple and contradictory discourses on masculinity are available for men to make sense of themselves. This thesis explores how young men negotiate these discourses when learning to dance.

The research is based upon an ethnographic study of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes in South West England. The core methods included 1) four years of embodied fieldwork in the form of the researcher learning to dance, 2) writing field-notes and collecting multi-media artefacts, 3) interviewing dancers, and 4) photographing dancers in action. The researcher also drew upon a diverse range of subsidiary methods that included producing a dance wall of collected images and artefacts, cataloguing relevant dance websites and YouTube videos, and extensive use of Facebook for publishing photographs, sharing resources and negotiating ongoing informed consent.

The findings of this PhD identify how learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance produces embodied, visual and discursive transitions in male dancers' performances of masculine identities. The analysis focuses on three sets of practices that work to support or problematise the transitions in masculine identities in dance classes. These practices include 1) dancing with women in ballroom dancing, 2) performing awesome moves in capoeira, and 3) men's experiences of stiff hips. In examining transitions across these three processes the thesis documents the changing possibilities and constraints on embodied masculinities in dance.

1

Introduction

This chapter introduces the research presented in this thesis. I first outline how the current research project responds to wider issues and debates in the field of gender studies and dance research. I then discuss the specific research questions that direct this study, and provide information about the fieldwork sites and the ethnographic methodology I employed. I also include an historical overview of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing, a brief account of my own personal interest in undertaking this study, and conclude the chapter by providing a summary of the thesis content.

At its heart, this research is a study of how male dancers negotiate contemporary discourses of masculinity and how they enact dynamic and multi-faceted performances of masculinity. The findings and analysis presented in this thesis are based upon data produced during four years of ethnographic fieldwork. The ethnographic methodology involved a range of qualitative research methods, the most prominent of which included 1) engaging in embodied fieldwork in the form of attending capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes and learning to dance, 2) writing field notes and collecting multi-media artefacts, 3) interviewing male and female capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers, and 4) photographing dancers in action at festivals, competitions and in class.

In the initial stages of designing this research project, two central aims provided the direction for the research. The first aim was in line with the long established requirement for PhD research, namely, to 'contribute to knowledge' and 'fill a gap' in the academic literature. With this in mind, I set about constructing a research project that focused on a fascinating, dynamic and under researched area of social activity – *men who dance*. Of course, this under-researched area was not randomly chosen but was a topic in which I had a personal desire to practically experience and intellectually explore. My interest in this area had developed whilst undertaking my undergraduate degree and Masters course in Sociology of Sport, where I explored forms of gendered boundary crossing in sport. Previously, I had engaged with the burgeoning research literature that focused on female sportswomen's experiences participating in traditionally male-dominated sports such as rugby, football, boxing and bodybuilding

(Mennesson, 2000; Wright & Clarke, 1999). I was intrigued by how the women who participated in these activities were perceived to be transgressing gender norms and were constructed as deviant through the application of the label 'lesbian'. I was also interested in how sportswomen responded to this labelling process, whether they re-aligned their performances to include 'emphasized femininity' such as hetero-sexy performances, or if they challenged the application of the 'lesbian' label, by demonstrating support for gay members of their team.

Whilst engaging with the sizeable literature on sportswomen's experiences in traditionally masculinised or male-dominated sporting arenas, I found that there was a distinct lack of comparable research on sportsmen's experiences in historically feminised or female-dominated arenas. Davis's (1990) study of male cheerleaders and Burt's (1995) study of male ballet and contemporary dancers were two exceptions here. Intending to explore this gap in the literature, I formulated the following possible research questions:

- Do men who cross gender boundaries experience similar problems and challenges to those experienced by women, e.g. homophobic policing and compulsory heterosexuality?
- How do men negotiate being in a feminized or female dominated arena?
- Do these men push at the boundaries of acceptable masculinity?

In the initial stage of designing this research, I also needed to choose which traditionally feminized or female dominated physical activity I would focus on. The answer to this dilemma came one evening whilst undertaking my Masters course at Loughborough University. One evening on the way home from the pub, my housemates and I heard some unusual but enticing Latin music coming from a side street. Following the music to its source, we came across an international students' event in a local bar and decided to go in to investigate. As we walked into the bar, I was instantly taken aback by the sight of a number of male-female couples dancing together on top of large hardwood tables that stretched the length of the bar. There were also dancing couples randomly spread throughout the bar, intricately intermingling with other people sipping their drinks. For me, this was something strikingly different from the normal drunken student nightclubs I had experienced. Most importantly, I didn't know what dance these people were performing, but I knew it looked awesome. The movements and interactions

between the couples looked sexy, alluring, flirtatious and cool. Watching from the side lines, sipping my pint, I thought, '*I wanna learn to dance*'.

My response to this event was to use dance classes as the context for my ethnographic research. As such, I was aware that dancing was broadly constructed as a feminine activity in England (an issue I will discuss in greater depth shortly). This was aptly illustrated in my own relationship with dance as I had never attended a dance lesson in my life, and, to my knowledge, neither had any of my male friends or male family members. Thus, when I started the research, except for drunken dancing in nightclubs, I had no formal dance experience and I would start the fieldwork as a 'beginner'.

Whilst I was aware that there was a problematic relationship between masculinity and dance within English culture, at the beginning of my PhD I had also started to note that there was a re-emergence of dance as a primetime television phenomena. At this time, in 2005, a BBC television program called *Strictly Come Dancing* had become extremely popular, occupying a primetime slot on Saturday night television and drawing in reported viewing figures in excess of 10 million (www.mirror.co.uk, 2005). I also found it interesting that one of the male celebrity participants, English cricketer Darren Gough, was being lauded on the show, in the newspapers (www.mirror.co.uk, 2005; Kahn, 2009), on the radio ('Fat Lads Don't Dance' BBC Radio 4, 2006), and by members of my own family, as a noteworthy example of how men can dance and still look masculine. Avidly following the media discourse surrounding Darren Gough's supposedly 'macho' performances on the dance floor, I was intrigued by the prospect that this new media visibility, celebration and discussion of male dancers provided evidence that we were witnessing exciting changes in British popular culture (Davidson, 2012). Building on this new wave of interest surrounding male dancers' performances of masculinity, I took up the topic of masculinity and dance as the focal point of my PhD and undertook an in-depth exploration of how masculinity is constructed, negotiated and performed locally within specific dance classes.

My interest in the construction and performance of male dancer's masculinities comes at a time when research on masculinity in the UK is moving to a new level. The academic study of masculinity has needed to respond to wider changes in post-modern societies that have included the unprecedented expansion in new media technologies and the growing impact of globalization. These changes have meant that people now

have greater access to discourses and physical cultures that circulate beyond their local geographical location. Contemporary gender relations have also been influenced by significant shifts in sense making associated with neo-liberalism, consumerism and post-feminism (see chapters two, three and four for discussion of these concepts). Taken together, these shifts have helped shape a generation of young men and women who are required to deal with new challenges, opportunities and resources in the construction of their gender identities. For example, within the UK, young men now need to negotiate post-feminist informed dynamics between men and women, the increasing representation of gay masculinities in the media and the consumer discourses and practices associated with metrosexuality.

In response to these new challenges, a number of contemporary masculinity scholars have documented examples where the boundaries of acceptable heterosexual masculine performance are expanding, and where young men are constructing increasingly fluid and flexible masculinities that engage with diverse gender roles and sexualities (Segal, 2007; Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). The emergence of these apparently new local gender practices poses fascinating challenges to the theorisation of contemporary masculinities. A prominent issue to consider is whether Connell's (1987; 1995; 2002) theory of *hegemonic masculinity,* that has acted as the central focal point for masculinity studies for over twenty years, is still applicable in 21st century post-modern societies. Connell's approach originally built upon Feminist theories that had developed a critical approach to femininity and sexuality, and so from the mid-1980s Connell tried to extend this approach to the study of men and masculinity. Work informed by Connell's theory has sought to critique prevailing constructions of masculinity, highlighting how they work to reproduce inequitable gender relations and forms of gender and sexual oppression. These studies have documented how dominant constructions of masculinity work to trivialise women, police men's performances of femininity, and stigmatize male homosexuality. In summary, this has led some feminist and gender researchers to assert that masculinities and male bodily performances are policed to such an extent that masculinity is invariably viewed in negative, defensive and exclusive terms, where "to be 'masculine' is *not* to be 'feminine', *not* to be 'gay', *not* to be tainted with any marks of 'inferiority'" (Segal, 2007:xxxiv).

When engaging with masculinity research that is heavily influenced by Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, Anderson (2009, 2011) argues that it is

important to remember that this theory emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s, a period beset with homophobia wherein men often feared being perceived as feminine or homosexual. Located in this historical context, the emergence and prominence of hegemonic masculinity theory makes sense. However, in the 21st century, masculinity researchers have started to recognise the dangers of relying on a single theory, particularly one that is pre-occupied with a narrow search for examples of male domination, exploitation and oppression (Seidler, 2006; Moller, 2007). One such problem with taking this approach is men and masculinity are invariably positioned in a negative light. This becomes particularly problematic when researchers subsequently ignore or trivialise the analysis of progressive gender practices of men working towards gender equality (Collier, 1998; Seidler, 2006; McCormack, 2012).

Building on these concerns, a number of contemporary masculinity scholars have argued that hegemonic masculinity theory does not adequately explain the complexity of relationships between the multiple types of masculinities that exist in cultures of decreasing sexism and homophobia (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). The most established critique has emerged in the work of Eric Anderson (2009) who has put forward *inclusive masculinity theory*. This theory proposes that the discourses around masculinity that are currently available for men to make sense of themselves as men are in a state of flux. Inclusive masculinity theory is one of the first approaches to explicitly address the diversity of discourses that have challenged the dominance of traditional or orthodox masculinities, and it can be viewed as an initial attempt at theorising how the rules of masculinity are changing (Anderson, 2012). The current PhD research will therefore make a crucial contribution to the field of masculinity studies by engaging in an in-depth qualitative study that applies, evaluates and builds on the exciting new theory of inclusive masculinity. And thus my work will explore new ways of theorizing the changing dynamics between old and new masculinities and physical cultures.

1.1 Ethnography

In order to take an in-depth look at the potentially new forms of masculinity proposed above, I employed an ethnographic methodology. This approach has enabled me to explore how wider cultural shifts in discourses, representations and performances of masculinity are being dealt with and enacted in specific local contexts. An ethnographic approach is particularly suitable for exploring the construction and performance of masculinities within capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes, since at the outset of the

project very little academic research had been published on these two physical cultures. Adopting a methodologically responsive, flexible and evolving approach, as is typical of ethnographic research, enabled me to engage with the dynamic and little-explored fieldwork sites.

Getting to grips with the complexity of masculinities also required that I develop a multi-pronged methodological approach. This is where ethnography comes into its own, as one of the core premises of ethnography is to use multiple methods so that the researcher can analyze a phenomenon from multiple angles and make links between different research materials and experiences. I have harnessed the benefits of this approach by bringing together an innovative and eclectic mix of multi-media methods that have allowed me to gain 1) experiential insights into the male dancing body in action, 2) textual and interpersonal data about the verbal construction of masculinities, and 3) photographic records of visual performances of gender.

The third major benefit of adopting an ethnographic approach is being able to attend to the processual nature of the construction of masculine identities. Conducting ethnographic fieldwork over a period of four years allowed me to investigate any changes in the construction and performance of masculine identities over time, and attend to how male dancers became exposed to a wider range of discursive resources that facilitated shifts in their bodily performances and their understandings of what it means to be masculine.

Using an ethnographic approach to investigate the potential value of inclusive masculinity theory, I needed to identify an appropriate sample for the study. I decided to focus the research on the activities of young male dancers aged 18 - 35. Focusing on this group is significant because young people in post-modern societies form a major part of an emerging cohort of 'digital natives'. These are a group of people who have grown up surrounded by social media, digital technology and a wider range of inter-cultural discourses and new forms of cultural expression. As Jenkins (2009:125) notes, they have "the education, skills, financial resources, and time required to navigate the sea of cultural choice". In addition, Anderson (2009) and other researchers have argued that cultural norms against prejudice and the establishment of gender and sexual equality are increasingly being taken for granted in youth cultures in post-modern societies. This has led to a deceasing social stigma surrounding homosexuality and the

demonstration of increasingly positive attitudes toward gay men and women (Segal, 2007; Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). In short, then, the experiences of young male dancers offer a fascinating site where broader changes in discourses around gender and sexuality can be explored.

1.2 The research sites: Capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes

In the initial weeks of the project I scouted the local area searching for dance classes that would be suitable sites of research. There were two main factors that underpinned my inclusion criteria. First, I was led by a personal desire to choose dances that I thought I would enjoy learning. This was crucial as these activities would become a major part of my social life and academic life for years to come. The second factor that underpinned the choice of dance was the methodological imperative to undertake a comparative approach. I wished to compare two dances, one that was typically perceived as more feminine and attracted predominantly female students, and one that was perceived as more masculine and attracted predominantly male students. The rationale behind this research design was to facilitate an exploration of how contrasting gendered histories and discourses surrounding a dance would shape the different ways masculinities were experienced and performed through dance practices. I thus choose to focus my comparative research on capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes. The Latin and ballroom dance class ratio was between 40-60 to 30-70 male-to-female students. With often double the amount of women to men in class, I positioned this dance class as the more female dominated terrain. In comparison, the capoeira classes had an equal ratio of 50-50 male-to-female. However, the male-dominated Brazilian history of capoeira and its explicit martial arts elements allowed me to locate it as a more masculine terrain (see below for further discussion of the historical context of these dances).

I attended Latin and ballroom dance classes that were made up of university students from the University of McNulty* (*note: the university and club names are pseudonyms). There were approximately two hundred dancers in total, aged between 18 to 30, and the ethnic makeup of the class was 60-70% White British and 30-40% a range of other nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. I also attended two capoeira classes organised by two different capoeira groups in two local cities in the South West. Both capoeira groups had links with the respective university in each city and some classes were held at the university campuses. Classes were also held in the city centres, and

most classes were attended by a mix of university students and local residents. The two groups had similar demographic make-ups, with participants typically being university educated men and women aged between 18-35. This meant that my sample was mainly from more affluent and middle class socio-economic groups. Approximately half of the participants where White British, and half were a mix of a range of other nationalities. Using these case studies allowed me to develop my generic research questions on masculinity and dance (see section above) into three specific major research questions that I aimed to explore.

1.3 The research questions

1) *'How are masculine identities enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes?'*

2) *'What role does 1) language, 2) visual practices, and 3) embodied practices play in the enabling of masculine identities'?*

3) *'To what extent does Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity explain how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes?'*

1.4 The History of Latin and ballroom dance in England

To contextualise this thesis I offer below an introduction to the history of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing in England, discussing their changing historic relationships with the performance of masculinity. I look first at the history of Latin and ballroom dancing.

Rebecca Harris-Warrick (1986) detailed how ballroom dancing first emerged as a courtly activity for European privileged upper classes. She notes that in the late 17th century the French royal court of Louis XIV developed a taste for grand ceremonial balls with social dancing playing a major role in court life. During the 18th century, ballroom dancing started to spread throughout the European royal courts. Taken up in the English court, ballroom dancing was adapted and invested as a symbol of 'Englishness'. In turn, ballroom dancing provided a public site where privileged men could demonstrate their gentlemanly behaviour by "exhibit[ing] their grace, elegance and refinement, essential characteristics of a refined manly character" (Adams, 2007:872). Moreover, ballroom dancing allowed these men to "show their awareness of

the latest fashions, and to display their mastery of polite behaviour – qualities required for acceptance in society" (Marion, 2008:20).

Discourses about the English gentleman and the practice of ballroom dancing both emerged and then subsequently declined in England during the same historical period. This was not a coincidence, but rather an effect of wider changes in society. Looking first at the emergence of the English gentleman in the 18th century, commentators have made sense of the gentleman as an archetype, an image, a model, an ideal, and an embodiment of idiosyncratic qualities associated with Englishness and masculinity (David, 1991; Collins, 2002). As such, the English gentleman can be understood as a response to wider social movements instigated by the aristocracy and gentry that placed greater significance on manners, the internalization of self-restraint and increasing thresholds of shame and repugnance (Downing, 2010). This collection of discourses and practices formed what came to be known as 'polite society', and, as a product of its time, the figure of English gentleman emerged. Initially the figure of the English gentleman was linked with men from upper to upper-middle class backgrounds who came from a 'good family' and had a privileged education at public school and Oxbridge (Collins, 2002).

However, in the late 19th and early 20th century, commentators noted that there were shifting understandings of who could be viewed as a gentleman and what constituted gentlemanly behaviour (David, 1991; Collins, 2002). The ideal of the English gentleman gained greater appeal across a wider social spectrum, most notably with the increasing middle-class who demonstrated a desire to appropriate aristocratic cultural forms (Collins, 2002; Berberich, 2007; Downing, 2010). This broader appropriation of gentlemanly ideals meant that the English gentleman took on a more elastic character that could be enacted through the self-fashioning display of ones' cultural status. Men could therefore be praised for exhibiting a long line of gentlemanly qualities that included the demonstration of good manners, chivalry, unselfishness, self-restraint, good humour, fairness, temperance, humility, amateurism, generosity, courteousness, gallantry, honour, politeness and respect for the better man (Collins, 2002; Adams, 2007; Berberich, 2007). Gentlemanly forms of masculinity were thus so influential they infiltrated everyday gender relations, including men's activities on the dance floor. As Bartsky (1988) notes, a man,

"may literally steer a woman everywhere she goes: down the street, around corners, into elevators, though doorways, into her chair at the dinner table, around the dance floor. The man's movement is not necessarily heavy and pushy or physical in an ugly way; it is light and gentle but firm in the way of the most confident equestrians with the best trained horses" (p.68, cited in Shilling, 1993:84).

It was during this period, in the first half of the 20th century, that dance historian Arba (2009) argues Britain saw a national dance culture emerge. Arba posits that this dance culture was instigated by the importation and transformation of popular Latin American and ballroom dance forms from other countries, particularly Latin America and the United States. This is supported in Savigliano's (1995) study of Argentine Tango and McMains (2006) study of American DanceSport competitions, wherein both researchers comment on how Latin American dances were Anglicized, 'cleaned up' and 'whitened' for European and North American audiences. In Britain, this process was also accompanied by the opening of hundreds of affordable public dance spaces (Arba, 2009). The new imported dances thus became increasingly accessible to large portions of the population and those who didn't actively participate could still engage with popular dancing's increasing ubiquity, in newspapers, on the radio, at the cinema, or by watching popular dance television shows such as *Come Dancing,* a televised dance competition that involved professionals but not celebrities, which originally debuted in 1949 on the BBC (Arba, 2009).

Whilst the practice of ballroom dancing and the enactment of gentlemanly masculinity were popular during the 19th and early 20th century, in the 1960s ballroom dancing and the traditional figure of the English gentleman both went out of fashion (David, 1991; Collins, 2002; Silvester, 2005). This phenomenon was part of a wider set of changes in society that were bound up with processes of de-colonization, changes in the economy and the rise of feminist politics. As such, after World War II Britain's colonial power dwindled and it was no longer considered to be the world leader it once was. In turn, the image of the English gentlemen and his supposed 'right to rule' had now been critiqued in many sections of the mainstream press as a form of white authority that was underpinned by forms of xenophobia, racism and the demonstration of national superiority (Collins, 2002). At the same time, with the economic decline that occurred after WWII, the ideology of amateurism that underpinned the actions of the English gentleman were no longer viable within an economy that was moving towards increasing forms of professionalization, materialism and meritocracy. And finally, the

rise of the feminist movement and increasing calls for gender equality posed a growing challenge to the authority, privileges and institutions gentlemen had once maintained. The image of the English gentleman that had once been held up for celebration thus came under sustained critique as a propagator of chauvinism, conservatism, economic decline and the continuation of patriarchy (David, 1991; Collins, 2002).

In relation to dance, the wider socio-cultural changes of the 1960s were embodied through the advent of Rock 'N' Roll music, and in the following decade with the introduction of disco dancing. The dance practices associated with these genres of music challenged the rigid definition of gender roles that had accompanied ballroom dancing (Wieschiolek, 2003). Silvester (2005:42) goes so far as to cite one particular song, Chubby Checker's (1961) 'Lets Twist Again', having a radical impact upon the performance of gender roles in popular dance. He notes, "the twist brought with it a new idea: the dancers did not have to have partners, girls did not have to wait to be asked to dance; everyone could join in". In the subsequent decade, this trend was followed by the growth of disco dancing, what Silvester calls the "ultimate free-for-all of the twentieth century" (p.43). As a result of these changes in culture, ballroom dancing became increasingly unpopular with young people and dance shows such as *Come Dancing* were taken off the air due to falling ratings.

Alongside the rise and fall in the popularity of ballroom dancing and gentlemanly styles of masculinity, another social trend impacted upon men's relationships with dancing within the UK. As such, despite the popularity of social forms of male-female couple dancing in the early 20th century, presumptions about the effeminacy of professional male dancers became widespread, both inside and outside the world of dance (Burt, 1995; Adams, 2005). In professional performances female dancers were objects of desire for male spectators, and thus dance came to be seen as an increasingly feminine activity and homophobic prejudices against male dancers grew (Burt, 1995; Adams, 2005). The feminization of dance in the UK persisted throughout the 20th century, and led to years of limited male participation in dance classes and a lack of male dance teachers.

It was not until the turn of the 21st century, that Latin and ballroom dancing re-emerged as a major force in the mainstream media in the UK with the promotion of the prime-time BBC television program *Strictly Come Dancing*. The show acted as a quasi-revival

of the previous BBC show *Come Dancing*, but it also adopted a different structure with celebrities teaming up with a professional dancer and competing in a weekly knock-out dance competition. Over the last decade, the *Strictly Come Dancing* show has become extremely popular, introducing new generations of young people to ballroom dancing and bringing the image of the male dancer back into the mainstream cultural milieu. In chapter two I will explore the phenomena of *Strictly Come Dancing* in greater detail, examining how it is reflective of a wider set of social changes wherein a more diverse range of acceptable representations of masculinities have now been made available in contemporary society.

1.5 A Brief History of Capoeira

Capoeira's roots are in Africa and Brazil and it is commonly referred to as an Afro-Brazilian art form. Capoeira can crudely be described as an activity that mixes dancing and fighting. It is commonly referred to as a game - *jogo de capoeira* - and practitioners talk about 'playing' capoeira. Capoeira is typically played within a circle of people who sing Brazilian Portuguese capoeira songs, clap their hands to a rhythm and play a range of capoeira instruments. One person will lead the song and the rest follow in a call and response sequence. In the centre of the circle two people move their bodies in dialogue, attacking and defending, asking questions of one another, 'playing' capoeira.

The specific origins of capoeira are highly contested, but its historical narrative typically starts in Africa and is subsequently embedded within a Brazilian context (Delamont & Stephens, 2008). In some basic form, capoeira was brought to Brazil by African slaves. During the period of slavery, capoeira is said to have initially developed in Salvador in the northeast region of Brazil and then spread to large southern cities (Lewis, 2000). A common narrative professed by capoeirista is that the African slaves who were bought to Brazil needed to practice martial arts under the watchful eye of their slave owners, and hence slaves introduced dancing elements in order to disguise the martial elements of their training (Capoeira, 2002).

With the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888, capoeira continued to develop alongside the changing Brazilian culture. During the late 19th and early 20th century capoeira became associated with black males and the escalating urban violence in Brazilian society (Rosa, 2012). Capoeira thus became linked to criminality and the activities of the street gangs (Downey, 2005). In 1937 there was a groundbreaking shift in the

historical narrative of capoeira as Mestra Bimba created the first formal institution for *Regional* capoeira in Salvador. Framing capoeira as a gymnastic activity with physical educational benefits, Mestre Bimba created the first capoeira academy to be legalized. In the following decade, a second institute of capoeira *Angola* emerged in Salvador led by Mestre Pastinha. This alternative strand of capoeira sought to promote capoeira as an art of self-defense that was connected to African heritage.

Reflecting on the brief historical summary of capoeira written above, it is important to note that much of it was gleaned from word of mouth as well as through the published books and documentaries of esteemed capoeira masters. Indeed, by undertaking extensive fieldwork and learning to play capoeira, on numerous occasions I have witnessed the verbal practice of capoeirista orally sharing the history of capoeira. This has typically involved listening to the storytelling rituals of older, more experienced male Brazilian masters – *mestres*. It is these experienced male capoeirista who, in Joseph's (2008a:500) words, demonstrate their "authority to provide interpretations of the past", relaying stories of capoeira's violent and dangerous past in Brazil. For example, I have heard numerous stories about beer bottles being smashed in capoeiristas' faces, and stories about capoeirista being involved in knife fights and needing to tie a silk scarf around their neck in order to prevent the opponent's knife from landing a killer blow. I have also heard of stories about musical instruments being used as weapons, and instances where capoeirista were employed in samba competitions to physically protect a specific samba group's flag bearer against rival groups who might attempt to steal their flag or start a fight (Bartlett, 2009).

Reflecting on the practice of orally re-telling the history of capoeira, I suggest that it has a number of interesting functions. At a personal level, listening to real people tell these stories in animated and emotive ways, the practice of storytelling has the ability to cultivate a sense of drama and an emotional reaction. These stories also work to construct individual and group histories and identities, and they cultivate knowledge and bonds to the capoeira community. The oral histories are usually told by Brazilian capoeirista who have emigrated from Brazil, and so there is typically a sense of nostalgia and a glorification of a Brazilian past. Finally, I also want to suggest that the historical stories function as warnings and cautionary tales for capoeirista not to leave themself open and vulnerable to treachery or violence. This is aptly captured in the

advice Lowell-Lewis (1992) gives to capoeirista, "don't be fooled by appearance of friendliness, don't trust anyone too far, and always be ready to defend yourself" (p.193).

When analyzing the history of capoeira it is unmistakable that it is a story dominated by men. The historical actions of capoeirista were performed almost exclusively by men, whether slaves, criminals or freedom fighters (Lewis, 2000; Rosa 2012), and the modern re-telling of these stories is also almost exclusively performed by men. In many of the historical stories, the narrative or the moral of the story draws on traditional qualities of masculinity such as aggression, competitiveness, risk-taking, violence, claiming space, and feats of strength (Rosa, 2012). Constructions of masculinity and the history of capoeira are thus intimately entwined. It is important to note, however, that whilst more traditional aspects of masculinity are typically represented in the historical stories of capoeira, the male capoeirista are not representing dominant social groups. As such, the history of capoeira is a history of masculine subversion and resistance that was originally reflected through a slave mentality and then extended through criminal activities and the actions of subordinate people fighting against an oppressive state. The masculinities represented in the historical capoeira stories from Brazil therefore have a strong focus on the necessity of using cunning, cheating, deception, subtly and subversion in order to outwit an opponent.

It is interesting to note that the discourses reflected in these stories play an important pedagogical role as they are woven into the actual everyday practice of capoeira. For example, unprovoked violence, humour-less humiliation and the abuse of an opponent, especially someone with less skill, was not admired or valorized in the capoeira classes I attended. On the other hand, as others have also noted, the performance of a subtle, cheeky or well-timed move that used the power of an opponent's attack against them would always gain sounds of appreciation from the crowd (Fuggle, 2008; Stephens & Delamont, 2009).

1.6 The spread of Capoeira to the UK

Through conversations with a number of experienced capoeira instructors and masters, I have been able to build up a brief oral history of the emergence of capoeira in the UK. This history was said to begin with the arrival of Master Nestor Capoeira in 1971. However, there seems agreement that capoeira did not start to flourish until the late 1980s and early 1990s when a series of masters that included Master Gato, Master

Ousado and Master Sylvia Bazzarelli started to establish groups in London and other major cities in the UK. There is currently no official record or website that documents the number of capoeira groups in the UK. And so, from questioning numerous experienced capoeira teachers, they estimated that there are currently in excess of thirty established capoeira groups active in major towns and cities across the UK. This sizeable number suggests that despite emerging from relative obscurity twenty five years ago, capoeira is now relatively established in the UK and is becoming an increasingly popular art form. The emergence and increasing success of capoeira can be understood as part of the wider processes of globalisation, wherein, with the relative ease of air travel, and with consumers' appetitive for exotic foreign products, predominantly male Brazilian economic migrants have been able to travel to major cities around the world to set up capoeira groups. As part of this process, the Bunk* capoeira group was established in 2001 and the McNulty* capoeira group was established in 2003. Both classes were started by Brazilian male instructors in their twenties who came to England with the intention to teach capoeira.

With the spread of capoeira to the West, two fundamental shifts in the historical narrative of capoeira have occurred. First, there has been a steady increase in the media representations of capoeira. Representations of capoeira can be found in a wide range of movies, television advertisements and computer games (I will explore this topic in greater depth in chapter seven). And, as with most physical cultures, there is a now wealth of audio visual material on *YouTube*. This material includes lessons in how to perform capoeira moves, play capoeira instruments and sing capoeira songs, and amateur and professional documentaries. There are also hundreds if not thousands of video snippets of 'home-video' style recordings of capoeira games played in capoeira classes and street rodas. The second fundamental change that emerged with capoeira leaving Brazil and coming to cities in the West is that women have increasingly become active participants. In my four years of fieldwork, I have observed that classes usually have a 50-50 ratio of male to female students. In terms of the teachers of capoeira in the UK, this is still resoundingly dominated by men, and the majority of the published practitioner literature on capoeira is also written by male Brazilian masters. However, in the academic field, with the interest in capoeira rapidly growing, the signs are good that male and female academic practitioner-researchers are both publishing research on capoeira.

1.7 A summary of the thesis chapters

In the final section of this introduction I offer a summary of what is to come in the following chapters. In chapter two I present a historically and culturally sensitive understanding of the construction and performance of masculine identities in the context of dance. I draw upon Michel Foucault's understanding of 'discourse' to highlight how our own personal meanings of what it is to be 'masculine' are produced in practice, through our everyday active engagement and negotiation with the existing discourses in our culture. Building on this position, I provide an historical analysis of the most prominent discourses surrounding the performance of masculinities in dance in England. This form of analysis is informed by Foucault's (1984b) historical method of genealogy. Genealogy works to identify key struggles, transitions and transformations in a field of discourse over time and I employ this method to show how male dancers' masculinities have been represented, challenged and justified in the mass media in a variety of different ways over the last twenty years. To structure this analysis, I focus on three specific fragments of history:

> 1) the *Billy Elliot* movie and musical,
>
> 2) the *Strictly Come Dancing* television show, and
>
> 3) *YouTube* dance videos, including male dancers' performances of Beyoncé's *Single Ladies* video.

These fragments focus on representations of popular male dancers in the mainstream English mass media over the last fifteen to twenty years. Crucially, these examples highlight prominent cultural shifts wherein distinctively different styles of masculinity have been represented in the mass media. The gender discourses associated with the three fragments of history show that traditional discourses of masculinity have been seriously challenged through the contemporary representation of male dancers. In my analysis of *Billy Elliot* and *Strictly Come Dancing* I identify how these representations work to incorporate new performances of masculinity within traditional discursive frameworks by adapting, recuperating and appropriating traditional masculine discourses from other areas such as sport and athletics. In my analysis of *Strictly Come Dancing* and the *YouTube* videos, I also identify the emergence of new discourses of masculinity that provide alternative ways of legitimatizing and making sense of dancing masculinities. In turn, I show how these new masculinities work in dialogue with more traditional masculinities and can be placed within a discursive field consisting of a dynamic play between overlapping, interweaving and conflicting old and new discourses.

In chapter three I theorize the changing nature of masculinities in contemporary English society and I help make sense of the dynamic interplay between the old and new discourses of masculinity outlined in the previous chapter. To do this, I draw upon Eric Anderson's (2009) theory of inclusive masculinity. This theory was developed from Connell's (1995; 2002) earlier work on the construction of masculinities, which was itself informed by feminist perspectives. Anderson's central premise is that improved attitudes toward homosexuality have had a profound impact on socially esteemed masculinities, resulting in the proliferation of what he calls *inclusive masculinity*. Anderson argues that this archetype of masculinity is challenging the dominance of *orthodox masculinity*, an older and more traditional form of masculinity based upon anti-femininity, compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia. To support and extend this theory I bring Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse and power relations into the mix. This enables me to analyze the complex and interweaving relationships between orthodox and inclusive masculinities, and facilitates a critique of Anderson's theory. As such, Anderson's theory seeks to blend Foucauldian and Gramscian understandings of power relations. By outlining the tensions and differences between Foucauldian theory and Gramscian theories of hegemony, I argue that blending these approaches is problematic due to a series of underlying contradictions that are difficult to overcome. In response, I advocate a Foucaldian-inspired theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities that is firmly located within a post-modern context. This ultimately allows me to attend to how multiple forms of orthodox and inclusive masculinities currently exist and intermingle across time and space, such that male subjects can tactically shift between different orthodox and inclusive performances depending upon the rhetorical demands of the local context.

In chapter four I locate human bodies as a crucial site in the on-going performance of masculinities. By exploring the centrality of the body, I construct a theoretical framework that combines a focus on the discursive construction of orthodox and inclusive masculinities, with an account of how male bodies take on a dynamic mediating role as the product and producer of gender discourses. To outline this approach, I split the chapter into three sections. In the first section I provide the essential ingredients for my theorisation of embodiment. In the second section, I theorize how the process of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing facilitates changes in men's embodied performances of masculinity. Here I offer an original

theoretical framework based upon an assemblage of concepts deployed by Marcel Mauss, Pierre Bourdieu, Kitaro Nishida, and Michel Foucault. In the final section I highlight how my theorisation of masculinity and embodiment connects with my methodological and analytical strategy. As such, I advocate a form of ethnographic discourse analysis that explores how masculinities can be analysed as embodied identities in transition.

In chapter five I outline how I built an ethnographic methodology that allowed me to interrogate the multi-dimensional complexity and processual nature of male capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers' experiences and performances of masculinity. Moreover, I detail how the concept of co-performance shines a valuable light on the way I cultivated rapport and built collaborative and ethical relations with research participants. I also draw support from Kincheloe's (2001; 2005) theory of Methodological Bricolage, in order to make sense of how and why my ethnographic practice ultimately took an eclectic, unpredictable and messy shape. In this chapter I also discuss the choices I made in relation to the four core methods employed in this research: 1) engaging in embodied fieldwork in the form of attending capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes and learning to dance, 2) writing field notes and collecting multi-media artefacts, 3) interviewing male and female capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers, and 4) photographing dancers in action at festivals, competitions and in class.

Employing an ethnographic methodology has allowed me to structure the analysis chapters in a way that addressed the research questions, focusing on the most taken for granted masculine practices in Latin and ballroom ('Dancing with Women' - chapter 6) and capoeira classes ('Performing Awesome Moves' - chapter 7), and by examining the most problematic masculine practice which was the same in both classes ('Stiff Hips' - chapter 8). It is important to note that, the first two analytic chapters sit alongside each other in a way that allows me to demonstrate how male dancers in each group faced different sets of gender troubles over time and engaged in the different processes of cultivating masculinities in dance. In the third analysis chapter, however, I show how the two different dances work in tandem, and so by bringing the two 'problems' together I produce an integrated thesis where the analysis of the two dances inform one another.

In the concluding chapter I draw this work together by reflecting upon the common sets of transitions that emerged across these three processes, and thus I show how the thesis documents the changing possibilities and constraints on embodied masculinities in dance.

2

Billy Elliot, Strictly Come Dancing and YouTube Dance Videos – A Brief History of English Dancing Masculinities

To explore how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes, I will first locate the study within its wider historical and cultural context. By adopting this approach I will show how masculinities are historically and culturally specific entities. This means that 'masculinity' is not a fixed, singular or universal category. There is no essence to masculinity and nothing natural or normal about a body identified as masculine. Rather, as Judith Butler (2004) asserts, the terms,

> "'masculine' and 'feminine' are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending upon geo-political boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose" (p.10).

In turn, this means that there is nothing inherently feminine or masculine about men who engage in dance. As Adams (2007) notes, "there is…nothing innately feminine or masculine about particular movements or styles of moving. Gendered adjectives are applied to movement in accord with historically and culturally specific norms" (p.875). In the subsequent historical analysis, I will illustrate these arguments by showing how the performance of dancing masculinities and the meanings attributed to them have changed over time and space.

My analytical approach to understanding the historical and cultural contextualisation of masculinities will be informed by Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse and his use of genealogy as a historical method. The concept of 'discourse' has a complex history and has been used in different ways by different theorists (Mills, 1997). To outline how I intend to use this concept, I will first draw upon Sara Mills' summary of Foucault's use of discourse. Mills (1997) identifies that,

> "A distinction may be usefully made between general, abstract theoretical concern with *discourse* and the analysis of individual *discourses*, or groupings of statements produced within power relations" (p.9).

This definition allows me to attend to the general sense of how discourse constructs a topic through socially constructed meaning-making processes that allow people to make sense of some aspect of reality (Hall, 1997). In addition, I can attend to specific discourses that take the form of groups of statements. These statements provide a

language for talking about and a way of representing knowledge about a particular topic, in this instance embodied masculinities (Hall, 1997; Mills, 1997). By attending to how understandings of masculinity are discursively constructed, I will be able to shine a light on how our own personal meanings of what it is to be masculine will be produced in practice through our active engagement and negotiation with the existing discourses available in our culture (Mills, 1997). It is also important to note that discourse is articulated through an ensemble of various components (Hook, 2001). Foucault argued that, "discourse never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source. The same discourse…will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society" (Hall, 1997:44). In turn, to gain insights into how discourses enable and constrain the performance of masculinities, I can attend to how discourses are manifested and reproduced through multi-media texts, objects, bodies, practices, groups of ideas, stories, and any other cultural resource people draw on to make sense of masculinity.

Foucault offered the method of genealogy as a means to historically analyse the on-going influence of discourse within a culture. He suggested that genealogy can be used with a strategic and critical intention to highlight the limits of the present, to expose how the body is imprinted by history, and to identify struggles, transitions and transformations in the field of discourse over time (Foucault, 1984b; Dean, 1994; Sharp & Richardson, 2001; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). In this chapter I will perform a genealogical analysis in order to show how the male dancer has been constructed and legitimatized in discourse in different ways at different times through different media. By adopting this approach, I will undertake a focused and in-depth analysis that promotes a sense of the historical possibilities of different masculinities and offers up these examples as sparks of inspiration for ways to actively construct new masculine identities in the future.

Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, I locate the individual male dancer as an "artifact of a very long and complicated historical process" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982:130). Due to limits on time and space in this thesis, I need to restrict my genealogical analysis of this long and complicated process to focus on what I consider to be the most relevant "fragments of history" (Kendall & Wickham, 2004:129). The fragments I have chosen to analyse take the form of exemplars. They are specific examples of distinctively different styles of masculinity that have been represented in the English mainstream

media over the last fifteen years. My choices were structured primarily through examining which dance media was most prominent in the mainstream media, and which dance media dancers frequently drew upon when making sense of their dance class experiences. The three historical fragments are:

1. The film and stage show **Billy Elliot**. The film is set during the 1984 miner's strike when the Thatcher government sought to close down a series of coal mines in the UK. The main character, a young boy called Billy Elliot, enters a ballet class full of girls and learns to dance. The film was made in 2000 and the subsequent stage show launched in London in 2005.

2. The BBC television show **Strictly Come Dancing**. This show is based upon a knockout competition between dance couples consisting of a celebrity and a professional dancer. The show was launched in 2004 and is now in its eleventh series.

3. **YouTube dance videos** posted online. I will focus on a selection of viral dance videos submitted to *YouTube* over the last decade and I will pay particular attention to re-makes of Beyoncé's *Single Ladies* video which was launched in 2008.

2.1 Billy Elliot: Dancing through the crisis of masculinity in post-industrial England

Billy Elliot (2000) is an English film set during the 1984 miner's strike when the Thatcher government sought to close down a series of coal mines in the UK. The story focuses on a community of miners living in a small mining town in northern England who are severely affected by the strike. The miners are experiencing a crisis of masculinity as they face the realities of industrial decline, unemployment and the erosion of their working class traditions (Lancioni, 2006). Amidst the on-going battles between the miners, the government and police, the central character of the film - an eleven year old boy called Billy Elliot - enters a ballet class full of girls and learns to dance.

It is interesting to note that *Billy Elliot* (2000) is just one of a number of media productions where dance and a crisis of masculinity become narrative companions. For example, in the English film *The Full Monty* (1997), a group of demoralised unemployed Sheffield steel workers become dancing strippers in order to make money. Similarly, masculinity crises abounded in an episode of the American cartoon *The*

Simpsons (Homer vs. Patty and Selma, 1995). Here, Homer's crisis of masculinity is instigated by financial worries and his inability to fulfil his fatherly role as male bread-winner for the family. Alongside this, his son Bart experiences a parallel crisis of masculinity when he is forced to learn ballet in a PE class full of girls. Yet another example, in the film *Shall We Dance* (2004) the lead character played by Richard Gere faces a mid-life crisis and turns to Latin and ballroom dancing as a solution. Taken together, these media representations point to a common narrative theme wherein dance is presented as both a problematic arena for masculinity and a dramatic recuperative space for the negotiation of troubled masculinities (Weber, 2003; Lancioni, 2006).

2.1.1 Negotiating the problem of masculinity and dance

Turning back to *Billy Elliot*, I will now insert a link to a short video clip that acts as a starting point from which to discuss how media representations of dance classes depict them as problematic masculine spaces that have historically been perceived as more feminine and attracting predominantly female students. Prior to this scene, Billy had been attending a boxing class along with the other boys in the town when one day he stays behind after class and joins in the ballet class with the girls. After missing a few boxing lessons and secretly attending ballet instead, his father finds out something is wrong and goes to investigate. His father finds Billy dancing, pulls him out of class and returns home to tell him that ballet is 'Not for Lads':

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmgV3OFn0aE&feature=fvwrel

> *Father*: Ballet?
>
> *Billy*: What's wrong with ballet?
>
> *Father*: What's wrong with ballet?
>
> *Billy*: It's perfectly normal
>
> *Father*: Perfectly normal
>
> *Nana*: I used to go to ballet
>
> *Billy*: See
>
> *Father:* For your Nana, for girls, not for lads Billy. Lads do football or….boxing or…..wrestling. Not friging ballet!
>
> *Billy*: What lads do wrestling?
>
> *Father*: Don't start Billy
>
> *Billy*: I don't see what's wrong with it
>
> *Father*: You know perfectly well what's wrong with it
>
> *Billy*: No I don't
>
> *Father*: Yes you do
>
> *Billy*: No I don't!

Father: Yes you bloody well do! Who do you think I am?! You know quite nicely.

Billy: What?….What you trying to say Dad?

Father: You're asking for a hiding son.

Billy: No I'm not, honest.

Father: You are Billy, Billy.

Billy: It's not just poofs Dad. Some ballet dancers are as fit as athletes. What about that Wayne Sleep? He was a ballet dancer.

Father: Wayne Sleep?

Billy: Aye.

Father: Listen son. From now on you can forget about the fucking ballet! You can forget about the fucking boxing as well! I'm busting my arse for those fifty pences and you… No, from now on you stay here and you look after your Nana, got it?!

This dramatic and revealing clip shows two characters tactically using their knowledge of available discourse to debate whether Billy's actions are 'normal' for a boy. The dialogue can be viewed as a reflection of the wider societal tensions of the time surrounding the male involvement in dance and its associations with femininity. To make sense of this dialogue, it is therefore important to locate it within its relevant historical context. As such, in chapter one I provided a summary of the historical process through which dance became constructed as a feminine practice in England. This historical information helps contextualize the scene where Billy was the lone boy in the ballet class. This information also helps us understand his father's angry reaction - '*You! Out! Now!*' - as Billy's participation in this feminized environment offers a direct challenge to traditional masculine discourses that identify what activities boys should and should not do. When Billy's father confronts him across the kitchen table his father voices this traditional discourse that ballet is not something normal lads do, lads should play manly sports such as football, boxing or wrestling.

2.1.2 Repositioning dance as an embodied masculine practice

Billy rejects the gender dichotomy in physical activity proposed by his father and tries to defend his interest in ballet. When Billy provokes his father to explicitly detail "What's wrong with ballet?'', Billy's father becomes increasingly angry and insists that Billy already knows. Billy responds by repositioning dance as an embodied masculine practice. He deploys discursive resources he has heard from his friend Debbie that male ballet dancers are not necessarily gay and are fit as athletes. Notably, Billy draws upon repositioning strategies that have been frequently identified in academic studies of boys

and men who participate in feminized social arenas (Davis, 1990; Laberge & Albert, 2000; Gard, 2001; Adams, 2005, 2007; Fisher, 2009). These studies show how boys and men often defended their transgressions by arguing that the activity had been inappropriately gendered and by identifying particular roles within the activity that they perceived as masculine, for example performing acrobatic stunts or lifting female dancers and cheerleaders in the air. Billy Elliot follows this trend by "characterising ballet as macho, in the sense of making it seem athletically masculine and resolutely heterosexual" (Fisher, 2009:33)

In mainstream dance films, one of the most common techniques for repositioning dance as an appropriate embodied masculine practice is to form an explicit link with heterosexuality (Charlebois, 2009). If we look at Tony in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), Danny in *Grease* (1978), Ren in *Footloose* (1984), Johnny in *Dirty Dancing* (1987), Scott in *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), John in *Shall we Dance* (2004), and Pierre in *Take the Lead* (2006), all these male protagonists are positioned as heterosexual and their participation in dance functions as a tool of seduction and a mechanism for attracting the girl. In the case of *Billy Elliot*, we see in the excerpt above Billy tries to reposition dance so that it is not solely viewed as a feminine or queer space (Weber, 2003). Moreover, Weber (2003) argues that Billy's sexuality is not put in question because his young age works to desexualise him. Gard (2006) also suggests that positioning Billy as a gay dancer would have been a risky commercial decision and may have jeopardised the positive discussion the film promoted. From this perspective, *Billy Elliot* can be viewed as a film that challenges traditional stereotypes about male dancers and effeminacy, yet shies away from explicitly problematizing negative assumptions about male dance and homosexuality.

The second discursive strategy Billy uses to challenge his Dad's resistance to him dancing is to represent ballet as an athletic activity. Once again this is common strategy, with research documenting a history of male dancers being required to demonstrate strength, intensity, athleticism and physical prowess (Burt 1995; Gard, 2001; 2006). Adams (2005) and Keefe (2009) identify these expectations in their analyses of Gene Kelly's (1958) dancing performance *Dancing is a Man's Game* which was aired as a US television special. Here, Gene Kelly directly tries to counter the stereotypical association between dance and effeminacy by drawing inspiration and legitimacy from athletic themes and male athletes themselves (Keefe, 2009). As evidenced in the brief

snippet uploaded to *YouTube*, we can note how by dancing alongside famous sportsmen and mimicking their athletic actions, Gene Kelly tries to legitimate dance as a masculine practice by explicitly drawing parallels with the more assuredly masculine practice of sport http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd70iqK_bsU .

Drawing upon a similar discursive strategy, the celebration of male dancers' athleticism and power is clearly demonstrated in the final scene of *Billy Elliot*. Shown in the clip below, Billy is now grown up and has become a successful professional ballet dancer. With his father, brother and childhood friend watching on in awe in the audience, the film finishes as Billy runs across the stage and powerfully jumps into an acrobatic and beautiful pose. This final shot is slowed down with Billy's body flying through the air. The scene offers the audience the opportunity to savour Billy's achievement and appreciate the skills he has now attained. From a critical perspective, however, commentators have questioned the highly selective and limited focus on "Billy's powerful leap, the ultimately balletic masculine move" (Gard, 2006:10). As such, at no point does the viewer get to see a full view of men dancing ballet on stage in what is a depiction of Matthew Bourne's potentially queer rendition of *Swan Lake* (Sinfield, 2006). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFA6NRrgxnc&feature=related

With the subsequent success of *Billy Elliot*, the film was adapted into a stage show and launched in London in 2005. I attended this show in 2011, then its 6th successive year. During this trip I photographed the advertising billboard below.

Presented as 'A DAZZLING SPECTACLE', *Billy Elliot* was once again promoting the powerful, alluring and impressive image of a male dancer flying through the air.

Pictured at the pinnacle of his leap with toes, legs and arms outstretched, this image captures the privileged or perfect moment of Billy's dance move (Sontag, 1977). Here the photographic medium is able to freeze frame and dramatise the acrobatic action of the male dancer. Pictured in a similar style to the famous dance photography of Lois Greenfield (www.loisgreenfield.com), this form of visual representation offers a viable strategy for attracting boys and men to dance. In this way, dancing masculinities are revered through male bodies performing impressive athleticism and gravity defying aerial choreography.

3.1.3 The Transformative Power of Dance

In their analysis of *Billy Elliot*, Weber (2003) and Camino (2010) comment on how dance is commonly represented in the movies as liberating, empowering, transgressive and transformative. Presented in this manner, the masculinity crisis narrative involves the male dancer passing through a series of embodied challenges or a rite of passage, ultimately leaving the male dancer unquestionably masculine (Fisher, 2009). Accompanying the male dancer's embodied transformations, dance movies also frequently present dance having a wider social and cultural transformative impact. In *Billy Elliot* we can clearly see these common narrative structures as Billy initially experiences a series of physical challenges and social obstacles but continues dancing and develops a passion for ballet. This is demonstrated in the 'Pirouette Practice' clip inserted below. Here we see Billy's continuing practice and endearing struggle to master new dance techniques. When Billy shows his first signs of embodied excellence we are then instantly reminded of his continued struggle with wider traditional masculine discourses. This is embodied through Mr Braithwaite the piano player who tells Billy, 'you look like a right wanker to me son'.

 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69RNNex-sig

After Billy's father first finds out about Billy's participation in ballet class and prohibits him from attending, Billy is persuaded by his dance teacher Mrs Wilkinson to return to dance and train in secret for a pending dance audition with the Royal Ballet School. During his training, dance is represented as an alternative space where Billy can temporarily escape from the problems with his family and the political upheaval that has engulfed the town. When Mrs Wilkinson helps Billy choreograph a dance for his audition, she asks him to bring in items that are precious to him so they can be incorporated into the dance. Here we see dance romantically presented as a form of

creative self-expression, we witness Billy gaining a sense of joy and empowerment through dancing, and we see the secret dance class as a place to escape from the constraining power of traditional masculine discourses (Gard, 2006; Lancioni, 2006).

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phOvapApNds

Billy's experience of dance as a form of escapism and embodied transcendence is also revered at the end of the dance audition when the dance examiner asks him 'What does it feel like when you're dancing?' Billy responds:

> Don't know. Sorta feels good. Sorta stiff and that, but once I get going…then I like, forget everything. And…sorta disappear. Sorta disappear. Like I feel a change in my whole body. Like there's fire in my body. I'm just there. Flyin'…like a bird. Like electricity. Yeah, like electricity.
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0tTT_87Hh8&feature=fvst

As a result of Billy's embodied transformation and his undeniable passion for dance, we also witness wider social and cultural gender transformations whereby Billy's father, brother and the local community of miners ultimately become supportive of Billy's dancing (Camino, 2010). When his father discovers him secretly dancing in the gym, Billy proudly and resolutely performs what he has learnt to his father.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CH8HV5gXQB4&feature=fvwrel

Recognising Billy's talent and potential, his father's prejudice and stereotypes of male dancers are broken down, and he and the local community start to support Billy in finding the funds to attend the ballet audition. From a critical perspective, it is interesting to ask to what extent this radical change in perception of masculinity and dance was instigated and legitimated only because of Billy's virtuosity and physical prowess. If Billy hadn't demonstrated so much talent for dance would the movie still have become such a powerful narrative in mainstream English culture?

2.1.4 The Billy Elliot discourse

Throughout my PhD research project I was able to cite the *Billy Elliot* movie in conversations with non-academics in order to provide an accessible way to introduce the purpose of my research. The success of this approach suggests to me that *Billy Elliot* is now an established and accessible discourse in the UK. Recent media reports support this assumption as they attend to the *Billy Elliot* discourse 'sweeping the globe', with the musical being successfully transported to Broadway and Chicago and with further intentions for it to play in Toronto, Australia, Korea, Japan, Germany and Holland (Cromption, 2012).

Commenting on the *Billy Elliot* musical in London, Rodosthenous (2007) locates the musical's success as part of a wider cultural move in the UK towards celebrating the all-singing and all-dancing young male body. He goes on to position *Billy Elliot* as an iconic symbol of the current age and as part of a new musical genre – 'the athletic musical'. From this perspective, the *Billy Elliot* movie and musical provide powerful representations that have formed a contemporary discourse encouraging the athletic male dancing body to be "celebrated, admired and looked at purely for its strength, muscular energy and beauty" (Rodosthenous, 2007:88).

In line with the success of the *Billy Elliot* movie and musical, Fisher (2009) notes that in some of her research interviews and conversations with male ballet dancers, younger men claimed they had never experienced homophobic bullying or effeminate stereotyping and in turn suggested that people have become more tolerant and educated about dance and the diverse performance of masculinities. Alongside these positive signs, Fisher (2009) also notes that there is still a wealth of examples of prejudicial male dancer stereotypes deeply woven into popular culture. A recent example of this was the BBC documentary *The Ballet Boys* (2011). The documentary focused on the story of three young ballet dancing brothers from the north of England. Reviews of the documentary on the BBC News website (2011) were accompanied with the headline, "Liverpool's ballet dancing brothers overcome bullies". The documentary and subsequent review reproduce the familiar discourse associated with *Billy Elliot*, reiterating long held stereotypes that the stigma around boys who do ballet still exists. Yet, placed within supportive dance schools and a supportive family environment, all three brothers cultivated success stories and were able to learn appropriate identity management strategies in order to deal with homophobic bullying and the restrictions of traditional masculine discourses.

Ultimately, the *Billy Elliot* movie and musical offer well meaning discursive strategies to make ballet and other forms of dance more acceptable to boys and men in the UK. These strategies show how boys and young men can creatively negotiate and circumvent the limitations of traditional masculine discourses by strategically appropriating alternative discourses that still lay within the realm of traditional masculine discourse. These strategies, however, are somewhat short sighted as the limits of traditional masculine discourse restrict the types of performances male dancers can enact and legitimate (Gard, 2001; Risner, 2009). The fundamental stumbling block

is that these recuperative strategies do not challenge or problematize the negative status attributed to femininity and homosexuality. Hence, rather than validating the characteristics of male dancers' performances that are deemed feminine or queer, the Billy Elliot discourse is locked into trying to prove that all male dancers are not homosexual or effeminate.

2.2 Strictly Come Dancing: the new visibility and celebration of male dancers

My analysis of the first historical fragment - *Billy Elliot* - identified how male dance was problematised in English mainstream culture during the 1980s and 1990s. At the same time, the commercial success of *Billy Elliot* has had the effect of celebrating the male dancer and has offered ways of negotiating the anxieties surrounding male dance, namely through the strategic deployment of alternative forms of traditional masculine discourse and performance. My second historical fragment - *Strictly Come Dancing* - comes a decade later and focuses on the representation of male dancers on prime-time television at the start of the 21st century. The emergence of the television program *Strictly Come Dancing* is reflective of a wider set of social changes wherein a more diverse range of acceptable representations of masculinities have been made available in contemporary society.

At the turn of the 21st century, numerous dance shows started to be screened on prime time television, the most popular of which has been the BBC television program *Strictly Come Dancing*. This show has run annually since 2004 and involves celebrities being paired with professional dancers. The celebrities learn how to perform a range of Latin and ballroom dances and participate in a weekly dance competition. The show's popularity can be evidenced through regular viewing figures in excess of eight million, an accompanying week day television show for fans, a popular website discussion forum, frequent comment upon the show in the national press, and the franchising of the competition format to thirty eight other countries (The Independent, 2008). In light of its current popularity and cultural prominence, I will detail how *Strictly Come Dancing* has produced a complex series of representations of male dancers that both re-produce and transgress traditional masculine discourse.

2.2.1 The re-emergence of couple dancing

Strictly Come Dancing has played a vital role in the re-emergence of male-female couple dancing as a popular mainstream social activity in the UK (see chapter one for more information about the historical rise and fall in the popularity of Latin and ballroom dance in England). A major part of the success and popularity of *Strictly Come Dancing* has been based upon promoting and legitimating a new visibility of male dancers. To demonstrate how this has been achieved, I will first identify how the wider cultural context has facilitated a shift in the mainstream representation of male dancers. I will then show how *Strictly Come Dancing* has employed a series of discursive strategies that make the representation of male dancers not only acceptable but widely celebrated.

It is important to locate the emergence of *Strictly Come Dancing* and the new visibility of male dancers within a wider shift in the mainstream media toward the representation of male bodies. As Gill (2007:39) notes, "men's bodies *as bodies* have gone from near invisibility to hyper visibility in the course of a decade". With the increased media focus on the male body there has been an expansion of the cultural possibilities for displaying and consuming more diverse embodied masculinities. A number of these changes have been highlighted by Gill (2011) who notes how,

> "Oiled 'six-packs' stare back at us from magazine covers, superwaifs mince along the fashion catwalk, and beautiful young male bodies are offered up for our consumption in any number of advertising campaigns on billboards, television or the cinema screen" (p.29).

Located within this wider media backdrop, I will now analyse how the visibility of male dancers on *Strictly Come Dancing* has potentially challenged and destabilised traditional masculine discourses. As such, one of most significant challenges has been in terms of dealing with the unwritten rule in the media that 'men look' and 'women appear'. This gendered relationship was first theorized by Laura Mulvey (1975/1999) who argued that,

> "the pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female…In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Women displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease…she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire" (p.837).

Strictly Come Dancing provides a pertinent site to engage with Mulvey's argument. On the show, dancers' bodies are exhibited, asked to be looked at, and appraised by judges

and spectators. The bodily performances of male dancers therefore become a crucial site where gender relations and the politics and pleasure of looking at male bodies needs to be negotiated. Research has documented how since the 19th century female dancers were the sole objects of desire for male spectators. Thus attending to the spectacle of the male dancer would open up male spectators to the danger of receiving homo-erotic accusations that one was interested in men (Burt, 1995). Set against this tradition, the positioning of male dancers on *Strictly Come Dancing* as objects of the gaze and objects of desire has potential to disrupt conventional patterns of looking. In the following sections I will show how the programme has been able to negotiate this challenge and reassure male viewers that it is ok to watch male dancing bodies.

2.2.2 Traditional Gender Roles

Perhaps one of the main reasons why *Strictly Come Dancing* has been able to safely and successfully bring the male dancer into the mainstream public arena is because the show is based upon Latin and ballroom dances. In every Latin and ballroom dance style performed on the show, the dance is structured around traditional gender roles and performances. The man is the leader and the woman is the follower, the dance couple enact heterosexual relationships through the dance choreography, and the male and female dancers are clearly delineated through distinctively different style of dress. By attending to the media production of the show, we can also identify how the heterosexual status of the male dancers is reinforced as the camera frequently pans to the celebrity dancers' wives and female partners watching in the audience. The female host Tess Daly and the female presenters on the daily weekday show also voice frequent innuendos about the possible development of romantic relationships between heterosexual celebrities and professional dancers. In stark comparison, there is a notable silence surrounding the romantic relationships of gay participants on the show. The partners of the gay celebrities and gay professional dancers are not seen or heard. Taken together, the performance of dances with strict gender roles and the focus on heterosexual storylines provides a strong base upon which to realign the male dancers safely within the bounds of heterosexual masculinity.

Another strategy *Strictly Come Dancing* employs to safely bring male dancers into the mainstream and make dance acceptable to male audiences is to recruit famous sportsmen. Sport has long been valued as a masculinising practice, and sportsmen's assumed heterosexual status offers valuable masculine capital in this feminized arena

(Markula & Pringle, 2006; Keefe, 2009). Reiterating the example of Gene Kelly's (1958) *Dancing is a Man's Game*, we can once again see how dance can be promoted and legitimated by having celebrated athletes appear in order to counter audience anxieties that male dancers are effeminate. This approach is supported by judges on the show and writers in the press who typically make sense of sportsmen's success by drawing upon the manly discourses of sport. For example, in the wake of two consecutive cricketers (Darren Gough and Mark Ramprakash) winning *Strictly Come Dancing*, an article on the BBC News website asked the question 'Why are cricketers such good dancers?' Numerous commonalities between sport and dance were identified, ultimately suggesting that it was almost self-evident that sportsmen would make good dancers:

> Good batsmen are like bullfighters. Elegance, timing, style, poise made all the more poignant in the face of the adversary. It's little wonder they display the same qualities in dance (Lane, 2006).

This is a characteristic example that shows how sport discourses highlight the anxieties that still exist around men and dance. As such, the praise for the male dancers focused on a limited range of traditionally masculine qualities. The qualities were primarily drawn from dominant sporting discourses that include the valorisation of competition, the use of battle imagery and overcoming adversity (Messner et al., 2000). In the same vein as the *Billy Elliot* discourse, this example shows how traditional masculine discourses from other arenas can be appropriated to enable a justification of men's participation in dance and the exhibition of the male body.

2.2.3 The Female (Hetero-) Sexually Appraising Gaze

Whilst traditional masculine discourses play a vital role in *Strictly Come Dancing*, male dancers have also been represented in ways that engender potentially transgressive forms of display and consumption. One such example is the show's focus on the sexualisation and eroticisation of male celebrity dancers. As such, I contend that the success *of Strictly Come Dancing* has been partly achieved through actively appealing to heterosexual female audiences through the means of celebrating the sensual male dancing body. Once again it is it necessary to locate this phenomenon within the wider emergence of a post-feminist media culture that is obsessed with the body, particularly the possession of a sexy-young-aesthetic-toned body (Gill, 2007). Within this media culture it is now taken for granted that both male and female bodies can be commoditised and used for marketing purposes. Moreover, the sexy-young-aesthetic-

toned male bodies that populate the mainstream media are often coded to give women permission to look at them and coded to stimulate female heterosexual desire (Gill, 2007; Gill, 2011). The presentation of young athletic fit male celebrities on *Strictly Come Dancing* provides an excellent illustration of this. During the Latin dances, the young male dancers wear outfits that show off their bodies: low cut v-neck shirts reveal their chest, sleeveless shirts show off their biceps, and tight Latin trousers curve around their buttocks. The Latin dances also require the male dancers to perform sensuous, flirtatious, and sexually provocative dance movements. In turn, these performances are commented upon in the post-dance interview where the show's female co-presenter - Tess Daly - often draws attention to male dancers' sexy bodies and provocative performances. Her talk involves commenting on how the female audience watching at home will no doubt be immensely attracted to the male dancers. Here, then, we can see an explicit enabling and calling forth of the female hetero-sexually appraising gaze.

Writing in 1975, Mulvey argued that "the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification" (p.838). In *Strictly Come Dancing* and the wider post-feminist media culture of the 21st century, this claim no longer seems to ring true. This is not to say that the sexual objectification of the male dancing body does not still cause tensions. It does. Yet, the shear number of representations that sexualise and eroticise the mediatised male body suggest that the male body often has little choice but to bear (or at least negotiate) the burden of objectification. In this respect, *Strictly Come Dancing* provides a particularly interesting example as some male dancers actively offer their body up as an object of desire for the female gaze. A pertinent example of this is Robbie Savage's recent photography shoot where he posed nude for the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*. Robbie Savage is a retired footballer, a current football pundit, and a celebrity participant on *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2011. A week after the completion of the 2011 series he was shown on the centre-fold of *Cosmopolitan* (2012) in the shot below.

On the one hand, we can place this image within an ever growing repository of mainstream representations of the male body that challenge the simplistic gendered traditions that 'men look' and 'women appear'. This image clearly offers a different form of gendered and sexualised display and consumption. Accompanying this image there were also four small quotes taken from an interview with Robbie Savage where he discussed his experience of participating in *Strictly Come Dancing*. One of the quotes is particularly revealing in terms of negotiating the new forms of display and consumption of male dancers' bodies:

> "Even men, you know, men are attractive when they can dance. I'm a liberal guy, I'm not gay but I'm just saying that when a man or a woman dances well, they look very, very good".

This is a fascinating quote. On the one hand, we hear Robbie Savage advocating a broader definition of masculinity that includes openly acknowledging looking at other male dancers' bodies and appreciating how they look good. On the other hand, we cannot fail to miss the glaring disclaimers he tactically deploys to safe guard his heterosexual masculinity. For me, this interview quote provides a succinct example of a male dancer trying to justify and make sense of their dancing practices by negotiating a path between old and new masculine discourses. In turn, if we look at the image and the text together, we can see that the visual representation and consumption of male bodies opens up new opportunities for a pleasure seeking female heterosexual gaze. The explicit focus on the aesthetically appealing male body also provides an obvious opportunity for the male audience to join in with this gaze. However, as the example of Robbie Savage suggests there are still tensions that need to be negotiated for men to publically acknowledge and appreciate the aesthetic and sensual appeal of other male dancers' bodies.

2.2.4 Metrosexuality

To better understand how male dancers are able talk about other male dancers' bodies looking good, and are able to expose their bodies in ways that invite a sexually appraising gaze, we need to acknowledge how a new discourse and aesthetic of male beauty has emerged in the Western mass media over the last fifteen years. This development is often referred to by the term *metrosexuality*. Coad (2008) describes metrosexuality as a "personal aesthetic…a lifestyle…an art of living…[and] an asexual art of existence" (p.35). Explicit within the practice of metrosexuality is an aesthetic engagement with the male body. This can manifest through a range of practices that include taking care of one's body and appearance, becoming an active consumer of fashion and beauty products, appraising the look and style of other male bodies, and being open to non-normative sexualities.

Much of the popular discussion and academic debate about metrosexuality has focused on specific celebrities who are seen to embody and epitomise metrosexuality (Harris & Clayton, 2007; Coad, 2005, 2008). Over the last ten to fifteen years, David Beckham, in particular, has created a precedent in British culture by becoming the poster-boy for metrosexuality. The mass media's incessant focus on David Beckham has gone far beyond his performances on the football pitch, with attention being paid to his appearance, clothes, grooming, fashion sense, photography shoots, his friendship with gay celebrities, and his role as a father and husband. Moreover, a fundamental part of this media coverage has commented on how he departs from traditional forms of masculinity and engages with the male body in ways that have historically been associated with women and homosexual men (Coad, 2008). In this way, Beckham's highly publicized metrosexual performances and practices provide a fundamental challenge to the longstanding discourse that men cannot be seen to be vain, narcissistic, exhibitionist or passive in front of the male gaze (Gill, Henwood & Mclean, 2005; Coad, 2008). This challenge is succinctly captured in an interview conducted with his wife and Sacha Baron Cohen who plays the fictional comedy character Ali G. The interview was screened in 2001 for the charity television program *Comic Relief*.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ez0Qq8C-HmU&t=1m19s

> *Ali G*: Why do you think you is a pin up for so many gaylords? Me don't use the word batty men now cos it ain't politically correct.
> *David*: You tell me

> *Ali G*: I mean just because you wear skirts, your girlfriend's pants, have a sun tan and a
> skin head, talk like a girl and hang out with Elton John, what's gay about that?
> *David*: Nothing. Nothing wrong with that.
> *Ali G*: For real. Respect.

This interview snippet is particularly interesting as it demonstrates how on the one hand David Beckham's actions have come under scrutiny, ridicule and critique in the media. Yet, on the other hand, the interview shows how David Beckham's actions have gained a level of acceptance and respect. From this perspective, the media representations of David Beckham have acted as an instrument of change in the UK, blurring the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, heterosexuality and homosexuality, and widening and diversifying what is considered acceptably masculine (Coad, 2008).

Linking this discussion back to *Strictly Come Dancing*, I argue that metrosexual discourses and practices have permeated some of the everyday actions of male celebrity dancers performing on the show. For example, in interviews and behind-the-scenes footage, male dancers are regularly seen and heard attending to the appearance of their body. This has included public conversations about how they like their dance clothes tailored and how they like their make-up and fake tan applied. At times these conversations are enacted casually and positioned as nothing out of the norm. For example, in Robbie Savage's *Cosmopolitan* interview he is asked "Fake tan or real tan?" and he replies "Fake tan – it's a lot safer than going on the sun bed". However, at other times there is considerable male banter surrounding the use of make-up, with male dancers 'taking the piss' out of their male rivals by saying they look rough and need to spend more time in the make-up room.

Another interesting example of a non-traditional performance of masculinity was aired during the 2011 series wherein an instance of male-male couple dancing was revealed. In the weekday show - *Take Two* - the female celebrity dancer Holly Valance and her professional male dance partner Artem Chigvintsev where being interviewed. The week before Artem had suffered an injury and another professional male dancer - Brendan Cole - had stepped in to partner Holly for the week. A week later, whilst Artem was still recovering, Brendan continued to join in training to provide the option for Holly to dance with either professional depending upon the speed of Artem's recovery. The *YouTube* video below shows a clip of the three dancers training together:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vW9ichhXh-c&t=2m55s

It is important to note that this edited behind-the-scenes video clip has been structured with comedic intent. Much of the humour emerges through the use of the song *I wanna dance with somebody (who loves me)* by Whitney Houston. As such, this song is assumed to be about female heterosexual desire but here it is re-deployed to help structure the audiences' interpretation of Artem and Brendan dancing together. As intended, the video clip sparks laughter among the presenter, the guests and the studio audience. The video is humorous because we are seeing something out of the ordinary - two men dancing tenderly together. Moreover, this representation of male interaction challenges traditional discourses of acceptable masculine behaviour, as evidenced by Brendan Cole's comment that he has never been more embarrassed on television.

To help legitimize and make sense of this series of male-male interaction, Holly Valance positions the two professional dancers as 'speaking the same language', in other words, they are collaborating in professional dance teaching and professional dance choreography. The presenter of the show - Zoe Ball - offers an alternative interpretation, positioning the male-male interactions as a sign of a 'Bromance'. Like the term metrosexuality, Bromance is a recently invented word made up through a combination of words: *bro* or *brother* and *romance*. The term is increasingly being used in public discourse to refer to the display of strong bonds and affectionate friendships between men. It is assumed that the men are heterosexual but there is less concern among the men about being identified as gay. And so, when Zoe Ball refers to Artem and Brendan's relationships as a Bromance there is an acknowledgement of a homo-social intimacy being demonstrated through dancing together, yet there is no explicit assertion of homo-sexuality or homophobia

(see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJVt8kUAm9Q).

2.2.5 The Gay Gaze

Finally, I want to bring attention to how the gay gaze has been enabled and enacted in *Strictly Come Dancing*. Here my focus centres on the most prominent facilitator of an explicitly gay gaze at male dancers, namely Bruno Tonioli. Bruno is a judge on the show and was previously a professional dancer and continues to be a choreographer. His performances on the show are invariably exuberant, flamboyant, exaggerated, flirtatious and camp. In short, he embodies many of the performative characteristics commonly associated with the performance of gay masculinities. In turn, Bruno can be seen to actively cultivate the gay gaze when he reviews male celebrity dancers'

performances on the dance floor. A prime example of this was in the 2010 series when he incessantly flirted with the celebrity dancer Scott Maslen every time he reviewed his performance (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hii3zT_MlCY) . From viewing the clip inserted above, it is evident that Bruno's flirtatious performance is accepted by Scott, enjoyed by crowd and used to comic effect to provoke laughter from those present.

To conclude this section, I have detailed how *Strictly Come Dancing* draws upon and reproduces an array of discourses of masculinity. On the one hand, it engages with traditional gender roles, heterosexual storylines, and the recuperative use of sportsmen in order to locate the male dancer within traditional masculine discourses. On the other hand, there is an engagement with more diverse masculinities through the pervasive sexualisation of male bodies, the female heterosexually appraising gaze, the performance of bromance and metrosexual practices, and the enabling of a gay gaze at male dancers' bodies. Taken together, then, *Strictly Come Dancing* can be read as an example of how contemporary mainstream representations of masculinity and the male dancer can offer the possibility for multiple, contradictory and shifting representations and readings of masculinity (Gill, 2009; 2011).

2.3 YouTube Dance Videos: Dance diversity on the internet

The final historical fragment I wish to explore is the representation of male dancers in *YouTube* videos. This fragment brings us up to date with contemporary representations of male dancers in the 21st century wherein *YouTube* videos are continuously being adapted and innovatively used. *YouTube* is the most popular entertainment website in Britain and has become the means through which vibrant representations of male dancers are being displayed and consumed by millions of people world-wide. *YouTube* has multiple uses including the sharing of online videos, engaging in social networks, providing a public archive for culturally diverse material and offering a platform for exhibitionism, performance and self-promotion (Burgess & Green, 2009). *YouTube* is now part of the mainstream media landscape and *YouTube* videos can be found circulating on *Facebook* and *MySpace*, embedded in blogs, and shown on television programmes (Burgess & Green, 2009). This social and technological phenomenon is important to the study of male dancers as it has facilitated a fundamental shift in the representation of dancing masculinities. In comparison to the representational practices of the *Billy Elliot* movie and musical and the *Strictly Come Dancing* television show,

YouTube dance videos offer more space for creativity, diversity and innovation in the performance of masculinities.

It is important to note that the popularity of *YouTube* dance videos has been built upon the previous era of music videos popularized by *MTV*. Established in 1981, *MTV* (short for Music Television) was the first twenty four hour cable programme service to present an endless stream of music videos (Banks, 1998). The success and popularity of *MTV* had far reaching influences, rewriting the rules of music marketing and visual culture, and establishing video clips as a necessity for any artist wishing to achieve commercial success in the pop market (Banks, 1998; Caramanica, 2005). During the 1980s the launch of new music videos by high profile artists were seen as major cultural events, none more so than with the launch of Michael Jackson's ground breaking *Thriller* video. *Thriller* was one of the first videos to introduce storytelling into the music video convention. Its success enabled Michael Jackson to be the first Black artist to break into the previously White rock dominated domain of *MTV*, and the video was heralded as one of Michael Jackson's major television breakthroughs and one of the most iconic performances of his career (Delmont, 2010; Hawkins, 2012; Patti, 2010). In turn, the video's success helped promote the *Thriller* album to become the biggest selling album in the history of pop music and ultimately push Michael Jackson into the position of global superstar (Mercer, 1986). Building on this success, Michael Jackson continued to unleash a procession of music videos in which he performed legendary dance choreography that included the infamous 'Moonwalk'. Three decades on, the impact of these dance videos is still being felt as hundreds, if not thousands, of imitators are performing his dance choreographies and uploading videos of these events to *YouTube*. Probably the most well-known of these performances is the iconic re-enactment of the *Thriller* choreography by a group of Philippines prison inmates:

> Philippines inmates performing Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' [53 million views]
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMnk7lh9M3o

2.3.1 Technological Innovation, Social Saturation and the Global Flow of Dancing Masculinities

To make sense of the representation of male dancers in *YouTube* videos, I need to locate this phenomenon within the wider explosion in technological innovation that has occurred over last decade. In this time we have witnessed the unprecedented growth of 'new media', including the internet, Web 2.0 technologies, digital media and social media. In response to the ever increasing presence of new media technologies in

people's everyday lives, social commentators argue that the use of new media must be incorporated in the theorising of contemporary identities (Schechner, 2006). Gergen (1991) proposes that our bombardment with new and diverse forms of media technology creates a socially saturated self. In postmodern societies, social saturation is enabled through the global flow of information, images, people and products. By engaging with these multi-dimensional flows, people are brought into closer proximity and experience a range of interactions, social relations and forms of high-tech social connectedness. As a result, individuals are exposed to diverse cultural norms, a multiplicity of new experiences and alternate ways of understanding themselves (Gergen, 1991; Burkitt, 2008)

If we apply Gergen's (1991) theory of social saturation to the study of masculinities, we can identify a number of positive possibilities. For instance, the increasing availability of new media technologies open up possibilities to access more diverse representations of embodied masculinities. As Seidler (2006) notes, new technologies have facilitated the circulation of images of diverse masculinities emerging within different societies in a globalized world. Moreover, he argues that virtual online spaces enable people to identify and experiment with masculinities that might not be available in local traditional communities. With a wider range of competing and contradictory representations of masculinities on show, there is greater opportunity for challenging traditional masculine discourses and cultivating a diverse sense of the potential uses of the male body (Atkinson & Wilson, 2002; Burkitt, 2008). A pertinent example to support this argument is the case of Capoeira. Here, the forces of globalization and social saturation have enabled the migration of an art form from Brazil to the South West of England. And as I argue in chapter seven and eight, the masculine identities being performed in the capoeira classes I research have points of reference reaching far beyond the history of dance in England and far beyond my experience in these specific locales.

2.3.2 Online Participatory Cultures

One of the most significant developments associated with the rise in new media and digital technologies is the ability to upload and share parts of one's daily life on the Internet. This phenomenon has been referred to as 'participatory culture'. Jenkins (2006; 2009) describes how there is currently considerable excitement and energy around participatory culture due to its focus on increasing diversity and breadth of

participation. Moreover, the essence of participatory culture is to provide audiences the opportunity of moving from the passive role of consumer to the more active role of participant and author in cultural production. To make sense of this shift we need to acknowledge how over the past century cinema, radio, television and newspapers have organised media production into an industrial model. This model has meant that active contribution to cultural storytelling has been restricted to expert elites. As Hartley (2009) notes, "millions watch but mere hundreds do the writing" (p.132). In contrast, Hartley details how participatory cultures of production offer a more open innovation network for harnessing the creative energies of a wider section of the population. For example, he notes, along with many others, that the social media sites *YouTube*, *Flickr*, *Twitter*, and *Facebook* no longer involve a unidirectional flow of information. These sites are more open and dynamic and provide opportunities for increasing numbers of people to be active in creating, editing and sharing digital materials. In turn, this greatly widens the pool of information and opinions available for consumption, and increases the number of opportunities to engage with new ideas, new web communities and new social networks (Bench, 2010). Ultimately then, new media has, to a certain extent, democratized media production and distribution and enabled greater opportunities for the performance of diverse online identities (Nelson, Hull & Roche, 2008).

2.3.3 Dancing Masculinities on YouTube

Arguably the most popular and pervasive means through which representations of male dancers are currently being distributed and consumed in post-modern societies is through *YouTube*. As such, *YouTube* is central to the current participatory culture and acts as a meeting ground where a wide spectrum of representations of embodied masculinities can be viewed (Young, 2007; Jenkins, 2006, 2009). One of the benefits of publishing dance videos on *YouTube* is the ability to reach non-traditional dance audiences who do not attend live dance shows yet enjoy dance in televisual and popular media contexts (Bench, 2010). By reaching these audiences, *YouTube* dance videos have the possibility to 'go viral' and be viewed by millions of people worldwide (Burgess & Green, 2009). To evidence this phenomenon, I have pasted links to two of the most popular viral *YouTube* videos featuring male dancers and I have recorded the number of views they have received as of October 2013:

> Evolution of Dance by Judson Laipply [225 million views]
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMH0bHeiRNg
>
> Ok Go's 'Here It Goes Again' [18 million views]
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTAAsCNK7RA

In addition to the possibility that *YouTube* dance videos may go viral, publishing on *YouTube* also opens up opportunities for combining new artistic and social practices (Bench, 2010). One of the most fascinating developments in this regard is crowdsource choreographies. This is an internet based method that draws upon the affordances of participatory culture by incorporating the creative input of audience members and dance participants from outside of a specific local dance community (Bench, 2010). An excellent example of a crowdsource choreography that has been underpinned by a critical and inclusive agenda is 'The Big Fat Gay Collab!' Organised with the intention of critiquing online homophobia, a *YouTube* user named 'steviebeebishop' posted an online call for *YouTube* users to assist in making a video performed along to Lily Allen's song *Fuck You*. Directions and guidance were provided for what types of shots and action should be performed to the camera, whilst also leaving room for participants to add their own creative improvisations. The *YouTube* user then edited the submitted clips and posted a video of people dancing and lip-syncing along to the song. The original video gained over 420,000 views but was recently blocked by *YouTube* for breach of copyright. In spite of this, the video has been re-posted numerous times by other *YouTube* account holders. Inspired by this video, a series of further *Fuck You* crowdsource collaborations have been created by gay groups in different countries around the world, including one in the UK recorded during the Manchester gay pride demonstration in 2009.

> The Big Fat Gay Collab! [Original - re-posted]
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0i2lIU7idQ
>
> Manchester Pride 2009
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sWaTGLmppg&feature=BFa&list=PL31403C97A506EB4B

Another important trend that has emerged with the growth of *YouTube* dance videos is the proliferation of 'dorky dance'. Young (2007) states that dorky dance involves the performance and celebration of socially awkward movement. She suggests that dorky dance focuses primarily on male youth, possibly because male dance has historically been viewed as more socially troublesome than that of females. The distribution of dorky dance videos via *YouTube* has worked in tandem with the emergence of webcam culture and the online practice of self-staging and self-stylization (Peters & Seier, 2009). Hence, we can now watch a multitude of *YouTube* videos where men have recorded themselves dancing in the privacy of their own bedroom whilst performing dance movements that may be considered transgressive or embarrassing if performed in a public setting. In this way, *YouTube* has played an enabling role in the public promotion

of representations of more diverse masculinities that may be viewed as too radical, alternative or transgressive to be represented in the mainstream commercial media. As Young (2007) notes, "the removal of commercialistic incentive creates a freer space for the trying on and commixing of personalities that would be perceived, in other financially-driven venues, as pernicious and objectionable" (p.12).

2.3.4 Single Ladies

To bring this fascinating phenomenon to life, I will now examine how the *Single Ladies* dance video performed by the internationally renowned singer and dancer Beyoncé Knowles has inspired the publication of a series of provocative male dance videos on *YouTube*. Before analysing these videos, it is essential to note that Beyoncé is a hip hop superstar. Holding such an influential position, cultural commentators have started to analyse her images, performances and body presentations, locating them as a site of intersecting discourse about ethnicity, gender, sexuality and commerce (Durham, 2012; Griffin, 2012). Of particular relevance for this project is how Beyoncé engages in the performance of multiple femininities, wherein she is able to successfully shift between the performances of 'respectable lady' and 'provocative bombshell' (Griffin, 2011; Durham, 2012). Indeed, Beyoncé has at once been lauded for achieving success through the demonstration of business acumen, ambition, hard work and virtuosic talent. At the same time, she has also constructed a marketing alter ego called 'Sasha Fierce' that she embodies in her hyper-sexual on-stage performances where her curvaceous and voluptuous body (in particular her backside) is presented as a seductive commodity (Cashmore, 2010; Griffin, 2011). Notably, these multiple femininities come together in her performance of the *Single Ladies* video where she engages in a dance style that demands physical strength and power, demonstrates her sensual body movements and allows her to sing about a form of female empowerment. The *Single Ladies* video was released in October 2008 and currently has in excess of 249 million views on *YouTube* (October 2013). In effect, this makes it one of the most popular videos in the world.

> Beyoncé - Single Ladies (Put A Ring On It)
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4m1EFMoRFvY&feature=list_related&playnext=1&list=AVGxdCwVVULXeDd7ydWg7mR6cPW2bA2G-j

The *Single Ladies* dance video has been heralded as inciting the first major dance craze of the Internet era with a string of copy-cat dance videos being performed by diverse populations and uploaded to *YouTube* (Pullen, 2011). To make sense of this phenomena we can locate it as a clear example of what Jenkins (2006) refers to as,

> "Convergence culture, where old and new media collide, where grass roots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways" (p.2)

Here then, we can see how *YouTube* users have adapted, imitated, appropriated, transformed, parodied and re-circulated the dance moves and dance music from a commercially produced music video. Of greatest interest for this research project is that the most popular set of *Single Ladies* videos are performed by men. Below is a selection of some of the most viewed male performances of *Single Ladies* on *YouTube*:

1. Single Man dance to SINGLE LADIES [3 million views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGemjUvafBw

2. Single Ladies - Shane Mercado [101 thousand views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUCKE7M90IY

3. Justin Timberlake Parodies Beyoncé [405 thousand views]
[Full version not currently available on YouTube]
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xbj73o_justin-timberlake-parodies-beyonce_music

4. Cubby dances to Beyonce Single Ladies [4.3 million views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_lrKhmx2WU

5. African Remix [1.8 million views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4hTkRokQPY&feature=fvwrel

6. Chocolate Chip Dancers - Single Ladies (Put a Ring on it) [80 thousand views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=3FDrGFpA9T4

7. Three Straight Guys - "Single Ladies" [74 thousand views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw49hfQzIEA&feature=related

8. Single Ladies Take a Tumble [45 thousand views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6HAH_Yiuo4&feature=related

9. All The Single Ladies Wedding Dance [380 thousand views]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=O4Nr7sBzxiA

I will now identify some of the similarities and differences evident in the videos above. This approach will help me draw attention to how male dancers' online performances provide evidence of the increasing diversity and playfulness of contemporary masculinities. Attending to the differences first, the local environments in which the dances were staged show considerable variety. Some of male dancers perform in the privacy of their bedroom (1, 4) or in a private dance studio (7), some perform in public settings such as weddings (9) or school/college talent shows (8), others are performing on commercial television talk shows (2) and in professionally produced comedy skits (3, 5). There are also a range of dance abilities on show. At one end of the scale, the male dancer in videos (1) and (2) demonstrates great skill and technique to perform an exact replication of Beyoncé's dance choreography. Video (1) was uploaded only a few days after the official release of Beyoncé's original dance video and the dancer - Shane

Mercado - has become something of YouTube celebrity and has re-performed the dance sequence on an American talk show (2). At the other end of the scale, in videos (3), (4) and (9) we can see examples of dorky dancing wherein the male dancers are clearly performing the dance choreography badly and/or with comic intent. Other videos, such as the African Re-mix (5) demonstrate creative combinations of different styles of dancing with sections of admirable imitation, dorky dancing, and the input of new choreography, lyrics and storytelling.

The male dancers performing in the *Single Ladies* videos also exhibit a range of body shapes that vary from the super-lean (1, 2) to the super-fat (4, 6). Different sexualities are also on show, with some male dancers identified as gay (1, 2), some identified as straight (5, 7), and some with no sexual identity specified (3, 4, 6, 8, 9). The male dancers also wear a variety of different clothes and are in various stages of undress. Some dancers are wearing traditionally masculine clothes: wedding suits and ties (9), baggy shorts and t-shirt (7), and traditional African male clothing (5). The Chocolate Chip Dancers (6) are also wearing traditional masculine attire yet this is combined with the bare-chested exposure of their 'black' male middle-aged fat upper bodies. Crucially, in a number of the videos male dancers copy the style of clothing worn by Beyonce and her dancers. In videos (3), (4) and (8) male dancers wear the stereotypically feminine body leotards that are cut tight around the crotch and buttocks, and in videos (3) and (8) the dancers are wearing high heeled shoes.

In Young's (2007) study she noted that the vast majority of online dorky dancing videos consisted of young white males. The selection of videos posted above provides support for Young's assertion about the significance of youth. However, the videos also provide evidence of greater ethnic diversity with 'black' dancers appearing in videos (5) (7) and (9). Notably though, 'Asian' male dancers are absent from these *Single Ladies* videos. Taken together, the interrogation of the nine *Single Ladies* videos provides evidence of a diverse cross section of male dancers performing a range of dancing masculinities in a range of contexts.

2.3.4 Playful Masculinities

Switching to the similarities, I will now argue that the *Single Ladies* dance videos all share one common feature, namely they demonstrate a sense of playful masculinities. The male dancers all look like they are having fun moving their bodies, and when in-situ audiences are present they voice their enjoyment with screams, cheers, laughter and

clapping. I suggest that a big part of the playfulness in these videos emerges through the performance of dance moves that were originally choreographed to extenuate feminine and erotic styles of dance. Hence, we see men performing body rolls up, down and across their body, we see hips grinding and gyrating, pelvises thrusting, shoulders rolling, wrists cocked, bottoms being slapped, bodies sensually rubbed, and cat-walk like struts and prances across the stage. The crucial point to be taken from these playful performances is that the experience of play and playfulness may be important for enabling the male dancers to try out new performances of embodied masculinities. This argument can be supported by the work of performance studies scholars who comment on how people use different forms of play in order to escape, explore, experiment, destabilize and subvert (Carlson, 2004; Schechner, 2006; Bial, 2007). In this light, play can act as a force for innovation and creativity in the performance of masculinities; it can allow men to step out of their everyday gender rituals, temporarily observe a different set of rules and formulate new discursive and performative possibilities (Davies, 1997; Carlson, 2004).

Play comes in many shapes and sizes. I suggest that the styles of play on show in the *Single Ladies* dance performances can be conceptualised as forms of pastiche, parody, satire and drag. For those unfamiliar with these terms, they can be defined as such:

Pastiche:

> "…pastiche…can readily and promiscuously combine imitations without regard to formal wholeness or generic unity. A text that pastiches can therefore be hybridic and heterogeneous, mixing modes, genres or styles" (Cohen, 2007:547).

Parody:

> "…artistic work that broadly mimics an author's characteristic style (and holds it up to ridicule)…To create a successful parody, the author must employ a subject that is culturally ingrained in the audience—a familiar visual form" (Zinkhan & Johnson, 1994:2)

> "Judith Butler identifies parody …as an example of performance that effectively exposes gender as performative" (Shugart, 2001:95)

Satire:

> "…a literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humour and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved. The true satirist is conscious of the frailty of institutions of man's devising and attempts through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodelling" (Thrall, et al., 1960:436, cited in Harris, 1990).

Drag:

> "…an ironic commentary on how gender and sex are produced by the mastery of bodily acts and gestures that signify masculinity and femininity" (Burkitt, 2008:121).

> "…in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself - as well as its contingency" (Butler, 1990:137)

From reading these definitions, my sense is that they overlap and have a shared interest in various forms of humour, imitation, art, body work, and social and political critique. When I use these concepts to help interpret the playful dance performances on *YouTube*, I have found it useful to see the dance performances consisting of differing blends of pastiche, parody, satire and drag. In the process of identifying how the differing blends of play feature in the dance performances, I have kept returning to three important issues, namely, that the playful performances

1. offer a critique of traditional gender discourses,
2. provide examples of new possibilities for performing more diverse masculinities, and,
3. highlight the polysemic nature of gender performances.

Addressing these three issues in turn, critique can be defined as "an interrogation of the terms by which life is constrained in order to open up the possibility of different modes of living" (Butler, 2004:4). From this perspective, the male dance performances can be viewed as forms of critique because they draw attention to how gendered styles of movement are socially constructed. By successfully imitating Beyoncé's moves, the male dancers have the potential to expose and disrupt the assumed correspondence between gender and the body and implicitly reveal the imitative and performative quality of gender (Butler, 1990, Salih, 2002). In other words, the performances can be interpreted as making fun of restrictive gender discourses which assert that men are naturally designed and destined to move and dance in different ways to women. The videos show that dancing in a way that is commonly held to be erotically and seductively feminine is simply an embodied act; it can be learned and performed by men as well as women. For further practical guidance to pursue and support this argument please view the *YouTube* video pasted below. Here a sexy female dancer offers lessons in 'J-Setting', the style of dance Beyoncé performs in the *Single Ladies* video. Interestingly, the dance teacher says all you need to learn how to dance like Beyoncé is online videos and practice. And lest us not forget the added option of wearing high heels!

> How to Dance like Beyoncé [740,000 views]
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DekLtVWSDM0

Alongside the potential for critique, the *Single Ladies* videos also demonstrate positive new possibilities for more diverse enactments of dancing masculinities. As such, the varied levels of skill, technique and aesthetics on show suggest a widening of the notion of who can dance (Young, 2007; Pullen, 2011). The videos also contribute toward an increasing visibility and celebration of gay and straight male dancers who enjoy performing like women and/or performing in a camp manner. In turn, these performances may blur the supposed boundaries between masculinity and femininity, and between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Ultimately, with the shared effect of offering critique and new possibilities, the *Single Ladies* videos demonstrate that there are proliferating numbers of representations of playful masculinities currently acting as a,

> "potentially productive force, introducing oppositional knowledge, reconfiguring public and private spaces, and opening up new possibilities for challenging old patterns of gender performance" (Brickell, 2005:39).

The arguments above offer a distinctively positive interpretation, no doubt some would argue too positive. To warn off potential criticism that I have offered a selective or overly positive interpretation, it is important to note that pastiche, parody, satire and drag are not inherently subversive or transgressive (Butler, 1999; Bell, 1999). As such, whilst the playful *Single Ladies* performances certainly transgress traditional masculine discourses, there is no certainty that they will have a wider knock-on effect to destabilise restrictive gender discourses (Lloyd, 1999). As such, Butler (1999) notes that playful methods of gender subversion can be rendered ambiguous, reincorporated into traditional gender discourses and/or become deadened through repetition. Crucially, this argument draws attention to the polysemic nature of performing masculinities. In other words, as forms of pastiche, parody, satire and drag, the *Single Ladies* dance performances are "flexible and nuanced instruments capable of carrying and communicating many messages at once, even of subverting on one level what it appears to be "saying" on another" (Turner, 1986:24, cited in Conquergood, 1991:189). Thus, for audiences to make sense of these videos and view them as forms of gender subversion "would involve interpretation and meaning making in the context of [their] interactions with others, and hence it would require negotiation or contestation over definitions of the situation" (Brickell, 2005:35). This contestation of meaning can be evidenced by browsing through the mass of *YouTube* comments accompanying the *Single Ladies* videos. Viewing these comments we can see how audiences produce

varied readings of the male dance performances, some of which are not as positive as the one I have offered.

To conclude this section, I have shown how *YouTube* acts as a potent participatory media technology enabling the publication of more diverse representations of dancing masculinities. This was illustrated through the *Fuck You* crowdsource choreography that harnessed *YouTube* as a network of creative, critical and inclusive practice, and the *Single Ladies* dance videos that included a diverse range of male dancers and used dance as a form of playful practice. Ultimately, the *YouTube* dance videos are a fascinating social and technological development which offers new cultural resources for people to draw on, re-mix and use in their own lives.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has been written with genealogical intent to document a series of discursive transformations in the representation of popular male dancers over the last fifteen to twenty years in England. Through noting the different ways in which dancing masculinities have been represented and legitimated in discourse, my hope is that this chapter not only shines a light on the transformation in the field of discourse surrounding popular male dancers, but also offers sparks of inspiration for showing how embodied masculine identities are potentially open for change and negotiation and do not have to be aligned with rigid and restrictive gender and sexual binaries (Markula & Pringle, 2006). The gender discourses associated with the three fragments of history discussed above have shown that traditional discourses of masculinity have been seriously challenged. In *Billy Elliot* and *Strictly Come Dancing* we saw examples where traditional masculine discourses were adapted, recuperated and appropriated from other areas such as sport and athletics. Alongside this process, in *Strictly Come Dancing* and the *YouTube videos*, we also saw the emergence of new discourses of masculinity that provided alternative ways of legitimatising and making sense of dancing masculinities. Crucially, these new masculinities worked in dialogue with more traditional masculinities. Looking at *Billy Elliot*, *Strictly Come Dancing* and *YouTube dance* videos together, we see a discursive field consisting of a dynamic play between overlapping, interweaving and conflicting old and new discourses (Edley & Wetherell, 1997). Interestingly, this discursive relationship echoes that of previous decades, as Kimmel's (1987) argument attends, "new models for men have not replaced older ones, but have grown alongside them, creating dynamic tension" (p.9). Over twenty five years on, this

comment astutely captures the current discursive relationships in representations of male dancers in the English mass media. Responding to this conclusion, I am left with a question I need to explore in the subsequent chapters of the thesis: '**How do young men negotiate a path through this complex discursive field when learning to dance?**'

3

Theorizing Masculinities in a Post-Modern Society

The purpose of this chapter is to theorize the changing nature of masculinities in contemporary English society. This will involve building upon the discussion in the previous chapter where I outlined how media representations of popular male dancers have demonstrated a series of transformations over the last fifteen to twenty years. In chapter two, my analysis of the *Billy Elliot* movie and musical, the *Strictly Come Dancing* television show, and the *YouTube* dance videos highlighted the emergence of new forms of masculinity alongside the reproduction, recuperation and adaptation of older, more traditional masculinities. I will now theorise this changing social landscape exploring how these examples of dancing masculinities can be used to inform a wider theorisation of the interplay between old and new masculinities in post-modern societies. To theorize the transformations and relationships between these multiple masculinities I will draw upon Eric Anderson's (2009) theory of 'inclusive masculinity'. Anderson's theory is useful for explaining the growing diversity of masculinities in post-modern societies. Anderson's central premise is that improved attitudes toward homosexuality have had a profound impact on socially esteemed masculinities, resulting in the proliferation of what he calls 'inclusive masculinity'. Anderson argues that this archetype of masculinity is challenging the dominance of 'orthodox masculinity', an older and more traditional form of masculinity based upon anti-femininity, compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia. To support and extend this theory, I will bring Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse and power relations into the mix. This addition is useful for analysing the complex and interweaving relationships between orthodox and inclusive masculinities. Aligning my approach with Foucault's work also facilitates a critique of Anderson's theory. As such, Anderson's theory seeks to blend Foucauldian and Gramscian understandings of power relations. By outlining the tensions and differences between Foucauldian theory and Gramscian theories of hegemony I will argue that blending these approaches is problematic due to a series of underlying contradictions that are difficult to overcome. In response, I will advocate a Foucaldian-inspired theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities that is firmly located within a post-modern context.

3.1 Orthodox Masculinity

Turning first to Anderson's (2009) theory of masculinities, he describes orthodox and inclusive masculinity as 'archetypes', in other words, stereotypical characterisations or categories of masculinity. Orthodox masculinity, then, can be viewed as an archetype that tries to capture the common features of masculinities inherited from the historical traditions of English society. In the previous chapter I characterised these forms of masculinity using the label of 'traditional masculinity', but form here-on I will refer to them as 'orthodox masculinity'.

In discussing orthodox masculinity, Anderson (2009) acknowledges that it is difficult to come up with a precise archetype of what orthodox masculinity or orthodox masculinities is/are. He is however clear that there are number of central tenets, namely the demonstration of anti-femininity, compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia and homo-hysteria. As an illustration, in the previous chapter, Billy Elliot's father can be viewed as a prime example of orthodox masculinity. At the outset of the film Billy's father performs the role of the male breadwinner, undertaking the dangerous, stoic and traditionally manly job of a coal miner. He also encourages Billy to follow the family sporting tradition and undertake the manly pursuit of boxing. He initially demonstrates little emotion apart from instances of aggression against the police and anger about his son's transgression into the feminized terrain of ballet. Moreover, he tells Billy that boys should not do girls activities and he demonstrates an unspoken assumption that ballet is associated with homosexuality.

Another prime example that captures many of the core elements of orthodox masculinity can be seen in the clip below. This clip is taken from the film *In and Out* (1997). The main character, Howard Brackett (played by the actor Kevin Kline) is an English teacher living in a small American town with his fiancée. One of Howard's former students - Carmon Drake - has become a famous actor and wins an academy award for his portrayal of a gay soldier in a Hollywood movie. During Cameron's acceptance speech, screened live on national TV, Cameron thanks Howard 'his gay English teacher' for all his support. Howard, his fiancée and the entire town watch the acceptance speech on TV and are all shocked by the revelation that Cameron assumed Howard was gay. In response, Howard starts to reassure himself and others that he is actually heterosexual. In the process, he buys a self help tape entitled 'How to be a Man': https://vimeo.com/55482812

In this clip we see the self-help tape constructs an archetype of orthodox masculinity.
The male self-help voice instructs Howard:

> …are you dressed in suitably masculine attire?...are you in control?...Are you ready to take charge?... are you a man?...stand up, straight and tall…excuse me, are we a little teapot?...un-tuck your shirt, just one side…you hate this don't you…you want to be neat, you want to be tidy…adjust yourself, not there, the package sissy man, the family jewels, grab em…repeat after me: 'yo', 'hot dam', 'what a fabulous window treatment', that was a trick…we have come to the most critical area of masculine behaviour - dancing...truly manly men do not dance…under any circumstances…this will be your ultimate test…at all cost avoid rhythm, grace and pleasure…whatever you do, do not dance […] men do not dance…they work, they drink, they have bad backs […] whatever you do they do not dance…what are you doing?!... stop dancing you big ballerina…stop waving those hands…aren't you listening you pantywaist …stop it, stop shaking that booty…be a man, kick someone, punch someone, bite someone's ear…stop it, get a grip…think about John Wayne, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Arnold doesn't dance, he can barely walk…stop it, stop it, just stop dancing!... so how did you do pussy boy?

Using Billy Elliot's father and the clip from the film *In and Out* as examples, I will now examine the central tenets of orthodox masculinity. First, there is the demonstration of 'anti-femininity', as Anderson (2009:36) notes, "masculinity has traditionally been constructed in opposition to femininity" (p.36). This is evidenced in the two examples through the requirements for the male characters to distance themselves from characteristics coded as feminine and activities typically performed by females. It is important to note that this orthodox discourse is based upon dualistic binary thinking that assumes that men and women are naturally, biologically and fundamentally different, and in turn need to be directed into distinctively masculine and feminine roles. Men are thus required to demonstrate characteristics such as reason, stoicism, strength and aggression, whereas women are required to demonstrate emotion, caring, weakness and passivity. This form of gendered binary thinking first came to prominence during the industrial revolution with the positioning of the man as the 'breadwinner' and woman as the 'homemaker' (Seccombe, 1986), yet two centuries on it still has a powerful legacy in contemporary English discourse. A pertinent example from the world of dance can be seen in the performance of couple dancing on *Strictly Come Dancing*. Here, male-female couples dance together and performatively reiterate the gender binary with male dancers performing the active role of leader and female dancers performing the responsive role of follower.

In addition to the focus on the supposed natural differences between men and women, orthodox masculinity also places greater social value on the characteristics attributed to

men, it looks disparagingly at femininity and involves an aversion to anything coded as feminine (Anderson, 2009). As a result, men's engagement with activities or actions coded as feminine must be hidden from public view or else become a likely source of shame and ridicule (Seidler, 1997). In the clip from the film *In and Out* we can see a typical example of how male performances of femininity - effeminacy - are policed, ridiculed and stigmatized through insulting name calling. In this instance, Howard is called a 'big ballerina', 'a panty waist', 'a pussy boy' and 'a sissy man'. Notably, the name calling explicitly references the feminine in a derogatory way, demonstrating disdain for the performance of femininity by males and reiterating contempt for women (Segal, 2007).

In cultures where orthodox masculinity predominates, heterosexuality holds a resoundingly dominant position and it is taken as a compulsory part of demonstrating one's masculinity (Rich, 1980; Butler, 1999; Anderson, 2009). In order to prove one's heterosexuality boys and men must either actively demonstrate their desire for the 'opposite' sex, typically by viewing women as sexual objects and sources of sexual validation, or they must distance their self from homosexuality by being openly homophobic (Segal, 2007; McCormack & Anderson, 2010). Once again binary logic supports these practices with the positioning of heterosexuality in opposition to homosexuality, and with homosexuality being constructed as the denigrated other. Furthermore, Segal (2007) contends that:

> "Homophobia serves as an instrument for regulating the whole spectrum of male relations, rather than simply those of men engaged in homosexual relations. The possible imputation of homosexual interest to any bonds between men ensured that men had constantly to be aware of and assert their difference from both women and homosexuals" (p.116).

With the denunciation and repudiation of homosexuality comes an intimate policing of male bodily performance. This is evident in the *In and Out* clip when Howard places his hand on his hip and the self-help tape responds with a homosexually themed ridicule, "are we a little teapot?" The combined power of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) and homophobia is also evident in the film *Billy Elliot* wherein Billy feels it necessary to repeatedly proclaim that he is not gay simply because he wishes to dance. Located within an orthodox culture of masculinity, Billy's repeated repudiation of a gay identity can be viewed as a clear sign of *homohysteria*. This is a new concept employed by Anderson (2009) to highlight the incessant fear of being labelled homosexual. As such, with the emergence of a cultural and social awareness that anyone can potentially

be gay, people in orthodox cultures undertake a "witch hunt to expose sexuality" (Anderson, 2009:86). In response, males employ an array of identity management techniques to publicly and repeatedly prove their heterosexual masculinity (Coad, 2008; McCormack & Anderson, 2010).

With anti-femininity, homophobia, compulsory heterosexuality, and homohysteria forming the central and inter-related tenets that construct and regulate orthodox masculinity, they produce an archetype of masculinity that is largely defined in negative and defensive terms and is produced through practices of exclusion (Seidler, 2006). Thus, in summary, "to be 'masculine' is *not* to be 'feminine', *not* to be 'gay', *not* to be tainted with any marks of 'inferiority'" (Segal, 2007:xxxiv). In such an environment it is not surprising that the fear of being thought gay or feminine places severe restrictions on the way men lead their lives, leaving them "drawn so tight as to allow little real room for manoeuvre" (Segal, 2007:184). By recognising the costs of living up to the principles of orthodox masculinity we can see that "gender roles are oppressive to both men and women" and "even the most confident and authoritative men…face gender troubles" (Anderson, 2009:46; Segal, 2007:xvii). As such, the strict policing of masculinities and the narrow definition of orthodox masculinity greatly limit the expression of men's gender and sexual identities, their engagement with their own body, and their friendships and intimacies with other men and women (Garlick, 2002; Ibson, 2002; Anderson, 2009). Moreover, Anderson (2009) states that,

> "This culture places boys into a gender straightjacket that forces them to mask their feelings, deny their need for help, disconnect from their families, and ultimately it leaves boys with a host of psychological disorders that follow them into adulthood" (p.46)

This argument is supported by the work of Victor Seidler (1997; 2006) who raises concern that boys and men typically do not learn how to share their problems, emotions and vulnerabilities because they are embarrassed about reaching out physically and emotionally toward others for fear of having their actions misinterpreted as signs of weakness, femininity or homosexual desire.

An example of the 'gender trouble' (Butler, 1990) associated with orthodox masculinity is poignantly represented in the *Billy Elliot* movie when Billy's father recognises Billy's talent. Wanting to financially support Billy so that he can attend the ballet audition, Billy's father faces a personal crisis of masculinity due to being out of work, on strike and barely having enough money to support his family. In his desperation to help his

son, Billy's father plans to abandon the miner's strike action and join the 'scabs' whom he had previously vilified for continuing to work while the vast majority of miners were on strike.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLZClsaDEw0

This is a powerful and emotional scene that captures the deep uncertainty surrounding the economic future of Billy's family and the future of the community of coal miners. The tension, uncertainty and vulnerability are poignantly represented when Billy's father breaks down in tears whilst hugging his eldest son and says: "We're finished son. What choice have we got ah? Let's give the boy a fucking chance!" No doubt Billy's father is referring to the impending failure of the miner's strike and his desire to give his son the opportunity to fulfil his potential as a dancer. However, I also want to suggest a second reading of this scene wherein it represents the wider social problem of working class men having to deal with the break down of the traditional supports and certainties of orthodox masculinity at the end of the 20th century.

3.2 Inclusive Masculinity

Anderson (2009) theorises that in post-modern Western societies numerous challenges to the cultural dominance of orthodox masculinity have arisen and alternative ways of performing masculinities have emerged. He suggests that boys and young men have increasingly been able to present softer, more humane, and more feminine forms of masculinity. Anderson conceptualises these developments using the archetype of 'inclusive masculinity' - a form of masculinity characterised less by anti-femininity, compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia than orthodox masculinity. He argues that inclusive masculinity has emerged as part of a broad socio-cultural movement emanating through the actions and effects of multiple discourses, representations, organisations, institutions and individuals.

According to Anderson (2009), a major factor in the cultural movement toward inclusive masculinity is the decline in levels of cultural, institutional, and organizational homophobia. This has been clearly evident in English society over the last ten to fifteen years with the rapidly deceasing social stigma surrounding homosexuality and the demonstration of increasingly positive attitudes toward gay men and women. The reduction in homophobia has been influenced by a general move towards neoliberal forms of governance wherein cultural norms against prejudice and the establishment of gender and sexual equality have largely been taken for granted (Segal, 2007). Notably,

the introduction of institutional policies against sexual discrimination and legislative shifts regarding sexual diversity (such as, the introduction of civil partnerships, gay marriage, and the equalization of the age of consent for queer and straight sex) have contributed to a dramatic decline in the formal discriminations against gays and lesbians, and have helped create a cultural climate where queer sexualities have become increasingly normalised, whilst at the same time a heterosexual norm remains in place (Segal, 2007).

Since the mid 1990s in England, gay sensibilities have also been increasingly appropriated into the mainstream media through a variety of forms. Media commentaries critiquing the persistence of explicit homophobic discourse have abounded. The Louis Theroux BBC documentaries, *The Most Hated Family in America* (2007) and its sequel *America's Most Hated Family in Crisis* (2011) are prime examples. Here, Louis Theroux documented the activities of an American family from the religious Christian right who demonstrated extreme homophobia in public demonstrations, often protesting at funeral of soldiers killed in action with signs that display text such as "God Hates Fags" and "Fags Eat Poop". The documentaries also show how this family are often vilified by members of the public and they have been sued for defamation, invasion of privacy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. Critical commentaries on homophobic discourse also arise in the mainstream media when celebrities, politicians and sports stars are chastised for using explicitly homophobic language in public arenas.

Positive gay visibility has also sharply increased in the mainstream media through the burgeoning number of openly gay talk show hosts, stand-up comedians and presenters of style and fashion shows screened on terrestrial television. The television program *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* provides a prominent example where gay men have been represented as useful style gurus who work to reform heterosexual masculinities (Miller, 2005; Sender, 2006). By encouraging heterosexual men's engagement in metrosexual consumer practices, these gay men represent a form of queerness that is compatible with white, middle-class, urban, heterosexual culture. In addition, an array of queer characters can now be found on mainstream British soaps such as *Coronation Street* and *Holly Oaks* and in youth drama series such as *Skins*. Notably, in Edwards' (2009) analysis of the teen drama *Skins*, she suggests that gay visibility has now become 'unremarkable' in the sense that the show embraces queer content as just another facet

of contemporary youth culture. This positive interpretation is justified through the main characters typically demonstrating indifference or a laissez-faire acceptance of queerness.

In line with the media representation of queerness in *Skins*, a recent ethnographic study of pre-dominantly white middle class students in three 6th form schools in the South West of England shows that the majority of students considered the explicit public voicing of homophobia to be socially unacceptable (McCormack, 2011a; 2011b; 2012). Evidently, homophobic discourses do not necessarily resonate with the experiences of younger generations who have grown up to take gender and sexual equality for granted in their schooling and media consumption (Seidler, 2006).

Reflecting upon this radical shift in popular culture, inclusive masculinity theorists argue that "when one lives within a culture of diminished homophobia the rules of masculinity change" (Anderson, 2012: xiii). This argument has been based upon a series of ethnographic studies in sports and educational settings where gay men were equally included in the local cultures, there was less social stigma about being gay, and there were fewer requirements for men to repeatedly prove their heterosexuality (Anderson, 2008a, 2008b; 2009). In turn, heterosexual men had greater freedom to engage in feminized practices and act in more feminized ways without these actions posing a threat to their heterosexual identities. The boys and young men participating in these cultures were also able to physically engage with women in new non-sexual ways and demonstrate increasing physical closeness with other men. Ultimately then, research documenting the enactment of inclusive masculinities provides evidence of an expansion of the boundaries of acceptable heterosexual masculine performance and the construction of increasingly fluid and flexible masculinities that engage with diverse gender roles and sexualities. Anderson's (2009) initial findings have been supported and extended in subsequent studies by inclusive masculinity scholars who have documented further positive examples of inclusive cultures of masculinity in university football clubs, student union nightclubs and in 6th form schools (Adams, 2011; Peterson & Anderson, 2011; McCormack, 2012; Cashmore & Cleland, 2012).

Taken together, the identification of inclusive cultures of masculinity offers a radical break from the majority of masculinity research that casts men and masculinity in a negative light (Seidler, 2006; Moller, 2007). This however does not mean that inclusive

masculinity theory is a naïve or blindly positive theory. Indeed, whilst inclusive masculinities have emerged as a critique and alternative to orthodox masculinity, there is a recognition that "not all oppositional behaviour has…a clear cut response to domination, oppositional behaviour can involve significant reproduction of domination" (Raby, 2005:157). Inclusive masculinities, then, are not completely free from reproducing forms of domination, and men who embrace inclusive masculinities may not necessarily fully reject the principles of orthodox masculinity (Anderson, 2009; Adams, 2011).

To explore these issues in greater depth, inclusive masculinity theorists have argued that when overt homophobia diminishes, hetero-normativity and hetero-sexism may persist (McCormack & Anderson, 2010; McCormack, 2011b). Boys and young men will thus continue to regulate heterosexuality and may privilege it above other sexual orientations even when homophobia is absent. In response, researchers have suggested that future analyses and identification of inclusive masculinities need to pay attention to how heterosexual boundaries are maintained through more subtle identity management techniques. McCormack & Anderson (2010) provide three examples of common identity management techniques through which heterosexual boundaries are maintained within inclusive settings. The first technique is *heterosexual recuperation*. This takes the form of a defensive heterosexuality where men who identify as heterosexual transgress the constraints of orthodox masculinity yet their masculine identity is still ultimately presented as something not homosexual. Whilst this strategy does not include enacting overt homophobia it may implicitly marginalize gay identities. The second identity management strategy McCormack and Anderson (2010) highlight is that of *conquestial recuperation*. This refers to men's sexual objectification of women and includes men boasting about their heterosexual desires and conquests. The third strategy is *ironic recuperation*. This involves boys or men purposefully acting gay, camp or feminine in order to 'prove' they are straight. These actions are performed on the assumption that only the most confident and secure of heterosexuals will perform in this manner (McCormack & Anderson, 2010; McCormack, 2011b). Possible examples include wearing pink clothes (Adams, 2011), dressing up in drag, temporarily acting in an explicitly gay manner for comic effect, "appearing just gay enough to get the girl" (Shugart, 2008:293), or as in chapter two, playfully re-enacting the provocative and feminine movements of Beyonce's *Single Ladies* video. Taken together, these arguments suggest that cultures need not be entirely free of homophobia, hetero-

normativity or other forms of domination in order to encourage a proliferation of inclusive masculinities (Anderson, 2009).

3.3 A Limited Sample

In light of the generally positive findings noted in inclusive cultures of masculinity, it is important to acknowledge that the ethnographic data informing the current theorisation of inclusive masculinities is based upon a relatively limited sample of male research participants. This means that researchers should not assume there is a uniform or universal movement toward more inclusive styles of masculinity in England or in post-modern societies more generally. As Segal (2007) notes, men are generally permitted greater flexibility in post-modern societies yet it is not always easy for all men to adopt such flexibility. Anderson (2011) supports this argument positing that "decreasing cultural homophobia is an uneven social process [and]…maintains varying implications for differing demographics" (p.575).

At present, studies identifying inclusive masculinities have focused almost exclusively on young, white, middle class and/or university educated males in England and America. The focus on this demographic is significant because these are relatively privileged members of society and likely have least to lose from the decline in homophobia and the denaturalisation of heterosexuality (Lloyd, 1999; McCormack & Anderson, 2010). Moreover, these groups of males typically have greater access to a range of information networks that offer appropriate discourses and cultural resources to support the enactment of inclusive masculinities. For example, in Segal's (2007) research on changing masculinities, she found that,

> "Anti-sexist men were, by and large, men whose personal and often public lives within a radical middle-class culture permitted, if not encouraged, them to behave in less traditional ways. They were the men who could more easily choose…to live more collectively, to share in childcare, to work part time, to appear more 'feminine' and thereby, be more sensitive to the experiences and needs of women and gays" (p.238).

To better understand how inclusive masculinity is being adopted by this demographic, it is useful to highlight how cosmopolitanism is increasingly common among the middle classes in post-modern societies (Beck, 2002; Burkitt, 2008). The term 'cosmopolitanism' refers to "an intellectual and aesthetic openness toward diverse cultural experiences" and the "capacity to be adaptable and to manoeuvre skilfully between different systems of meanings" (Burkitt, 2008:191). Ulrich Beck (2002) and

others have used this concept to help describe how young urban dwellers in post-modern societies engage in forms of social performance that integrate the negotiation of contradictory cultural experiences and alternative ways of life into part of their everyday activities.

Alongside the impact of cosmopolitanism, inclusive masculinities have predominantly been documented in research focusing on young males aged 16-30. This age group is significant because young people in post-modern societies are,

> "on the cutting edge of social change…Young adults both reflect and enact new social forms because they are old enough to be making relatively autonomous decisions but young enough to be influenced by basic social shifts and to take advantage of new opportunities wrought by social change"
> (Gersen & Horowitz, 2002:204).

This phenomenon can be further understood by acknowledging that young middle class/university educated males form a major part of an emerging cohort of 'digital natives'. Growing up in post-modern societies proliferated with an explosion of new technologies, young men,

> "…who have the education, skills, financial resources, and time required to navigate the sea of cultural choice will gain access to new cultural opportunities…They will discover new forms of cultural expression that engage their passions and help them forge their own identities"
> (Ivey and Tepper, 2006, cited in Jenkins, 2009:125)

The discussion in chapter two that focuses on the practices of teenage boys and young men posting dorky dance videos on *YouTube* provides a vivid illustration of this phenomenon.

In light of the arguments above, it makes sense that inclusive masculinity scholars (including myself) have initially based their studies on the exciting opportunities and radical changes young, middle class, university educated males are experiencing. However, in order to develop the theory further and establish a more diverse and empirically verifiable theorisation of inclusive masculinities, future research needs to broaden its sample. This will enable a more extensive study of how constructions and performances of orthodox and inclusive masculinities are not only shaped by issues of gender and sexuality but also intersect with class, ethnicity and nationality.

Inclusive masculinity research and theorizing also needs to pay greater attention to how the on-going changes in men's lives are intersecting with the changes in women's lives.

McCormack (2011b) notes that the relationship between men and women has been under-theorised in masculinity research, but inclusive masculinity theorists have yet to comprehensively respond to this concern. This is possibly due to their pre-occupation with studying relationships between men and the influence of homophobia. Understanding the nature of male-female relations is crucial for developing a more comprehensive theory of inclusive masculinity because "it is not…possible for change to occur for one sex without affecting the other" (Segal, 2007, p.xxxv). Therefore, greater attention should be directed toward how men are adapting to the changes in women's lives and vice versa, particularly within the post-modern context of sexualised culture, consumerism and post-feminism. With this in mind, contemporary feminist analysts have argued that feminism is constituted as no longer necessary, and women are increasingly called upon to be 'sassy' and assertive sexual beings (Gill, 2007). This has created a complex and contradictory social landscape in which men and women operate, where on the one hand gender and sexual equality has become a valued social norm, yet on the other hand sexualised images of women are ubiquitous (Gill, 2007; Evans, et al., 2010). These contradictory media discourses and post-feminist constructions have been conceptualised as forming a 'double entanglement' of feminist and anti-feminist ideas (McRobbie, 2004; Gill; 2009a, 2009b). This theorisation of contemporary femininities offers a powerful conceptual tool that directly links to and reflects Anderson's (2009) theorisation of the co-existence of two opposing archetypes of masculinity. I therefore propose that future inclusive masculinity research would benefit from considering the theoretical and analytical connections between the entanglements of feminist and anti-feminist constructions of femininity and the entanglements of orthodox and inclusive constructions of masculinity.

The current study offers an ideal place to explore this theoretical proposal as approximately half of the participants in a typical capoeira class were female and approximately two thirds of the participants in Latin and ballroom dance classes were female. Thus, based upon sheer numbers, the actions and performances of female dancers would undoubtedly impact on men's experiences of dance and their performances of masculinity. To methodologically interrogate the relationship between masculinity and femininity, I included eight women with different levels of experience into my interview sample, I directed equal attention to photographing male and female dancers, and I spent just as much time engaging in embodied fieldwork, dancing, playing and talking with men and women.

3.4 Multiple Masculinities, Power Relations and Hegemonic Theories of Masculinity.

Inclusive Masculinity theory asserts that in postmodern societies there will be a diversity of masculinities co-existing and jostling in ongoing relations of power. To make sense of these multiple enactments, performances and discourses of masculinity, I will analyse them in relation to the two archetypes of orthodox and inclusive masculinity. In proposing this theoretical and analytical approach, a fundamental question arises, 'how should the relations of power between orthodox and inclusive masculinities be theorised?' To outline my answer to this question, I first need to outline how Anderson (2009) positions inclusive masculinity theory in relation to the previously dominant theory of masculinity, namely Connell's (1987; 1995; 2002) theory of *Hegemonic Masculinity*.

Connell's approach built upon the earlier work of feminists, Marxist theory and psychoanalytic theory, and was undoubtedly the most widely used theory in the study of men and masculinity throughout the late 1980s and 1990s. Since the late 1990s, however, masculinity researchers have become increasingly critical of this body of work and have voiced an almost endless list of problems, criticisms and concerns (Donaldson, 1993; Martin, 1998; Whitehead, 1999; de Garis, 2000; Speer, 2005; Pringle, 2005; Seidler, 2006; Moller, 2007). In response to the onslaught of criticism, Connell and other hegemony theorists have sought to update and re-formulate hegemonic masculinity theory (Demetriou, 2001; Hearn, 2004; Connell & Messherschmidt, 2005), whilst others have sought to combine it with discursive and psycho-analytic theories (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Frosh et al., 2002; Jefferson, 2002). Alternative approaches have also emerged, with researchers constructing theories of masculinity based upon the work of Michel Foucault (1977; 1978), Judith Butler (1999; 2004), Pierre Bourdieu (1990; 2001), and Erving Goffman (1959). Within this extensive network of theories, Anderson locates inclusive masculinity theory as a challenge to Connell's original theorisation of hegemonic masculinity. For Anderson, the primary limitation of hegemonic masculinity theory is that it is unable to account for the changes in masculinity in cultures of decreasing homophobia. Despite this, Anderson does not reject hegemony theory outright but instead acknowledges the potential benefits a more subtle and sophisticated hegemony theory may offer. Moreover, he proposes drawing upon hegemonic theories to help analyse cultures where high homohysteria persists, and

he actively advocates blending Gramscian and Foucauldian understandings of power relations in his analysis of orthodox and inclusive masculinities.

In the subsequent section I will critically evaluate Anderson's engagement with hegemony theories and I will outline how I follow a different path. To begin, I will first offer support for Anderson's critique of Connell's formulation of hegemonic masculinity. I will then explore the proposition that more sophisticated theories of hegemony could be integrated into inclusive masculinity theory as it is currently formulated. In this respect, I will argue that Demetriou's (2001) theorisation of the *Hegemonic Bloc* offers the most sophisticated re-formulation of the relationship between hegemony and masculinity. As such, hegemonic bloc theory engages with the changing status of gay masculinities in society and offers insights into the vital role of neo-liberal consumer capitalism, something that is currently underplayed in inclusive masculinity research. However, I will also argue that introducing hegemony theories into inclusive masculinity theory causes problems. As such, Anderson advocates blending Foucauldian and Gramscian understandings of gender, discourse and power relations. Following the work of Pringle (2005), I assert that this approach is problematic due to a series of underlying tensions and theoretical contradictions that are difficult to overcome. Ultimately then, I will outline a Foucauldian-inspired approach to theorising orthodox and inclusive masculinities.

3.4.1 Engaging with Hegemonic Masculinity Theory

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity draws upon Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony. This concept was originally deployed to explain how a ruling class wins power, maintains and legitimizes its position by setting the terms in which events are understood and persuading subordinate classes to consent to the mainstream cultural and political ideology (Donaldson, 1993; Hearn, 2004). Connell adopted a similar theoretical explanation to make sense of the stratification of masculinities and the maintenance of masculinity as the dominant gender in society. Connell argued that masculinities are structured hierarchically and the process of hegemony works (in part) through the production of highly visible exemplars of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (2002:28) argued that an idealised form of masculinity was the "most honoured or desired in a particular context" and would dominate other masculinities. To support this theory, a mass of media and sports research was conducted during the 1990s identifying how famous actors and sportsmen

were celebrated as heroes, role models and the epitome of masculinity (Davis, 1997; Whannel, 2002; MacKinnon, 2003). Messner, et al.'s (2000) extensive review of the media coverage of popular American sports during the 1990s provides a pertinent illustration. This research detailed how the media representation of male dominated sports provided a "consistent and (mostly) coherent message about what it is to be a man" (p.390). This message was grounded in the idealisation of bravery, risk taking, violence, bodily strength, courage, self sacrifice and heterosexuality.

For Connell, the representations of culturally idealized masculinity have two functions or effects. First, boys and men aspire to this idolized symbol of masculinity. Those who are successful in living up to this ideal are rewarded with the most social capital, whereas those who do not conform are marginalized, most notably with gay men being placed at the bottom of the masculine hierarchy. Second, representations of culturally idealized men work toward sustaining hierarchically organized power relations between men and women and ultimately reproduce patriarchy. To clarify, 'patriarchy' is a term used by Connell and numerous other feminist theorists (Walby, 1989), including inclusive masculinity theorists (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012), to refer to "the long-term structure of the subordination of women" (Hearn, 2004:51) and "global dominance of men" whereby "men are structurally and interpersonally dominant in most spheres of life" (Demetriou, 2001:340). Thus for Connell (1995),

> "hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p.77).

3.4.2 Critiquing Hegemonic Masculinity Theory

Over the last ten to fifteen years hegemonic masculinity theory has come under increasing scrutiny and critique. To make sense of this recent wave of criticism, Anderson locates Connell's approach as a product of its time. In other words, hegemonic masculinity theory emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s, a period beset with homo-hysteria wherein men often feared being perceived as feminine or homosexual (Anderson, 2009; 2011). Located in this historical context the emergence and prominence of hegemonic masculinity theory makes sense. However, in Anderson's series of ethnographies conducted during the 2000s, what he saw occurring among white university aged men was not accounted for by hegemonic masculinity theory. As

a result, Anderson argues that hegemonic masculinity theory does not adequately explain the complexity of relationships between multiple masculinities in cultures of decreasing homophobia and homo-hysteria.

Alongside a number of masculinity scholars (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Jefferson, 2002; Seidler, 2006), Anderson (2009) raises concerns with how hegemonic masculinity is typically conceptualised in the singular, with one dominant masculinity residing on top of a gender hierarchy. He asserts that hegemonic masculinity becomes problematic because it implies a considerable uniformity and consensus about what forms of masculinity are culturally valued, idealized and powerful at any one time. From this perspective, Connell's theory seems to contradict much of the contemporary research conducted in post-modern societies that shows how there is no single homogenized vision of masculinity that all men aspire to (Seidler, 1997; Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Gill, 2011). This critique can be supported with examples from the previous chapter where multiple styles of dancing masculinities were shown to be currently represented in the mainstream media, with no one style clearly holding a dominant position. Responding to this trend, Anderson (2009) provides a theoretical framework for making sense of the variety of competing masculinities currently in play. He theorises that there are two co-existing archetypes of masculinity (orthodox and inclusive) that currently have equal influence within English culture.

To further critique Connell's theory, Anderson's ethnographic studies provide examples where masculine hierarchies and hegemonies were not evident. Thus, rather than seeing one dominant form of masculinity at the top of a hierarchy, Anderson describes how multiple masculinities coexisted harmoniously with equal cultural value. These findings led Anderson to theorise that in times of lower homophobia, masculinities are more likely situated on a horizontal plane, as opposed to hierarchically organised. This change arguably occurs because without the presence of explicit forms of homophobia working to enforce the performance of orthodox masculinity, alternative masculinities can flourish (McCormack, 2011b; Anderson, 2011). It is important to note that this argument doesn't mean that masculine hierarchies will be universally wiped out in inclusive cultures, but rather that if masculine hierarchies do emerge they will not necessarily be based upon homophobia and an aversion to the feminine. For example, in McCormack's (2011b) study of male students in a 6th form school in the South West of England, he notes that although a

masculine hierarchy did exist, it was not based upon hegemonic domination, but rather stratified by student's popularity, established through their performance of charisma, authenticity, emotional support and social fluidity.

The findings from McCormack's (2011b) study also provide evidence of a decline in the hegemonic processes historically associated with orthodox forms of masculinity. As such, he provides examples of how various forms of masculinities co-existed in the 6th form with no one group dominating or maintaining a hegemonic position. Moreover, boys who performed alternative masculinities were not subordinated by those performing orthodox masculinities. These findings pose a direct challenge to hegemonic masculinity theory which presumes the complicity or subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities. McCormack (2011a) argues that these findings ultimately show that,

> "…the regulative mechanisms of hegemonic masculinity - physical domination and discursive marginalisation - are no longer present or lose utility in such a setting…boys no longer fear being homosexualised, meaning that they can act in ways once considered transgressive without the threat of homophobic policing" (p.339).

3.4.3 Incorporating Hegemony Theories

At this point it is important to note that whilst leading inclusive masculinity theorists are critical of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, they remain open to incorporating more sophisticated understandings of how hegemonic processes work in gender relations (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). In this regard, I now will argue that Demetriou's (2001) Hegemonic Bloc theory provides the best potential collaboration for inclusive masculinity theorists who are open to drawing upon hegemony theories.

In a similar vein to Anderson (2009), Demetriou (2001) positions his updated theorisation of hegemony and masculinity as a response to the weaknesses and critiques of Connell's work. Crucially, Demetriou moves the theory forward by drawing upon an alternative concept used in Gramsci's (1971) original writings. He thus re-conceptualises hegemonic masculinity as,

> "a hybrid bloc that unites various and diverse practices in order to construct the best possible strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy. That is, the con-figuration of practice that guarantees the reproduction of patriarchy need not necessarily be the one traditionally associated with white or heterosexual masculinities. It is in fact a hybrid masculine bloc that is made up of both straight and gay, both black and white elements and practices…Whereas for

Connell the existence of non-white or non-heterosexual elements in hegemonic masculinity is a sign of contradiction and weakness, for me it is precisely it's internally diversified and hybrid nature that makes the hegemonic bloc dynamic and flexible. It is its constant hybridization, its constant appropriation of diverse elements from various masculinities that makes the hegemonic bloc capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures" (p.348).

By focusing on the hybridizations, appropriations and reconfigurations that form within gender relations, the notion of a hegemonic bloc offers a more nuanced approach that accounts for the decline in homophobia and the inclusion of gay masculinities in the mainstream media, whilst still asserting that hegemony and patriarchy are ultimately maintained. Demetriou (2001) goes on to explain that,

"Many elements of [gay masculinities]…have become constitutive parts of a hybrid hegemonic bloc whose heterogeneity is able to render the patriarchal dividend invisible and legitimate patriarchal domination. Hybridization in the realm of representation and in concrete, everyday gender practices makes the hegemonic bloc appear less oppressive and more egalitarian...This appropriation of gay elements blurs sexual difference, enables some masculinities to appear less rigid and thus conceals patriarchal domination" (p.354-5).

For inclusive masculinity scholars who are open to incorporating hegemony theories into their work, Demetriou's theorisation of the hegemonic bloc offers two fundamental additions: one, it draws attention to how the discourses and practices of consumer capitalism have a significant influence on the shape of masculinities in post-modern societies, and two, it provides a continued focus on how patriarchy and hegemonic relations are maintained in the face of radical changes and improvements in gender and sexual relations. Responding to these issues in turn, Demetriou's theory draw's attention to the intensified practices of consumption aimed at men within neo-liberal capitalist societies, something that is currently under-theorized in inclusive masculinity theory. As an example, hegemonic bloc theory offers an alternative way to make sense of the emergence of metrosexuality. This is an issue of significant importance when considering the growth of inclusive masculinities.

In chapter two I detailed how the concept of metrosexuality has been used to highlight the emergence of an aesthetic engagement with the male body in post-modern societies. I identified how the Western mass media has played a crucial role in this process, directing incessant attention to celebrities such as David Beckham who have been positioned as embodiments of metrosexuality. With the example of male celebrity dancers on *Strictly Come Dancing*, I also detailed how metrosexual practices have

infiltrated men's everyday practices in the form of taking greater care of one's body and appearance, appraising the look and style of other male bodies, and becoming an active consumer of fashion and beauty products (Coad, 2008). One interpretation of the rise of metrosexuality is that it has contributed to the enabling of more inclusive forms of masculinity and the wider spread of a critical form of gender bending. However, from the perspective of hegemonic bloc theory, metrosexuality can be viewed as the result of changes in wider commercial and visual cultures, and as part of a wider strategy for the reproduction of the logic of capitalism based upon neo-liberal consumption and individualism (Harris & Clayton, 2007; Shugart, 2008; Gill, 2011). From this perspective, the media construction of metrosexuality involves the appropriation of techniques and meanings traditionally attached to the fetishized display of the female body in order to sell commodities to men. Metrosexuality can therefore be viewed as a consumer-driven marketing ploy to open up an underdeveloped area of sales by presenting consumer alternatives to orthodox masculinity. This argument ultimately leads to the conclusion that one of the reasons for the growth of inclusive masculinities is commercial.

Integrating Demetriou's focus on hybridized hegemonies and the reworking of patriarchy would also offer a way to respond to possible critiques that inclusive masculinity theory provides an overly positive interpretation of progress in gender and sexual relations. For example, Gough (2001:172) notes that "many feminists…are sceptical of 'alternative' masculinities and view…superficial changes in practice as a subtle means of maintaining, or modernising patriarchy". This argument is illustrated in the work of Riley (2001), Allen (2007) and Arxer (2011) who attend to the evolving constructions of hegemony and patriarchy. These researchers acknowledge that there has been a loosening up of masculinities and a decline in overt forms of sexism and homophobia. This has enabled boys and men to experience some of the pleasures traditionally connected with femininity and gay masculinities, and it has also given the appearance that men are now less oppressive and more egalitarian. However, in spite of these changes, the researchers argue that middle-class heterosexual men ultimately end up experiencing the 'best of both worlds'. In other words, they are able to appropriate more diverse aspects into their enactments of masculinity, they are able to make concessions to subordinated groups, and yet they still benefit from hybridized forms of hegemony that continue to offer old privileges and favourable structures of inequality and domination.

3.4.4 The problematic blending of theories of power

On the one hand, inclusive masculinity researchers may welcome the additions hegemonic bloc theory offers, namely a heightened focus on consumer capitalism and a more sophisticated theory of hegemony. However, bringing hegemony theories into the theoretical mix should not be taken lightly as there are a series of underlying assumptions and possible problems associated with drawing upon Gramscian understandings of power. To fully engage with these tensions I first need to detail how Anderson (2009) positions the issue of power in his theorising of inclusive masculinity theory. He posits,

> "I will utilize Foucault's (1977, 1984) theoretical accounts of the multiplicity of power, and Butler's (1990) conception of the power of discourse, to augment hegemonic theory…Instead of having two paradigmatic camps, we blend these epistemologies…I will interchange between Gramscian and Foucaultian operations of power throughout this book… I understand that some reject the use of blending these epistemologies (Pringle, 2005; Pringle & Markula, 2005), but I view this to be academic fundamentalism" (p.32-34).

Anderson is not the first masculinities researcher to blend aspects of Foucauldian and Gramscian theory (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). In response to the previous attempts, Richard Pringle and Pirkko Markula raise a number of concerns about synthesising understandings of power taken form different philosophical traditions and different theoretical perspectives (Pringle, 2005; Pringle & Markula, 2005; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Crucially, Pringle and Markula's argument offers an obvious critique of Anderson's approach. It is somewhat surprising then that Anderson spends little time engaging with this potential critique, instead opting to dismiss their position out of hand by calling it 'academic fundamentalism'.

In response, I assert that Anderson severely misrepresents Pringle and Markula's argument. As such, at no point do Pringle and Markula say that masculinity researchers cannot or should not blend theories. Rather, they argue that researchers who combine concepts or theories of power with different philosophical and theoretical underpinnings need to acknowledge the theoretical baggage that come with these perspectives, and researchers need to explicitly outline their proposal for unpicking the complexities of drawing upon potentially contradictory positions. In response to this point of contestation, I will now outline how I am in agreement with Pringle and Markula, and thus, I will argue that synthesising the work of Gramsci and Foucault within inclusive

masculinity theory is problematic and something I will avoid. Before outlining my concerns, I will first discuss Gramsci's and Foucault's points of agreement and overlap.

Foucault and Gramsci's theorisation of power can both be viewed as an advance on crude Marxist theories as they reject the idea that power is a static possession of any one social group or specific person (Pringle, 2005; Jones, 2006). In its place, both theorists locate power as a relational concept that exists and works through the actions of people. In Gramsci's work this comes through his subtle conceptualisation of power relations as a living process of negotiation. This relational approach is applied in Connell's (1995) work where masculinity is defined as "a configuration of practice within a system of gender relations" (p.84), and where he asserts that "no masculinity arises except in a system of gender relations' (p.71). Similarly, Foucault understood power as a relation between different forces wherein a person takes an action in order to help guide or govern the actions of others (Foucault, 1982; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Hence, from a Foucauldian perspective "power…is always a short cut to the expression…the relationships of power" (Markula & Pringle, 2006:34). For both Gramsci and Foucault, then, power relations are ongoing battles, negotiations and strategic games of action and reaction, question and answer, domination and evasion (Fox, 1998).

Whilst Gramsci and Foucault offer similar accounts of power as forms of relations, their accounts of the origins, structures and effects of contemporary power relations are fundamentally distinct and belong to different theoretical traditions (Pringle, 2005). In the following section I will detail how these divergences centre around three concerns:

1) Who controls or has the greatest influence in relations of power,

2) Whether to focus on power relations from a top-down macro-structural level or through a bottom-up analysis of local practice, and

3) What are the most common forms of contemporary power relations, in relation to gender?

I will now examine these three issues in sequence. First, Gramsci (1971) employed a neo-Marxist model of power that accepted the existence of a binary division between rulers and the ruled, between dominators and 'subalternate' groups (Pringle, 2005; Jones, 2006). Gramsci also argued that there was a hierarchical structure of power, with power relations working primarily in a top down direction influenced mainly by the actions of the dominant class. In this light, Gramsci set out to "map some of the locations of the headquarters of power" (Holub, 1992:201). In contrast, Foucault (1978)

rejected the claim that a binary division existed between the dominators and the dominated. Instead, "Foucault connected the workings of power to multiple discourses but avoided fingering a set group as responsible for producing or controlling these discourses" (Pringle, 2005:261). Foucault therefore rejected the idea that power was easily locatable and instead attended to how men and women are caught up in a web or a network of discourses and power relations that are diffused, dispersed and unstable. This conceptualisation is developed in Foucault's (1978) analysis of discourses of sexuality in the late 20th century where he states,

> "Never have there existed more centres of power; never more attention manifested and verbalized; never more circular contacts and linkages; never more cites where the intensity of pleasures and the persistency of power catch hold, only to spread elsewhere" (p.49).

To add support to Foucault's position, it is interesting to attend to how Norbert Elias (1970) likened power relations to a game, wherein, "the participants always have control over each other" and are thus always to some extent dependent on each other (p.81). Elias's insight suggests that over the long term it is difficult for any one individual or one group to determine history since their intentions and actions are always likely to be moderated by others on whom they are dependent (Newton, 1999). This argument is particularly relevant within globalised post-modern societies where there is "unlikely to be any simple relation between a particular 'strategy' and a particular 'outcome', since any outcome represents the interweaving of countless individual interests and intentions" (Newton, 1999:417). Bringing Foucault's (1978) and Elias's (1970) arguments together, they offer a fundamental critique of Gramscian studies of masculinity by challenging the assumption that one group (i.e. dominant men) can control the directions of power relations and the historical transformations in gender relations. From this position, it is too simplistic to try to identify a ruling group of men who somehow devise and orchestrate dominant discourses of masculinity to gain patriarchal benefit (Pringle, 2005).

The second issue of contention surrounding the synthesis of Gramscian and Foucaldian approaches in the study of power relations is their contrasting emphasis on 'macro' and 'micro' forms analysis. Studies of masculinity employing Gramsci's hegemony theory typically employ macro-structural analyses of gender oppression. These analyses focus on how patriarchy and the existing 'gender order' (that is "the structural inventory of an entire society") continue to be reproduced (Connell, 1987:98-9). In turn, when researchers descend toward an analysis of the local practice and performance of

masculinities, their focus is typically directed at how local action either reproduces or challenges the wider structures of patriarchy and the existing gender order.

Adopting a macro-structural approach is not without problems. deGaris's (2000) ethnographic study of men's participation in an American boxing gym provides one example. In this study, deGaris documented a wide range of inconsistent, fragmented and contradictory masculinity making boxing practices. Crucially, he asserted there was no evidence that these practices worked to support or challenge or could be explained by wider structures of male dominance and patriarchy. deGaris's wariness about asserting the existence of causal links between complex local phenomenon and wider structures of power has been re-iterated in the work of Segal (2007). She argues that the embodied experience and performance of heterosexual masculinities,

> "is not any single or simple thing at all – but the site of any number of emotions of weakness and strength, pleasure and pain, anxiety and conflict, tension and struggle, none of them mapped out in such a way as to make the obliteration of the agency of women in heterosexual engagements inevitable" (p.181).

In response to the analytical tensions highlighted by deGaris and Segal, I propose that patriarchy takes the form of a relevant set of discourses in post-modern societies, yet crucially, patriarchy isn't a totalizing discourse. In other words, patriarchy doesn't shape all gender relations and it cannot account for all constructions of masculinity and femininity. Masculinity researchers should therefore not assume patriarchal domination and structural oppression in advance of the analysis of research data (Foucault, 1978; Pringle, 2005; Speer, 2005). A more appropriate analytic strategy is to only bring inferences about the wider patriarchal context to the fore when it is helpful for making sense of specific instances of situated gender performance.

In response to the problems associated with employing a Gramscian macro-structural analysis of power relations, Stuart Hall (2001:77) details how,

> "Foucault shifts our attention away from the grand, overall strategies of power, towards the many, localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates...Power at these lower levels does not merely reflect or reproduce, at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures and behaviour, the general form of the law or government but, on the contrary, because such an approach 'roots [power] in forms of behaviour, bodies and local relations of power which should not at all be seen as a simple projection of the central power' (Foucault, 1980:201)".

From the quote above we can see how Foucault encourages researchers to begin an analysis of power relations at the micro-levels of society, asking the question "what are

the most immediate and the most local power relations at work?" (Foucault, 1978:97). Once the researcher has formulated an initial understanding of what is happening locally, an ascending analysis can then ensue where the researcher explores the wider discourses men and women are drawing upon to make sense of and justify local performances of gender. Based upon this brief outline of a Foucauldian approach, I argue that the incorporation of a Gramscian macro-structural approach that imposes top-down generalizations about patriarchy and the universalized influence of male power would ultimately miss the point of utilizing Foucault's understanding of power relations.

The third issue that differentiates Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches is their focus on different forms of contemporary power relations. Masculinity researchers drawing upon Gramsci's hegemony theory typically analyse power relations in terms of the multiple ways in which men systematically dominate, exploit and marginalise other men and women. A number of researchers have raised concerns that this approach involves a narrow focus on specific forms of power relations that shape research findings in ways that position men and masculinity in a negative light (Seidler, 2006; Moller, 2007). This negativity manifests through researchers being pre-occupied with the search for male domination and as a result they typically find it somewhere. Such an approach also opens up a risk that researchers will ignore or trivialize the analysis of progressive gender practices of men working towards gender equality (Collier, 1998; Seidler, 2006; McCormack, 2012). This argument is particularly relevant in the case of hegemonic bloc theory where the emergence of more liberal, egalitarian and inclusive forms of masculinity are likely to be interpreted as forms of hegemonic hybridization that strategically function to give the surface appearance of positive change whilst ultimately maintaining wider capitalist values, male domination and patriarchy. From this perspective it seems almost futile to try to identify a form of masculinity that could be considered genuinely transgressive, resistant or counter-hegemonic (Hearn, 2004; Segal, 2007).

In response to the arguments above, a growing number of gender researchers have drawn upon a Foucauldian approach in order to move away from a solely negative focus on power relations and masculinity. Moller (2007:266), for example, argues that,

> "in seeing power only as domination practiced by some men, we run the risk of failing to see how we – men and women – subject ourselves to the subtle

modalities of contemporary power; and that we are also always subjects of power".

By attending to the idea that men and women are always subjects of gendered power, Moller draws upon Foucault's (1978) notion that power is inescapable, that power manifests at all levels and sites in societies, and thus as subjects to power, "we are all, to some degree, caught up in its circulation" (Hall, 2001:77). The focus on men and women as subjects of power also encourages researchers to recognise that power relations are not only constraining and restrictive, but also productive and enabling. Foucault (1988) stresses,

> "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (p.18).

From this perspective, power can be viewed as "a productive network which runs through the whole social body", giving men and women their capacity to act, and enabling forms of pleasure, knowledge and discourse (Foucault, 1984:61; Fox, 1998).

Returning to Moller's (2007) critique, he also stated that masculinity researchers need to attend to the subtle modalities of contemporary power. Here, Moller's argument echoes a wider trend in gender research that has "shifted from [analysing] power as exploitation, coercion or manipulation to the subtle, pervasive and ambiguous processes of discipline and normalization through cultural representations" (Davis, 1997:11). Foucauldian theory has been invaluable in facilitating this shift as it directs researchers' attention to how contemporary modalities of power emerge through the non-coercive governing of human populations ('governmentality') and the deployment of technologies of domination and technologies of the self. These concepts will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter, but for now it is sufficient to say that Foucault's attention to the processes of 'governmentality' helps shine a light on how men enact embodied masculinities that require self-management in the context of neo-liberal consumer culture. Seidler (2006) advances this argument, describing how,

> "The dominant form of control now is an expansive system of discipline and surveillance based on stimulation and satisfaction of desire. The trend is most evident in the way the body is deployed in consumer culture, a culture which, above all, thematizes the primacy of the personal and satisfaction of individual desires" (p.85).

The arguments above provide a fundamental insight into the construction of contemporary masculinities. They highlight that whilst contemporary performances of masculinity may be regulated less by discourses of anti-femininity, homophobia and compulsory sexuality, they are being regulated more by discourses of neo-liberalism and consumerism. This argument is crucial for bringing attention to how inclusive masculinities are often shaped through the leisure and health discourses of consumer culture that survey and discipline the young male body. Thus, through a network of self-managing practices, young men engage in aesthetic body work with the intention of constructing more marketable identities that are young, healthy, beautiful and exciting (Featherstone, 1982/1991; Hall, 1997). Interestingly, these discourses of neo-liberalism and consumer culture may be considered less domineering and more self-empowering than orthodox discourses of masculinity, yet nevertheless they still form the workings of new disciplinary and self-reflexive modalities of power.

To conclude the discussion of the divergences between Gramscian and Foucauldian theorisations and analyses of power relations, it is clear that both approaches have considerable academic baggage, much of which actively challenges the foundations of the other theory. I therefore propose it is both theoretically counterproductive and analytically problematic to integrate these theories within the framework of inclusive masculinity theory. In the next section, I will respond to this argument by outlining a Foucauldian-inspired theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities that builds on the previous outline of Foucault's multi-faceted understanding of power.

3.5 A Foucauldian-inspired theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities

In this final section I outline my Foucauldian-inspired theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities. This approach will provide the necessary theoretical tools to grapple with the local complexities, contradictions and shifts in the enactment of contemporary masculinities. At the heart of this approach is the acknowledgement that in post-modern societies there exists a kaleidoscopic network of overlapping, intersecting and conflicting discourses of masculinity, with no single discourse holding a dominant or hegemonic position (Hall, 2001; Law & Urry, 2004; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Gill, 2009b). In turn, the analytical concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinity cover a diverse range of intersecting and interweaving discourses and performances. Orthodox masculinity, then, should not be viewed as completely separate

or distinct from inclusive masculinity. Rather, these categories of masculinity co-exist in an interknit relationship and they engage in dynamic dialogue. Orthodox and inclusive masculinities are therefore constructed from a constantly mobile field of discourse that is subject to continuous adjustments, transformations and innovations. In turn, as new versions of orthodox and inclusive masculinity emerge, they invariably arch back to older forms of masculinity in order to differentiate themselves from what has come before.

Foucault's theory of 'subjectification' (the social process through which individuals become constructed as subjects in society) provides another valuable tool for making sense of the fluidity and contingency in men's ongoing constructions of masculinities (Whitehead, 1999; Pringle, 2005). This lens helps shine a light on how orthodox and inclusive masculinities are constructed through male subjects' flexible, dynamic and unstable performances of gender. Moreover, the messy nature of these performances emerges through male subjects' continuous engagement with a messy field of gender discourse consisting of a plethora of changing, competing and conflicting discourses (Markula & Pringle, 2006). By embracing this Foucauldian understanding of discursive complexity and the subsequent enabling of shifting messy masculinities, a challenging question arises, 'how do I marry this approach with a theory of masculinity that tries to reduce this complexity down to two archetypes or categories of masculinity?' This is a difficult question that Anderson (2009) has already started to explore. He states,

> "I accept the limitation of identity categorization, sometimes pulling together various and intersecting forms of inclusive masculinities and various forms of orthodox masculinities into a singular archetype. This simplifies the complexities" (p.32).

Responding to the tension between complex gendered realities and more simplified forms of analysis and organisation, I agree with Anderson that the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinity should not be essentialized as rigid, self-contained and easily definable categories. Instead, to allow for greater complexity, it is necessary to conceive of these archetypes in a plural sense so that researchers are encouraged to explore how multiple forms of orthodox and inclusive masculinities exist and intermingle in a plethora of ways across time and space. Moreover, there is also a need to keep the definitions of 'orthodox' and 'inclusive' open for debate and to problematize these definitions when they do not fit with gender arrangements in different cultures with different gendered histories and traditions.

A further way in which inclusive masculinity researchers can embrace the complex realities of gender discourses and performances is to acknowledge that in some instance it may be difficult to decipher orthodox and inclusive masculinities. The analysis of local practice may reveal ambiguous performances of masculinity that simultaneously offer multiple possible messages and meanings. Anticipating this analytical difficulty, Anderson (2009) admits that there may be "limitations of categorizing men as belonging to the polarized categories of orthodox or inclusive archetypes" (p.32). Indeed, if as Foucault suggests, identities are fragmented, multi-layered, contingent and fluid, it will be of little surprise to find performances of masculine identities that cannot easily be divided into *either* orthodox *or* inclusive. What is more likely is that performances simultaneously consist of a mix of elements that could be defined as *both* orthodox *and* inclusive. Moreover, by attending to the rhetorical nature of gender performance, I can explore how men are required to jockey for position and develop a form of discursive artistry, tactically shifting back and forth between different orthodox and inclusive performances depending upon the demands of the local context (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Speer, 2005; Gard, 2006).

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined my theory of masculinities located within a post-modern context. I advocated a Foucauldian-inspired approach that attended to how masculine identities are hailed by and engage with a kaleidoscopic field of overlapping, intersecting and conflicting discourses of masculinity. I attended to how masculine identities are always enacted within diffuse relations of power that facilitate a series of productive and disciplinary forms of gender relations. By locating masculinities within this context, I was then faced with the challenge: how do I theorise gendered power relations when it gets this complicated? My response has been to deploy the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinities, exploring how these categories of masculinity form an interconnected and interweaving relationship in post-modern cultures.

Adopting this approach has provided an accessible way to account for the historical emergence of new forms of masculinity alongside the reproduction of older masculine discourses and practices. Hence, to make sense of more traditional forms of masculinity that are regulated by homophobia, anti-femininity and compulsory heterosexuality, I deploy the concept of orthodox masculinities, and to account for the apparent shift in society towards softer, more flexible and egalitarian forms of masculinity that are

policed less by homophobia and narrow definitions of masculinity, I deploy the concept of inclusive masculinities.

Whilst championing Anderson's (2009) inclusive masculinity theory, I assert that it could do more to locate inclusive masculinities within the wider social landscape in which they are emerging, namely consumer culture, neoliberal forms of governance and post-feminist dynamics between men and women. Taking these issues into account, inclusive masculinities can be located as both a form of liberation and a form of governmentality, encouraging men to make sense of their self in ways that facilitate their self-management in the context of neo-liberal-consumer-post-feminist societies.

I have also explored Anderson (2009) and McCormack's (2012) interest in drawing upon hegemony theories, suggesting that Demetriou's (2001) hegemonic bloc theory offers possible additions to inclusive masculinity theory. However, I assert that blending hegemony theory with the Foucauldian-inspired approach I advocate becomes theoretically counterproductive and analytically problematic. In this vein, my approach opens up an opportunity to explore a wider range of embodied masculinities and gender relations that extend beyond hegemonic assumptions of structural male domination and the subordination of women and gay men.

Finally, then, this PhD study provides a fascinating opportunity to explore the complex entanglements and the dynamic enactment of orthodox and inclusive masculinities. In the next chapter I will explore how the body plays a central mediating role in the ongoing performances of orthodox and inclusive masculinities as men engage in the process of learning to dance.

4

Theorising Embodied Masculinities when Learning to Dance

The current chapter will provide a vital addition to my theoretical framework, locating human bodies as a crucial site in the on-going performance of masculinities. By exploring the centrality of the body, I will be able construct a theoretical framework that combines a focus on the discursive construction of orthodox and inclusive masculinities, with an account of how male bodies take on a dynamic mediating role as the product and producer of gender discourses. To outline this approach I will split the chapter into three sections. In the first section I provide the essential ingredients for my theorisation of embodiment. These include:

> 1) Locating the body as a product and producer of culture
>
> 2) Advocating a multi-dimensional approach to studying the body
>
> 3) Positioning human bodies as thoroughly embedded in power relations, and
>
> 4) Attending to the cultural and historical location of bodies.

In the second section, I theorize how the process of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing facilitates changes in men's embodied performances of masculinity. Here I offer an original theoretical framework which was constructed through an iterative engagement with the analysis of the fieldwork data. The theoretical framework is based upon an assemblage of concepts deployed by the following theorists:

- Marcel Mauss - *body techniques*
- Pierre Bourdieu - *habitus*
- Kitaro Nishida - *historical body*
- Michel Foucault - *technologies*

In the final section I highlight how my theorisation of masculinity and embodiment connects with my methodological and analytical strategy. As such, I advocate a form of ethnographic discourse analysis that explores how masculinities can be analysed as embodied identities in transition. To do this, I draw theoretical support from mediated discourse analysis (Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Jones & Norris, 2005) and the work of Michel Foucault (1984a), and I structure the analysis of my ethnographic data by exploring *focal points*, *problematizations* and *chains of action*.

Finally, I detail how the analysis culminates in the writing of *process narratives*.

4.1 The essential ingredients in my theory of embodiment

4.1.1 Locating the body as a product and producer of culture

The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how human bodies are fundamental to the research agenda for studying masculinities. To do so, I will start by locating the body as a nexus or union point of culture (Atkinson & Wilson, 2002; Krueger, 2008). This means understanding that bodies act as a point of intersection wherein they are both a product and producer of culture. This argument has been supported by numerous scholars who focus on the two-way relationship between bodies and culture. For example, Bourdieu (1977) argues that the body is in the social world and the social world is in the body; Shilling (1993) argues that the body is a receptor and a generator of social meanings; Crossley (2004) states that the embodied agent is both subject and object of culture; Wacquant (2005) positions the body as a social product and a social spring or vector of knowledge; and Carless (2010) documents how the body both creates culture and is itself transformed by culture. In relation to the current study, these arguments help shine a light on how discourses of masculinity shape and make meaning out of male bodies, whilst at the same time male bodies produce new performances and alter established discourse by engaging in new forms of action.

In line with the arguments above, there has been a strong movement in the theorisation of embodiment to avoid dualisms and dichotomies (Gill et al., 2005; Sparkes & Smith, 2011). One consequence of this has been a shift towards what Yardley (1999) calls 'material-discursive' approaches. These approaches focus on material, biological, experiential and sensual aspects of flesh and blood bodies, alongside a discursive focus on the social symbols, discourses, images and stories people use to make sense of bodies (Burkitt, 1999; 2008). I will adopt this approach in the current study by locating male dancing bodies as a site of interaction between the material and the discursive. Moreover, I argue that it is prudent to attend to how the material and the discursive are inextricably linked, intimately connected, and maybe even impossible to distinguish in the process of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing (Downey, 2005).

4.1.2 The multi-dimensional body

In the search for more holistic studies of the body, Ian Burkitt (1999) has advocated a multi-dimensional approach for studying embodied relations and experiences. He argues that people should not be studied as isolated psychological units, compartmentalised beings or fragmented identities, but rather need to be examined as

whole selves. Burkitt's work represents a fundamental step forward in the theorisation of the body as he encourages the generation of interactive thinking and creative connections between different disciplines and theories. Embedding this approach within the current study, I seek to make connections between psychological, sociological, historical, physiological and biographical perspectives on the body.

Burkitt (1999) also calls for multi-level analyses of the body, encouraging researchers to draw upon multiple methods and multiple epistemologies of the body. Once again this is crucial for the current study as research shows that men and women enact a wide range of gendered performances that are constantly shifting and mediated by multiple forms of technology (Butler, 1999; Gill, 2011). In response, I will employ a multi-method ethnographic methodology with the intention of cultivating a multi-layered understanding of how masculinities are enabled through the body. Using different research methods will help me think about bodies in the variety of ways I experience them - visually, kinaesthetically, in sound, in abstract terms, in dialogue and in movement.

4.1.3 The body embedded in power relations

Another essential ingredient in my theorisation of embodiment is the exploration of how gendered human bodies are thoroughly embedded in power relations. The study of power relations is necessary for demonstrating that men and women are not granted unlimited choice and freedom on how they would like to use and develop their bodies. Rather, as gendered social beings, we exist in a network of relationships that socialise, organise and manage our bodies. In short, social relations exert power through enabling and constraining how we shape ourselves as gendered beings. Continuing on from chapter three, I suggest that Foucault's understanding of power relations is particularly fruitful for theorising embodiment. In one of his most cited quotes, Foucault (1977) comments that:

> "The body is…directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (p.25).

Here Foucault attends to how power relations have a multitude of influences on the body, providing the body with jobs, actions, purposes and functions to fulfil in society. Whilst he is not the sole theorist to argue the point, Foucault crucially positions the body as a key target and vehicle for the operation of power relations in contemporary society (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Cole, Giardina, & Andrews, 2004). From here,

bodies can be viewed as the site where power relations manifest in their most concrete form and they become a contested battleground over which personal and political struggles are fought (Andrews, 1993; Hall, 1997; Markula & Pringle, 2006).

4.1.4 The cultural and historical location of bodies

The final essential element, I propose, is to attend to how culture and history shape diverse forms of embodiment by enabling different ways of moving, using and inhabiting the body (Downey, 2005). For the current study, I can engage with the cultural and historical contextualization of the male body by acknowledging the powerful influence of contemporary discourses of neo-liberalism and consumerism. Neo-liberal discourses came to prominence in England during the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher was prime-minister. These discourses were based upon an economic philosophy that promoted free market values, privatisation, individual responsibly and self-management (Phoenix, 2004). One way in which the impact of neo-liberalism can be seen is through the increasing individualization of the body, wherein the body has become a "key vehicle for establishing a sense of individuality and for claiming a place in contemporary society" (Gill et al., 2005:57). As such, the male body has always been a central signifier of masculinity. However, historically this association was based upon the male body's ability to demonstrate the 'power' of masculinity and men, whereas now, masculinity and the male body are tied together more through the sense making of neo-liberal discourse (Featherstone, 1991; Gill, et al., 2005).

The rise of neo-liberal discourses has coincided with the rise of consumerism. Consumerism has impacted upon individuals' bodies by locating embodied lifestyle choices within the consumer market. For example, consumer culture has offered up forms of *commercial masculinity* that require men to engage in consumptive practices and aesthetic body work in order to enhance their appearance and present a more marketable self (Patterson & Elliot, 2002; Shugart, 2008). Taken together, the influences of neo-liberalism and consumer culture have folded into each other, providing a dominant way of engaging with one's body as a *biographical project of the self* that must be worked on and transformed over time (Featherstone, 1991; Shilling 1993). In this way, Walkerdine (2003) proposes that qualities once solely ascribed to femininity are now positioned as core elements of men's engagement with neo-liberal discourses. As a result, she posits, "both women and men are incited to become self-reflexive subjects, to be looked at and in that sense feminised" (p.242). Linking these

arguments with the discussion in the previous chapter, the study of orthodox and inclusive masculinities thus requires an understanding of how masculine identities are actively cultivated through the body, in multi-dimensional ways, over time and space, within a series of power relations, located within a specific historical and cultural context.

4.2 Theorising the embodied process of learning to dance

In this second section, I will now outline my theoretical approach for exploring how the process of learning to dance facilitates changes in men's embodied performances of masculinity. My approach incorporates the essential elements discussed above and brings together concepts deployed by Marcel Mauss (*body techniques*), Pierre Bourdieu (*habitus*), Kitaro Nishida (*historical body*) and Michel Foucault (*technologies*). I have been able to bring the work of these different scholars together into an original theoretical framework because their concepts complement one another and offer points of interconnection. As such, the concepts I deploy are based upon a shared set of theoretical interests and assumptions, namely, a focus on embodied practice, the interactive relationship between bodies and culture, and the transformation of bodies over time.

In summary, I propose that bodies are shaped through the process of learning a range of *body techniques* (Mauss, 1979). These techniques are culturally and historically variable and include such things as specific techniques for walking, swimming and dancing. The take up of a collection of body techniques leads to the creation of a person's *habitu*s (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990) or *historical body* (Nishida, 1937/1998). A person's habitus/historical body experiences on-going transitions and transformations as bodies grow and age, engage in new activities and learn new body techniques. The body techniques are embedded into the habitus/historical body through a person's engagement with *technologies* (Foucault, 1977, 1988). Technologies are the means of learning; the tools, resources, procedures and strategies used in pedagogical systems and training regimes. According to Foucault, technologies can be viewed as *technologies of domination* that discipline and control the body, or *technologies of the self* that enable creative transformations of the body through critical self-reflection and aesthetic self-stylization. How specific technologies are categorized depends on the researcher's analysis of their effects within specific contexts and power relations. I will now outline

this theoretical position in detail and demonstrate how it can be deployed to make sense of men's embodied experiences of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing.

4.2.1 Body Techniques

Marcel Mauss's (1979) study of body techniques explores the historical and cultural variability in the ways in which people use their body to perform every day actions such as walking, eating and swimming. The concept of body techniques can be applied to the current study to assert that there are no natural or universal ways of cultivating the male body, but rather a plethora of variations over time and space. The focus on body techniques also provides a multi-dimensional way of theoretically engaging with the body by pulling together the cultural, social, biological and psychological practices of human beings (Crossley, 2007).

Looking first at the *cultural* practice of body techniques, it is important to note that "the region and culture in which we were brought up becomes imprinted in our physical tastes and postural habits - a predilection for a certain…style of movement" (Yardley, 1999:40). To make sense of this phenomenon, Mauss argued that every technique of the body has its own form, style and technical aspects. For an experienced member of a culture the performance of these body techniques becomes effortless and taken for granted (Crossley, 2007). However, for new members of a culture (such as young children or beginners in a dance class) it is unclear how to perform these techniques, and so they must be learned (Crossley, 2007). The learning and transmission of body techniques can be viewed as a *social* process. Body techniques are passed on from person to person and from generation to generation through experiential social interaction with other bodies (Okely, 2007). This embodied interaction can range from the everyday conduct of informal rituals and traditions through to more formal instruction and apprenticeship (Burkitt, 2002; Downey, 2008).

Mauss was also attentive to how *biology* impacted upon how people perform specific body techniques. He noted that the anatomical structures of our bodies work to constrain and enable particular uses of the body, producing variations between individuals with slightly different anatomical bodies. Mauss also drew attention to the profound *psychological* impact of body techniques. He noted that in the process of acquiring body techniques they often become personalised and provide individuals with

a unique way to use and move their body. This can in turn become central to their social identity.

4.2.2 Habitus and Historical Bodies

In Mauss's (1979) study of body techniques he used the concept of *habitus* to "conceptualise the *collective* knowledge involved in 'body techniques'" (Crossley, 2007:86). In other words, Mauss saw men and women's everyday embodied actions and performances being shaped by a collection of various body techniques, referred to as a whole as their habitus. This concept was subsequently developed and popularized by Pierre Bourdieu and has now become one of the most widely used concepts in the study of embodiment. For Bourdieu (1990), habitus is the set of embodied characteristics, dispositions and schemes of perception that are developed through prolonged immersion within a culture and through the practice and repetition of particular actions. An individual's habitus is therefore a product of their upbringing, a product of the collection of body techniques they have sedimented within their body; it is shaped by the social relations of the culture(s) in which they are brought up and by the collective history of any groups to which they belong (Burkitt, 1999; Delamont & Stephens, 2008; Jennings, 2010). People who are members of the same groupings or culture will learn many of the same body techniques and thus will cultivate similar embodied dispositions and schemes of perceptions. However, "just as no two individual histories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical" (Bourideu, 1990:46, cited in Reay, 2004:434).

Habitus provides a valuable conceptual tool for the study of masculinities as it directs attention to how gender is deeply inscribed into the everyday functioning of men's bodies (McNay, 1999). Jackson (1990) eloquently details this phenomenon in his critical autobiographical reflections:

> "I carry my life history in my body, almost like the way the rings of a sawn off tree trunk reveal a process through time. My personal history of social practices and relationships is physically embodied in the customary ways I hold my body, relate to it, imagine its size and shape, and in its daily movements and interactions. My masculinity has been sedimented in my body over time" (p.48).

Building upon this understanding, I can attend to how beginners (like myself) entering capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes will come with a unique habitus that is already shaped by their biographical engagement in a series of cultural groups and gendered practices. In turn, the habitus beginners bring with them into class will impose

constraints and facilitate opportunities for them to subsequently use, cultivate and transform their bodies in new ways (Burkitt, 1999).

I have thus far argued that the concept of habitus is useful and relevant for the current study. At this point, it is important that I also attend to the criticisms aimed at Bourdieu's predominant focus on the constraints and demands that habitus imposes on people. As such, in Bourdieu's earlier work he argued that the embodied dispositions that constitute a person's habitus are relatively stable and durable, for instance in the way people are typically unaware of the existence of many of the dispositions they perform and re-produce on a daily basis (Crossley, 2004). As Scollon & Scollon (2004:13) note, "a lifetime of personal habits come to feel so natural that one's body carries out actions seemingly without being told". From this perspective, masculinities are understood as forms of habitual and routinized embodied performances, and men are viewed as typically being oblivious to the ways masculinity has inscribed itself upon their bodies (Butler, 1999; Edley, 2001).

Bourdieu's emphasis on the constraints and demands that habitus imposes on embodied action has been criticised for producing a fixed, un-reflexive and culturally determined theory of embodiment that predisposes individuals towards re-producing certain ways of behaving (Edwards, 2006; Jones, 2008). In response to these criticisms, mediated discourse analysts (Scollon & Scollon, 2005; Jones & Norris, 2005; Jones, 2008) have drawn upon the work of the Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida (1998/1937), deploying his concept of the *historical body* in an attempt to overcome the critique of habitus. The historical body is described as:

> "an expression of the instability and ineffability of the self and its relationship with the collective…It represents a movement…it never really exists because it is always changing…The historical body is an unstable, dissipative, structure in interaction with its environment…rather than an objective, regular, or durable set of dispositions (Jones, 2008:247)

This definition locates the historical body as a fluid, provisional and dynamic process that continually "transforms with the arising of each different activity situation" (Krueger, 2008:216). In turn, possibilities for creative self-transformation arise as new tools and new forms of experience are incorporated into the historical body, enhancing the body and opening up new possibilities for subsequent embodied action (Scollon & Scollon, 2005; Krueger, 2008).

MDA theorists present Nishida's concept of the historical body as an extension and improvement on Bourdieu's theorisation of habitus. Whilst I agree that the historical body offers an interesting conceptual addition to the embodiment debate, I am hesitant to agree that this concept is theoretically more sophisticated than the concept of habitus. As such, a number of contemporary researchers have re-examined Bourdieu's (1999a, 2005) later work and cite examples of a re-worked notion of habitus that is also open to modification and fluidity (Reay, 2004; Jennings, 2010). Crossley (2004:38), for example, suggests that the "habitus of both individuals and groups changes over time as an effect of events which are experienced, interpreted and innovatively responded to". We therefore see "a more dynamic and fluid notion of the habitus…constantly evolving as an effect of the interactions of the agent or group with both others and their physical environment". This conceptualisation of a more dynamic habitus has been taken up in Jennings' (2010) ethnographic study of Tai-Chi and Wing-Chun kung-fu, wherein he explores how practitioners' habitus emerge as a cultivated set of transformations that are open to pedagogic change through new experiences, education and training.

From engaging in the debate about the conceptual benefits of habitus and the historical body, I have shown that these two concepts can be deployed in the service of almost identical forms of understanding and analyses of embodiment. Indeed, both concepts allow me to make sense of men's bodies as:

> "a sediment of past interactions, innovations and learning experiences which shapes present interactions and future projections but which can be reshaped in those contexts through innovation, accident and learning" (Crossley, 2004:39-40)

If habitus and the historical body offer almost identical conceptual tools, you may ask what then is the point of this discussion, and what concept will I use? In the remainder of this thesis I will solely deploy the concept of the historical body. My reason for this choice is based upon my concern that I need to write a thesis that is intelligible and accessible to both academics and the participants in my study. I therefore favour the concept of the historical body as it is constructed through the use of everyday words.

4.2.3 Technology

Building upon the discussion above, I will now elaborate on the process through which body techniques are incorporated into the historical body via the means of individuals' engagement with Foucault's concept of *technology*. Michel Foucault used the concept of technology to refer to the diversity of tools, practices and procedures involved in

pedagogical systems and training regimes (note: this is not the usual notion of 'technology' that may refer to things such as mobile phones or televisions). Foucault argued that technologies pervade our everyday lives and are "so thoroughly ingrained in popular discourse that we cease to view them as anything but ordinary" (Hook, 2004:270). For example, he asserted that the body is moulded, modified and "broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habit or moral laws" (Foucault, 1984b:87).

For the current study, technology provides the conceptual lens through which I will explore how capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes are structured and taught. I will also explore how practitioners' active engagement with the technologies of different dance classes actively shapes different styles of male embodiment and "lead individuals to know and value different aspects of themselves" (Smith-Maguire, 2002:306). From this perspective, technologies play a vital role as masculinity-making devices; they are the local mediating mechanisms through which an embodied sense of masculinity is produced, experienced and transformed (Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2003). Relating this theoretical understanding back to the previous chapter, an important question arises: 'do dance class technologies shape men's bodies in ways that support the enactment of orthodox or inclusive masculinities, or an intricate mix of the two?' Put another way, this theoretical approach helps me explore how male dancers' engagement in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes provides the opportunity for them to cultivate new embodied masculine identities that may be shaped by a combination of forms of sexism, homophobia, compulsory sexuality, and/or neo-liberal discourses of individuality, gender and sexual equality, and consumption.

To assist with this form of analysis, I will now detail how Foucault identifies different types of technology; these include *technologies of domination* and *technologies of the self*. It is important to highlight that contemporary Foucauldian scholars advocate employing both concepts in tandem as they are unlikely to function separately (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Adopting this dual approach enables the exploration of the "productive aspects of technology alongside the disciplinary aspects" (Burkitt, 2002:236). In other words, I will be able to explore how dancers' engagement with dance class technologies both opens up and shuts down possibilities. I can then analyse the consequences of this for men's experience of their masculinity and the forms of interaction they cultivate with themselves, their bodies and other men and women.

Ultimately then, this conceptual apparatus will allow me to locate capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes as an amalgam of multiple technologies that operate as a complex and often contradictory medium for making masculinities.

4.2.4 Technologies of domination

Foucault's interest in technologies of domination emerged from his study of 'governmentality'. In this field of work, Foucault focused on the "government of human conduct in all contexts, by various authorities and agencies" (Hook, 2004:242). He argued that a diverse network of technologies and practices of government criss-cross society, shaping subjects in desirable ways (Hook, 2004). Within this broad agenda, Foucault used the concept of technologies of domination to bring together a focus on the macro-process of *bio-power*, alongside an analysis of the micro-processes of *discipline*, *self-surveillance* and the *micro-physics of power*. I will now attend to each of these issues in turn.

4.2.5 Bio-power

Bio-power focuses on the workings of governments in contemporary non-coercive societies, whose function, Foucault argued, was to improve the welfare of the population by increasing its health, wealth and longevity. Foucault posited that governments are politically invested in creating useful subjects by encouraging individuals to optimize their bodies in profitable and productive ways (Andrews, 1993; Hook, 2004). Under the guise of improving conditions for the population, governmental institutions have implemented an increased ordering of individual bodies and behaviour with a "multiplicity of diverse and multi-modal forms of social control" (Hook, 2004:250).

Numerous critiques of Foucault's work point to the negative connotations associated with his focus on the regulation, control and constraint imposed upon bodies (Shilling, 1993; McNay, 1999). Rail & Harvey (1995), however, suggest that bio-power can also be viewed in a positive manner, in the sense that it is exercised through motivating human beings rather than menacing them through corporal punishments or repression. Hook (2004) develops this argument further, suggesting that through their engagement with technologies of domination,

> "modern citizens…are subjectified, educated and solicited into a loose and flexible alliance between personal interpretations and ambitions and institutionally or socially valued ways of living" (p.268)

In summary, then, the study of bio-power necessitates an examination of how the objectives of governmental authorities, institutions and discourses connect with the personal ideals individuals have for the cultivation of their body and their self. This connection will be explored in the current study by analysing how capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance clubs draw upon socially valued discourses when advertising and marketing themselves as beneficial practices for developing the individual. Critical attention will also directed toward how dance class technologies seek to optimise particular capacities of the male body, yet suppress or ignore others.

4.2.6 The disciplined body

Focusing on discipline is a crucial element in the identification of technologies of domination. Foucault asserted that with the increasing amounts of rules, regulations and requirements imposed upon individuals in contemporary non-coercive societies, "the body must be disciplined into certain routines and habits through relations of power in order for it to be acceptable as a person or citizen" (Burkitt, 1999:123).

More specifically, Foucault (1977) identified the practices of hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examinations as three common methods for producing disciplined bodies. He stated that the purpose of these practices was to 1) control individuals' actions by making them visible and keeping them under observation, 2) standardise and classify individuals' actions by ranking them on a scale in comparison to others, and 3) increase the mastery of each subject over their own body. In turn, any person who deviated from the norm would become visible, classified as abnormal, penalised, and sought to be corrected.

In terms of the current study, engaging with this analytical approach allows me to ask numerous questions. These include: to what extent are bodies drilled and disciplined in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes? Are there a set of standardised tasks that beginners must copy? Do dancers and capoeiristas move within clearly defined boundaries, and how is space controlled? Is there a hierarchical structure within the group that regulates behaviour? On what grounds are male and female bodies separated, treated differently, assigned to specific roles, and upon what logic, knowledge or understanding is this based?

4.2.7 Self-surveillance

Interlinked with the focus on the disciplinary effects of technologies of domination, Foucault attended to how technologies can promote pervasive forms of self-surveillance. Foucault suggested that the freedom of the modern individual living in a neo-liberal society is "contingent upon knowing, monitoring, and improving oneself" (Smith-Maguire, 2002:298). As a result, the burden of responsibility for designing, transforming and optimising the body is firmly located on the shoulders of the individual (Featherstone, 1991; Phoenix, 2004). To illustrate the everyday techniques through which self-surveillance becomes pervasive, Foucault (1977) provided the example of the panoptic tower. This is a tower from which prison guards could spy on the behaviour of the inmates, whilst, at the same time, the tower was designed so that prisoners would think that they were being watched even when no guard was physically present in the tower. Foucault located the panoptic tower as an idealised example of how,

> "The omnipresent gaze of authority subsequently disciplines the subjects to survey their own behaviours in a manner that renders them docile: they become their own supervisors" (Markula & Pringle, 2006:43).

Foucault used this example as a starting point from which to explore how individuals embody the norms through which they are controlled and thus become their own disciplinarians, monitoring their own behaviour (Gutting, 2005; Markula & Pringle, 2006). As Foucault (1980:155) proclaims:

> "There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end up interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be minimal cost".

To apply Foucault's examination of self-surveillance to the current study, I can ask how, and to what extent, are men actively policing the boundaries of acceptable performances of masculinity by themselves and others? For instance, how are differently gendered and sexualised performances constructed and regulated by self and others? I can also explore how dancers' gazes at other male and female dancing bodies are enabled, constrained and justified. And I can enquire to what extent non-normative sizes, shapes and movements are harnessed and celebrated in class, and do practitioners struggle with what they believe to be transgressive bodies?

4.2.8 The micro-physics of power

In his various studies of the institutional implementation of technologies of domination, Foucault attended to how bio-power, self-surveillance and disciplinary practices facilitate the manipulation and transformation of individuals' bodies on an intimate scale. For Foucault, the body was thus bound up in a dense web of power relations that reached "into the very grain of individuals…their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday life" (Foucault, 1980:39, cited by Hook, 2004:211). Foucault referred to the intimate and pervasive impact of power relations on the body as the *micro-physics of power*.

Of course, Foucault's attention to the transformation of the body offers direct and explicit links and overlaps with Mauss's study of body techniques, Bourdieu's study of habitus, and Nishida's conceptualisation of the historical body. These researchers all direct attention to how cultural practices, discourses and power relations are subsumed into the intricate shaping and everyday performance of human bodies.

For the current study, Foucault's concept of technologies of domination offers an effective way of making sense of the complex disciplinary effects of incorporating body techniques into the historical body. In this vein, an analysis of capoeiristas' and Latin and ballroom dancers' engagement with technologies of domination would involve exploring the multiple ways in which dance class practices, performances and discourse internalise forms of discipline, domination and self-surveillance into their historical bodies. This might be identified through the production of orthodox styles of masculinity, wherein male dancers learn new ways of performing masculinities that are underpinned by a self-imposed distancing from practices considered gay, camp or feminine. Alternatively, or simultaneously, dancers' engagement with technologies of domination could also produce new performances of inclusive masculinities. This might involve dancers embracing forms of neo-liberal discipline that were previously the preserve of women but are now increasingly shared by both genders. For example, male dancers might be encouraged to incessantly monitor their weight, body shape, appearance, clothing and sex appeal in ways that have traditionally shaped the performance of femininity.

4.2.9 Technologies of the self

A pervasive criticism of Foucault's approach, whether justifiable or not, is that his focus on technologies of domination and disciplinary power results in overly negative representations of the lives of bodies (Fox, 1998; McNay 1991, 1999; Connell, 2002; Dudrick, 2005). In his later work, Foucault (1988) addressed this criticism by responding:

> "Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself in the technology of self " (p.19).

In turn, Foucault elaborated on what he meant by technology of the self, identifying practices that:

> "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (p.18).

From this definition, technologies of self can be viewed as an individual commitment to knowledgeable self-transformation of the body, and the active creation and exploration of new forms of identity and community (McNay, 1999; Markula, 2003, 2004; Gutting, 2005). The current study, with its focus on masculinity and embodiment in dance, therefore provides a site in which to explore whether these technologies of the self are mobilised and transformed, in relation to different masculinities. For instance, technologies of the self could be identified when practitioners engage in practices that test the limits of masculinity, stretch the boundaries of embodied identity, and provide a level of autonomy for dancers to make personal changes to the self.

When examining technologies of the self it is important to remember that they do not embody limitless forms of resistance or agency. As Foucault (1987:122) notes,

> "practices of the self …are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in this culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group".

From this perspective, technologies of the self will enable dancers to creatively construct their own performances of embodied masculinities, but, within rules and traditions not of their own choosing (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

4.2.10 Critical self-reflection

Two key elements in Foucault's discussions of technologies of the self are *critical self-reflection* and *aesthetic self-stylization*. When referring to critical self-reflection, Foucault (1984a) was interested in how people learn to problematize their identities by becoming more critically self-reflective. Foucault argued that by engaging in reflective practice there was potential for subjects to gain critical distance from their self and society, and to gain a greater awareness of the cultural constraints imposed upon them. For capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers this might involve interrogating what they perceive is 'natural' or 'normal' about their gendered historical body and actively pushing at its limits by engaging in new forms of embodied activity (Markula, 2004). Critical self-reflection could also manifest through practitioners' "awareness of the discursive construction of their training practices and performance standards" and an awareness of how their body is being enabled and constrained through these new practices and relationships (Markula, 2003:105). Evans, Riley & Shankar (2010) also suggest that critical self-reflection can involve altering technologies of domination by strategically re-using or re-interpreting dominant discourses and practices for one's own purposes.

4.2.11 Aesthetic self-stylization

Foucault (1987, 1988) attended to aesthetic self-stylization by focusing on how people engage in the development their bodies, their relationships and their selves as a creative activity. Foucault's interest in this area developed from his study of the historical Greek practice of thinking of one's self as a work of art. This practice involved viewing the self in an artistic and aesthetic light and was based upon the on-going everyday transformation of the self through embodied, visual, discursive and ethical practice.

I will explore the practice of aesthetic self-stylization in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes through identifying how the take up of new dance discourses, body techniques and relationships encourages male dancers to be attentive to the artistic, aesthetic and creative elements of performing masculinities. For example, aesthetic self-stylization could be demonstrated through male dancers' active pursuit of a whole range of body techniques, including those that push beyond the confines of the principles of orthodox masculinity. As an example, research by Garlick (2002) suggests that the development of close friendships and intimate physical relationships may work as a technology of the self. This is particularly relevant for capoeira and Latin and

ballroom dancing as many of the everyday activities performed in class require intimate physical interaction and emotional connection. Dance class technologies could therefore facilitate a supportive environment that allows men to develop more inclusive masculinities as they creatively experiment with their bodies, identities and interaction with others.

To conclude this section, I have outlined the theoretical framework I will use to explore the embodied process of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. This framework theorises that new body techniques will be incorporated into the historical bodies of capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers through their engagement with dance class technologies. Interweaving this focus on embodiment with the Foucaldian theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities, I now have a strong theoretical base upon which to develop answers to the three research questions that underpin this research:

1. *How are masculine identities enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes?*

2. *What role does language, visual practices, and embodied practices play in the enabling of masculine identities?*

3. *To what extent does Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity help explain how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes?*

My next step in the process of answering these questions is to outline an appropriate methodological and analytical strategy.

4.3 An ethnographic method for analysing the transitions in embodied masculinities

4.3.1 Mediated Discourse Analysis

Mediated discourse analysis (MDA) is an inter-disciplinarily and multi-modal approach that combines the methods of ethnography and discourse analysis (Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Jones & Norris, 2005). MDA has many points of connection and over-lap with the other theories, concepts and methods I employ in this thesis. I therefore employ MDA as a form of connective theory that helps brings together the shared interests from the other approaches I have deployed. As such, MDA works well to push my thesis forward by offering an appropriate methodological and analytical

strategy to research the ongoing embodied performance of orthodox and inclusive masculinities in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes.

MDA focuses on how social actors construct identities through engaging in *mediated actions*. The focus on mediated action draws attention to how identities are enacted through the use of *material* media and tools and *symbolic* systems and modes of communication. MDA attends to how the material and the symbolic are linked together in a symbiotic relationship wherein they inform, affect and transform one another (Scollon, 2001; Bhatia et al., 2008). From this perspective, the body can be viewed as a point of mediation in the material and symbolic construction of masculine identities. The focus on mediated actions can also be viewed as a useful way of conceptualising the situated instances when social actors actively engage with technology. Therefore, by identifying and analysing mediated actions, I can examine the specific sites where dancers are engaging with technologies that work to embed new body techniques into their historical body.

MDA promotes the use of ethnography as it enables researchers to gain multi-dimensional insights into the ongoing enactment of mediated actions. Ethnography provides an ideal methodology for the current study because ethnographic fieldwork is typically conducted over extended periods of time within the settings of the social actors under study. The temporal and situated aspects of ethnographic investigations therefore provide a means to produce data that is sensitive to the transformation of embodied identities over time and space. MDA also champions the flexible nature of ethnography as it gives the researcher space to move from site-to-site and introduce any form of data collection or analytical tool that is deemed useful for the topic under study (Jones & Norris, 2005).

At the outset of an ethnographic project, MDA suggests that researchers will only have a general idea of what actions, practices, performances and discourses might be relevant or significant within a fieldwork setting, and thus they will initially establish a wide site of engagement and explore numerous possible avenues of interest (Jones & Norris, 2005). A fundamental challenge with adopting this wide ranging ethnographic approach is that the researcher may end up being swamped by a mass of fieldwork data. The experienced researcher Howard Becker (2007a, 2007b) acknowledges that this is a common problem with ethnography. He notes that ethnographers inevitably come to realise that they cannot collect or describe the entire material and symbolic contents of

the field. Rather, they need to employ an appropriate analytical strategy that narrows down their analytic focus and reduces the amount of data they have to deal with.

The strategy I employ for winnowing data and prioritizing my analysis is theoretically informed by mediated discourse analysis and Michel Foucault's (1984a) account of problematization. Bringing these two approaches together, I have constructed an original analytical framework that attends to *focal points* of interest in the field. I chose specific focal points that allow me to engage with Foucault's method of *problematization*. This involves either focusing on problematic practices or actively problematizing practices that are taken for granted. I then set about identifying common *chains of action* that emerge as creative responses to the problematizations. At each step in the chain of action I focus on new challenges, opportunities, turning points and transitions that occur in the historical body and the performance of masculinity of the capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers. Finally, I write up the analyses in the form of *process narratives* that tell a series of coherent and logical stories about the common challenges young men face in the process of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. I will now detail each stage of this analytical process in turn.

4.3.2 Focal points

My experience of analysing data is characterised by Coffey's (1999) reflections on conducting ethnography. She notes that the process of analysis typically consists of two contrasting tendencies. On the one hand, analysis can be viewed as a "personal activity which is elusive and difficult to document", and on the other, it can be viewed as a form of "principled and formulaic analysis" (p.137). In the early stages of my fieldwork, I engaged in forms of analysis that primarily resembled the personal, intuitive and creative activity Coffey referred to. For example, in the methodology chapter which comes next, I discuss how I experienced ethnography as a process of discovery, involving dynamic and diverse fieldwork relations, new physical experiences, a myriad of opportunities for producing data, the ongoing inclusion of new theoretical insights, the opportunity to employ a diverse repertoire of methods, and a constantly changing fieldwork site. In the early stages of engaging in this complex, emergent and messy ethnographic process, I developed a creative and idiosyncratic analysis of ongoing fieldwork activities. To support this approach, Coffey, (1999:139) notes that,

> "Analysis…involves the researcher in meaningful engagement, which can be both imaginative and creative. Preliminary and prolonged analysis involves getting to know data – familiarity, playing, thinking and creating…The analytic

process is a point of emotional involvement and personal investment. [It is] difficult to disentangle the analysis of data from personal influences and incidences…Our analysis relates to how we feel about the data, the field, the people, and often our self…Analysis cannot simply be thought of as systematic and prescriptive, devoid of personal investment and emotional qualities"

By the time I reached the stage to write up my departmental transfer report, I had identified ten *focal points* I thought had potential to be analysed in further depth. These were:

Capoeira:	Latin and ballroom:
Body/self expression	Different dances require different masculine performances
Capoeira as a form of play	Changing lead and follow roles
Showmanship	Problematic dance moves
Photographing dramatic moves	Appreciating aesthetics/beauty of male dancer
Is capoeira gender neutral?	Strong reactions to men's Latin clothes and wearing make up

In discussion with my supervisors, I selected and ordered the focal points I thought were the most promising areas of investigation, and then one by one, I set about analysing them in greater depth. I started by identifying the specific data set in which the focal point was most clearly documented (e.g. in interviewee's talk, photographs or field-notes). I then tried to chart a pathway through the other data sets, exploring where the focal point made connections with other data, issues and focal points. My intention with searching for these points of connection was to create a constellation and a crystallisation of findings that would allow me to piece together a multi-layered understanding of what was going on at a specific focal point in the field (Moran-Ellis, et al., 2006; Ellingson, 2008).

To further develop my analysis of the focal points, I employed a more principled, formulaic and theoretically informed style of analysis. I found useful guidance in the

work of mediated discourse analysis. MDA outlines a method for analysing ethnographic data through the identification of what they refer to as a *nexus of practice*. According to Jones & Norris (2005), this involves a,

> "Focus on the intersection at a nexus of multiple social practices and the trajectories of multiple histories and storylines that reproduce social identities and social groups" (p.4)

Put another way, a nexus of practice is an interesting and significant focal point in the field where a series of practices, discourses, technologies, identities and historical bodies intersect and interplay. MDA views the interactions and power relationships occurring at the nexus of practice as a microcosm of wider activity and debates. In turn, MDA researchers start their analysis by first trying to understand what kinds of actions social actors are taking at the nexus of practice (Scollon, 2001). They continue their analysis by ascending to more macro issues. These may include, considering the wider historical and cultural context the activity occurs in, highlighting connections with other focal points, and exploring how discourse is being used to justify and/or make sense of local mediated action (Scollon, 2001; Jones, 2008). MDA also asks the crucial question: when undertaking the analysis, how does the researcher identify significant focal points in the field? (Jones & Norris, 2005). My initial response to this question was simply that I was focusing on specific instances of social action that seemed the most interesting and provocative. In reflection, I felt that I needed to provide a stronger theoretical justification for my choice of focal points, and thus I drew upon Foucault's method of problematization to direct my analysis.

4.3.3 Problematization

For Foucault, problematization refers to "practises…that raise an issue, pose a question, or introduce a hitherto unacknowledged element in the field of thought" (Deacon, 2000:137). By encouraging problematization, Foucault (1984a) believed,

> "academics can present knowledge that allows people to critically reflect on social practices, provides innovative insights, disrupts truths that are taken for granted, and challenges understandings about current social practices" (Markula & Pringle, 2006:201).

In this study I practically employ the method of problematization in two distinct ways: one, by focusing on problematic practices, and two, by actively problematizing taken for granted practices. I will now discuss these two approaches in turn.

In one sense, problematizations are instances where,

> "discursive objects and practices are made 'problematic' and therefore visible and knowable. They often form at the intersection of different discourses and expose knowledge/power relations" (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008:99)

From this perspective, the job of the researcher is to, one, identify what practices are being experienced and constructed as problematic within a specific social arena, two, identify the opposing sets of discourses and power relations that render a specific practice problematic and visible, and three, explore how subjects creatively negotiate these problematic practices over time. I employ this method of problematization in chapter eight when I examine what I found to be the most problematic practice for male practitioners in capoeira and Latin and ballroom class, namely, moving their *stiff hips*.

The second way in which I employ problematization in this study is through interrogating phenomena that are taken for granted and viewed as normal and self-evident. Here, Foucault encouraged the researcher to de-familiarize common sense and make conventional understandings uncomfortable and problematic (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). One way in which this can be achieved is by "exploiting the gaps or shortcomings of a given discourse…demonstrating its contradictions and discontinuities…[and] exposing these points of vulnerability" (Hook, 2001:536). Another way is to promote marginalised or 'subjugated' knowledge by pointing out things hidden from view or by telling surprising stories (Markula & Pringle, 2006). I engage in this form of problematization in chapters six and seven, wherein I identify what I perceive to be the most taken for granted masculine practices in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes, namely, performing awesome moves and dancing with women. In these chapters I actively problematize these practices by demonstrating how the process of acquiring the body techniques necessary to perform these practices is filled with embodied, visual and discursive challenges that impact upon the performance of masculinity.

4.3.4 Chains of action

The third element in my analytical strategy involves the identification of chains of action. This consists of piecing together snippets of data so that they form a chain or a sequence of linked action, interaction and performance. Mediated discourse analysts employ this analytical method in order to show how "activities, identities and discourses develop and evolve through time" (de Saint-Georges & Filliettaz, 2008:229). As de Saint-Georges (2005) states, mediated discourse analysts,

> "move beyond the level of single events to start addressing issues such as how social realities are constituted across time and spaces, and what kind of methodological and theoretical tools we need to conceptualize how events, people, ideas, objects and knowledge evolve over time" (p.155).

Adopting this process-sensitive analytical approach is invaluable as it directly links with my theorisation of masculinities as embodied identities that are continuously being transformed through time, space and practice.

To employ this analytical approach, MDA suggests that the different actions, practices, events and performances that make up each stage in the chain of action should be key points of transition in the historical body of social actors (Scollon, 2001). MDA also posits that the analyst needs to scour the data to find regularities in the linkages between sequences of actions in the field (Scollon, 2001; de Saint-Georges, 2005). Applying these guidelines to the current study, I have searched for common step-by-step changes, transformations and transitions in the historical bodies and masculine identities of male practitioners learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. At each step in the chain of action I have considered the influence of dance class technologies on the shaping of male bodies and the performance of orthodox or inclusive masculinities.

4.3.5 Telling stories using process narratives

After identifying and analysing a series of focal points, problematizations and chains of action, I structured the analysis chapters into a series of stories. I chose to use stories because story-telling is an accessible everyday technique that "individuals use…to give meaning to their experience, negotiate the meaning of events, make choices in the social sphere, and build up an identity" (Dimaggio, 2006:103, cited in Carless, 2010:335). In turn, in academia, stories are increasingly being recognised as providing engaging, logical and emotive ways of representing research findings (Bochner, 1997; Carless, 2010). For the current study, one of the benefits of using stories is that they help present research findings in a contextualised and holistic way by providing a structure to complex and interconnected issues (Carless & Sparkes, 2008; Douglas & Carless, 2009). Moreover, the process of creating a story requires the author to outline a series of steps and a chain of action, something that is already built into my analysis. Story-telling therefore provides an obvious way to present my research as it supports and links in with my theorisation of masculinities and embodiment as temporal processes of ongoing action. Becker (1998) helps to makes this link clear when he argues,

"Things just don't happen but rather occur in a series of steps which we social scientists are inclined to call "processes", but which could just as well be called "stories". A well-constructed story can satisfy us as an explanation of an event. The story tells how something happened – how this happened first and led, in a way that is reasonable to see, to that happening and then those things led to the next thing…and right on to the end" (p.31-32).

Building upon this argument, Becker (1998; 2007a) encourages researchers to tell ethnographic research stories that take the form of a *process narrative*. A process narrative involves arranging the common chains of action into a narrative that is logical and empirically correct. This means that the steps and the transitions described in the narrative are in the order that things really happened in the field (Becker, 2007a).

Following Wolcott's (2001) simple but effective advice, I start the process narratives at the beginning; the place where beginners (including myself) entered the field and started to get to grips with a new social arena and new embodied practices. More specifically, I start each analysis chapter by introducing the problematic practices or the taken for granted masculine practices that attracted men to class. I then construct a chronological narrative from these initial starting points, detailing how beginners engage with these practices, how they engage with new systems of knowledge, and how they experience embodied, visual and verbal transformations of their masculine identities as a result.

Constructing the series of process narratives has required weaving together the verbal, visual and embodied performances of multiple dancers. I have therefore needed to tack back and forth between different sets of data produced from different methods, and I have needed to shift from one perspective to another and from one person to another. At this point it is important to acknowledge that I have not been able to incorporate the experiences and performances of all the dancers I engaged with during my four years of fieldwork. Indeed, I have had to leave huge chunks of fieldwork activity and research findings out of the final written thesis. What I am left with is a series of stories that function as efficient representations and forms of generalisation (Becker, 2007b). The stories correlate shared experiences, summarise general patterns in the field and ultimately detail typical process narratives in the field. More specifically, the stories identify the likely pathways in the process of learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing, and they identify the common strategies men use to negotiate the performance of masculinities in class.

5

An Ethnographic Adventure

In the process of undertaking this research project, I have used an ethnographic methodology that dovetails with my theorization of embodied masculinities and enables me to address the research questions:

1. *How are masculine identities enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes?*

2. *What role does language, visual practices, and embodied practices play in the enabling of masculine identities?*

3. *To what extent does Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity help explain how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes?*

In the previous literature review chapters, I outlined how my theoretical framework consisted of an amalgamation of theories taken from the fields of social constructionism, post-structuralism and feminism. By bringing these theories together, I was able to theorize the complexities that shape the construction, performance and negotiation of masculine identities.

In chapter two, I drew upon Foucault's historical method of genealogy to identify a series of representations of popular male dancers in the mainstream media in England and examine the shifts in the representation of masculinities in dance over time. To make sense of these historical shifts, I outlined, in chapter three, my Foucauldian-inspired theorization of orthodox and inclusive masculinities. I outlined Anderson's (2009) proposal that previously dominant forms of orthodox masculinity, underpinned by homophobia, anti-femininity and compulsory heterosexuality, were now being challenged by the emergence of softer, more egalitarian and increasingly flexible forms of inclusive masculinity. I also situated this interplay between different forms of masculinity within a wider post-modern context, characterized by a media saturated, post-feminist, neo-liberal, consumer capitalist culture. In turn, I suggested that the apparent opening up of new forms of masculinity has provided greater opportunity for young, affluent, educated and technologically-savvy men to engage with a diverse field of discourses of masculinity. And as a result, men are now able to enact flexible,

dynamic and unstable performances of masculinity by jockeying for position, tactically shifting back and forth between different orthodox and inclusive performances depending upon the demands of the local context. Finally, in chapter five, I located the body as the central point of mediation in the performance of masculinity, and I argued that embodied masculinities are made through a long process of learning. Applying these arguments to the context of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes, I theorized that practitioners experience embodied transitions and transformations as they incorporate new body techniques into their historical body through their engagement with dance class technologies, and I will employ the empirical case studies to investigate this.

Bringing together the different strands in my theorization of masculine identities, it is clear to see that masculinities are a dynamic, multi-dimensional and complex object of study. Therefore, to engage with masculinities on a methodological level, I have needed to build a methodology that respects the multi-dimensional complexity and processual nature of male capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers' experiences and performances of masculinity. To do this, I have undertaken an ethnographic approach. In the final section of chapter four, I outlined how mediated discourse analysts advocate the use of ethnography for exploring the ongoing mediated enactment of identities within specific contexts and social groups. In the current chapter I build on this argument by providing an in-depth examination of how I developed an ethnographic methodology consisting of multiple theories, methods and forms of representation, with the ultimate goal of revealing a multi-faceted view of the enactment of masculine identities.

Probably the most fundamental aspect of ethnography is that it involves conducting fieldwork over a prolonged period of time within the setting of the participants or the social group under study (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2007). In this chapter I draw upon the work of performances studies (Conquergood, 1991, 2002; Schechner, 2006) and use their concept of co-performance to show how the extended period of time I spent interacting with group members was invaluable in helping me cultivate rapport and build collaborative and ethical relations. Moreover, I will demonstrate how spending extended time in the field allowed me to develop an in-depth, nuanced and processual understanding of local social practices from an insiders' perspective (Lather, 2001; Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2007).

In ethnographic research it is commonly accepted that the researcher will play an active part in the social world under study (Coffey, 1999; Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2007). To examine my active role in the current study, I will engage in a reflexive process of exploring how my historical body and my personal identity were embedded within the research process on many levels. For example, I will acknowledge relevant instances where the 'personal baggage' I brought with me into the field (such as my age, gender, sexuality, bodily history, bodily skills and academic interests) had an impact on the roles and relationships I was able to take up in the field. I will also be reflexive about the difficulties I experienced undertaking this project, and I will openly state how my personal skills and talents helped shape and benefit the research.

Another core assumption with ethnographic research is that there is no one correct method or procedure (Becker, 1998). At the outset of this project I prepared a tentative plan of action of how I wanted to initially develop the study. After spending time in the field, my ethnographic interests and activities started to deviate from this plan and spurt off in numerous different directions. To make sense of how and why my ethnographic practice ultimately took such an eclectic, unpredictable and messy shape, I draw support from Kincheloe's (2001; 2005) theory of Methodological Bricolage. This theory provides valuable insights into how qualitative research demands a flexible approach that "bends and moves with the pressures of enquiry" (Dadds & Hart, 2001:17). Using this theory, I detail how I engaged in ongoing reflective practice, employing feedback loops and tinkering with the research design (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). I will also give examples of where I needed to experiment, improvise and innovate with my research methods in order to respond to the unpredictable demands and exciting opportunities that continually arose throughout the project.

Ethnographic projects typically employ a diverse range of methods that allow researchers to bring together multi-media material, sources and data (Crang & Cook, 2007). Moreover, ethnographers who engage with feminist, social constructionist and post-structuralist theories develop multi-method approaches underpinned by the knowledge that the specific methods they use only provide partial accounts of the topic under study (Ellingson, 2009). Working from this perspective, I employed multiple methods because they allowed me to explore the performance of masculinities from different angles. I was also able to interweave and juxtapose these different ways of

viewing embodied masculinities, and this ultimately added depth, rigor and complexity to the research (Richardson, 2000; Ellingson, 2009).

At this point it is useful to briefly introduce the specific methods I employed in the project. To help order and make sense of my use of methods, I find it useful to identify their impact and influence in the research by referring to them as either *core* or *subsidiary* methods. The four *core* methods consisted of:

1. Embodied fieldwork in the form of attending classes and learning capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing

2. Writing field-notes and collecting multi-media artifacts

3. Semi-structured interviews with fifteen capoeirista (eleven men and four women) and fifteen Latin and ballroom dancers (eleven men and four women)

4. Photographing dancers in action in class, at competitions and at festivals, and then sharing these photos with dancers by publishing them on *Facebook*

I also employed a wide range of *subsidiary* methods. These included:

- Attending a wide range of other dance classes and related activities

- Video recording dance activities using a specialized video camcorder

- Downloading music files and dance videos from the internet

- Bookmarking and cataloguing a wide range of relevant websites and *YouTube* videos

- Producing a dance wall of collected images and artifacts

- Sound recording, video recording and photography with my mobile phone

- Extensive use of *Facebook* for publishing photographs, sharing resources and negotiating ongoing informed consent

5.1 Entering the field

Starting in October 2006, the fieldwork element of the ethnography lasted for approximately four years and primarily consisted of me attending two different capoeira classes and one Latin and ballroom dance class. In the initial weeks of the project I scouted the local area searching for dance classes that would be suitable sites of research. There were two main factors that underpinned my inclusion criteria. First, I was led by a personal desire to choose dances that I thought I would enjoy learning. This was crucial as these activities would become a major part of my social life and academic life for years to come. The second factor that underpinned the choice of dance

was the methodological imperative to undertake a comparative approach. I wished to compare two dances, one that was typically perceived as more feminine and attracted predominantly female students, and one that was perceived as more masculine and attracted predominantly male students. The rationale behind this research design was to facilitate an exploration of how contrasting gendered histories and discourses surrounding a dance would shape the different ways masculinities were experienced and performed through dance practices.

After trying ten different dance classes in the local area I choose to focus my comparative research on capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes. The Latin and ballroom dance class ratio was between 40-60 to 30-70 male-to-female. With often double the amount of women to men in class, I positioned this dance class as the more female dominated terrain. The capoeira classes had an equal ratio of 50-50 male-to-female. However, the male-dominated Brazilian history of capoeira and its explicit martial arts elements allowed me to locate it as a more masculine terrain. The details of the specific groups and classes I attended are as follows:

5.2 University of McNulty* Latin and Ballroom Dance Club

The Latin and ballroom dance club was a dedicated student club at the University of McNulty* in the South West of England (*note: the university and club names are pseudonyms). The club had four teachers - two white males and two white females - who would rotate responsibility for teaching. The dance classes were held in large halls on the university campus. The lessons were split into four levels of ability - beginner, novice, intermediate and advanced. These levels reflected the different ability streams used at the University DanceSport competitions which the club's dance team regularly attended. The club had a large intake of new dancers at the beginning of every academic year. By far the largest group was the beginners with approximately 100-130 new students starting every year. These numbers always declined over the course of the year and 30-45 dancers would typically move up into the novice class the following year. In turn, the intermediate and advanced classes typically had 20-30 dancers. The dancers' ages ranged from 18-35 with the majority being 18-25. From my observations in class, I approximate that the ethnic make up of the class was 60-70% white British and 30-40% a range of other nationalities and ethnic backgrounds.

5.3 The Capoeira Groups

I joined two capoeira groups. Both groups had Brazilian names. The names identified their links to capoeira lineages and groups in Brazil. In an attempt to make the groups anonymous I will call them McNulty* Capoeira Group and Bunk* Capoeira Group. I chose to attend the two capoeira groups (as opposed to one) for two reasons: first, when I initially attended the classes I liked them both and I liked the people in both groups. And second, by attending two capoeira groups I was able to research a larger number of capoeirista that was comparable in size to the number of dancers at the Latin and ballroom club. Notably, a year into the fieldwork I was required to negotiate with the leaders of the capoeira groups about being a member of two groups at the same time. Through informal conversations with experienced capoeirista I learned that capoeirista are typically required to commit to only one group. In response, I spoke to both instructors explaining that my attendance at the two groups was for research purposes and the instructors confirmed that they were happy for me to continue with this arrangement.

On an analytical level there were differences between the two groups. This is not surprising, as an experienced and well travelled capoeirista once told me, "different people, different capoeira". However, in the context of this study the differences were mostly small and subtle and only noticeable and meaningful to experienced capoeirista. Furthermore, the differences between the groups have not emerged in the findings of this study. As such, the most significant difference was simply the size of the groups. The McNulty group typically had between 5-15 people attend class and the Bunk group typically had 15-35 people attend.

The commonalities between these two capoeira groups were much more significant in producing the findings of the research project. As such, both groups were led by young Brazilian male instructors and both groups included a mix of students from local universities and people working locally in the cities. New people would join the groups on an irregular but continuous basis. The classes were held in locations such as dance centres, school gymnasiums, youth club halls and teaching rooms at local universities. The classes were usually taught in mixed ability groupings, and it was common to find complete beginners playing with experienced capoeirista. The age of participants typically ranged from 16-35, yet on occasion young children with capoeira experience and older capoeira *mestres* (masters) would attend. The ethnic make up of classes was

approximately 50% white British and 50% a range of other nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. The male-to-female ratio was typically 50-50.

Whilst I didn't actively enquire into the social class status of the participants, a large proportion of the capoeirista were either current university students or university graduates. Similarly, in the Latin and ballroom club, every member was either a current university student or a university graduate. I also did not actively enquire about the sexuality of capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers. When the topic came up naturally in conversation or was made obvious through participants' actions in class (e.g. bringing their partner to class) I would make a mental note of this, yet, at no point did I try to force the issue. I took this approach because exploring the impact of sexuality was not my main research question, but if male practitioners actively made the connection between their sexual identity and masculine identity then I would follow this up.

For both capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing, the period of fieldwork lasted for approximately four years. During this time, attending capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes became my primary leisure-time activity and I tried to attend class as often and regularly as I could. On average I would attend 4-6 hours of classes each week. However, my attendance in class varied considerably from once a month to four times a week depending upon other commitments in my life. Whilst I never kept a record of the precise number of hours I engaged in fieldwork in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes, I approximate that it was in the region of one thousand hours. In addition, I also conducted approximately five hundred hours of fieldwork undertaking a vast array of other dance classes and related physical and musical activities. These included:

> ballet, contemporary, yoga, breakin, samba drumming, samba de roda, samba-reggae, carnival samba, maracatu, machulele, afoxe, kizomba, LA salsa, Cuban salsa, rueda, bachata, bachata tango, flamenco, Argentine Tango, belly dancing, street dancing, meringue, Scottish country dancing, Mayfair quickstep, the Charleston, cheer-leading, baroque and bangra.

My participation in these extra activities emerged organically through the course of the research process as I participated in taster sessions, dance workshops and beginners classes in my local area. The benefit of adopting this broad multi-pronged approach was to develop an embodied awareness and theoretical understandings into how the performance of masculinities in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing can be located

within a much broader interlinking network of dance, music, history and physical culture that encircles the globe.

5.4 An Emerging Methodology

In the initial research proposal, my methodological plan was to undertake participant observation, write field-notes and conduct semi-structured interviews. From reading a number of ethnographies before starting this research project, I viewed this methodological proposal as a typical ethnographic approach. However, over the course of conducting the research, the methodology transformed considerably. As the list of methods above demonstrates, I introduced a diverse range of methods that were not planned at the outset of the project. In retrospect, trying to rationalize and make sense of this, I view my methodology as a highly stylized and individualized approach that emerged organically through the course of the fieldwork. Moreover, my experience of creating, adopting and using diverse methods emerged as a response to

1. the complexities of the changing contexts of my research,
2. my growing understanding of local cultures,
3. my dynamic relationships with dancers, and
4. a personal desire to tailor the research in a way that harnessed my skills and interests as a researcher.

Looking back on this project, I now recognize that I undertook a research apprenticeship. Over the last seven years, completing my PhD, I've been a researcher in training, I've been learning the craft of a social researcher (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Searle, 2004; Mauthner & Doucet, 2008). Prior to undertaking this PhD I had never conducted an ethnographic research project and I had only limited understanding of what was required to produce a PhD thesis. I had never attended a dance class, all I knew about Latin and ballroom dancing was what I had seen on Strictly Come Dancing, and I knew even less about capoeira. As a result of my lack of experience, I needed to undertake a multi-layered apprenticeship to become a dancer, an ethnographer and an academic. These tasks have been major enterprises requiring the identification and development of particular personal skills and forms of knowledge. They have been demanding activities requiring an enormous investment *of* my self and *in* my self.

A major part of my apprenticeship as an ethnographer involved taking on an active learning role. In practice this meant that I first needed to do a 'recce' of the dance

classes I wished to use as sites of research. In summary, I spent the first year in the field attending capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes, learning to dance and taking field notes when I returned home after class. My priority during the first year was to learn about the activities in the class, learn about the wider culture and histories of the dances, and start to develop rapport and collaborative relationships with the other members of the class. I reasoned that I first needed to achieve these essential elements before could I start to choose, design or implement other creative research methods and techniques.

5.5 Researching vibrant dance classes

When I first attended the capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes I quickly recognized they had the potential to be hugely productive sites for ethnographic research. The classes were socially, culturally and sensually stimulating. There was so much going on, so much multi-dimensional action and interaction. Moreover, I initially felt overwhelmed by the challenge of trying to make sense of the embodied, visual, emotional, historical, sensual, relational and discursive complexity of the dance class activities. To try to convey a flavour of these initial experiences in class, I will now present a 'beginners guide' to capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. This guide brings together personal reflections drawn from my field notes and photographs taken in the field, in order to depict a *typical* class from my perspective as a beginner.

5.7 Capoeira class

…the instructor turns on the stereo and capoeira music starts to play

….he calls aloud to start the class….the capoeira warm up might consist of jogging forwards and backwards, side stepping round the room, a game of tag, stuck in the mud, piggy backs, walking on all fours or wheel barrow racing….there's lots of laughter and excitement in the room, we're playing games, it's like being a kid again…..

…. next stretching ….this is a fundamental part of capoeira class…

....I start to feel which different parts of my body are particularly tight today….

…. I look around and see who has much better flexibility than me, and I see those whose flexibility is a lot worse….

…. we then start to *ginga* ….the basic step….we sway from side to side, the whole class moves in unison….I hear calls from the teacher to 'put style in your *ginga* - make your *ginga* big and beautiful'….He then calls out to touch the floor, right hand, left hand….we continue to *ginga*….now look back over your shoulder, right, left....continue

ginga….the teacher calls out 20 sit-ups, then 20 crunches....continue to *ginga*….now skip to one side, faint to the other….continue to *ginga*....the teacher calls out again 20 sit-ups, now change, 20 crunches, now change, 20 push-ups…. argh!! my abs are hurting….*ginga* again….after ten minutes of this I know I'm in a capoeira class, my body is hot, aching and sweating profusely….

….the instructor then demonstrates to the students a series of movements and maneuvers….an advanced student is called up to help demonstrate in the middle ….the series of moves are broken down then built up….they consist of a mix of kicks, dodges, feints, flips, trips, handstands, cartwheels, blocks, acrobatics and take-downs….

…..we pair off and try to put these movements into practice…..we shake hands and introduce ourselves…..we train with people of different abilities….I make mistakes…. more advanced capoeirista offer me advice on how to perform the moves more proficiently…..after a few minutes the teacher calls for everyone to change partners….

….at the end of the class we finish with a *roda*….a circle of people all facing inwards….within the capoeira circle I see the capoeira band grouped together….I hear them play music that is still new to my ears…..they're playing unusual instruments…..the instructor is striking and moving a bow shaped one-stringed instrument - the *berimbau*…..alongside the teacher I see a student playing a large hand drum, another is striking a bell, another is running a stick up and down a piece of wood and another is striking a rhythm on something akin to a tambourine….the teacher leads a song in Brazilian Portuguese….the group is responding in turn….I don't speak the language, I don't know the meaning of the songs, and I'm struggling to remember and pronounce the words I was taught only a minute ago….as I shyly and quietly sing I hear encouragements from the teacher to sing louder and clap my hands in time…..three beats…one-two-three, one-two-three

…as I look inwards into the circle I see two capoeirista crouch down below the teacher who is playing the *berimbau*….I see players perform different rituals before they start to play, some touch, shake hands, sing a song, make the sign of a cross, touch the floor, touch the bottom of the *berimbau*….they then cartwheel, headstand or step into the centre of the circle and start to play…

…. watching these people play capoeira I see intricate movements of bodies in dialogue….the more I watch the more I see an expanding repertoire of physical dialogue….sometimes the bodies weave together, sometimes around one another, invading and evading one another's space, they dodge and they move, attack and defend….I see some pairs interact as if playing a meticulously tactical game of chess….I see other players show off to the audience and perform humorous theatrics which make me laugh….I see advanced students play a ridiculously fast game where they throw kicks that fly only centimeters away from one another's face….I see players

perform spectacular acrobatic movements that make me go 'ooohhhh' and 'aaahhh'….I see nervous beginners who look scared and keep moving their heads towards instead of away from on-coming kicks, luckily the other player always halts or pulls away in time….some of the games look beautiful and in harmony, some look awkward and ugly, some look angry and offensive…..

….now it's my turn to go in, I'm next….I'm nervous but excited….who am I going to play?…what am I going to do?.....how am I going to play?

….at the end of the class everyone huddles together....we all place a hand into the centre of the circle …..the instructor calls out loudly '*AXÉ CAPOEIRA*' …. the group lift their hands in the air and respond in unison '*AXÉ*!'

….the class is finished….I drink water….I use my T-shirt to wipe the sweat from my brow….I feel my calves, hamstrings and gluts are sore, walking is going to be painful tomorrow…..I sit down on the floor to stretch out the muscles in my legs….while I'm stretching I watch some of the advanced students still practicing….at present, performing these moves is beyond my wildest dreams and I look on in awe….

I say goodbye to the people I know….I get on my bike and ride home buzzing all the way….

5.7 Latin and ballroom dance class

…. Cha cha cha music is playing and there are still a few minutes before the lesson starts….I put my black leather ballroom dancing shoes on….I borrow someone's shoe brush and scuff up the suede soles….there are lots of female beginners waiting by the side of the dance floor….which one shall I ask to dance?....I spot Liz, I danced with her

last week, she's nice….we go onto the dance floor and try to remember what steps we were taught last week….

….the class starts….the class is split into two…. 'boys' on one side of the room and 'girls' on the other, we face each other….the teachers are in the middle and they demonstrate the moves we are going to learn today, it looks cool….now its our turn….the teachers break down the first move step-by-step and repeat a few times….I'm concentrating intensely….my mind and body are doing overtime as I'm trying to focus on copying the foot movements, the body movement, I'm listening to the rhythm and the timing of each step….some steps are easy, some are hard, some instantly feel enjoyable, some feel awkward and unnatural….

…the teacher calls out: 'boys choose a partner'….both sides of the class walk towards the centre…I see a mixture of smiles and awkward eye contact ….there are a few girls I like dancing with and they've said they like dancing with me too, so I keep an eye out to see if they are free to dance with….most of the time I hang back a few seconds and let the eager ones choose their partners, it's ok I'm always guaranteed a partner, there are always more girls than boys ….some of the girls who don't have a partner sit out, some dance by themselves alongside the rest of us, and some dance with experienced female dancers who also know lead roles and have come to help out in the beginners class….

….its a funny thing to be 'in hold' with another person….I feel comfortable being in hold with some women and not others….some of the women seem completely at ease with being in close quarters with me…. they seem happy and friendly and in a good mood and it's a joy to dance with them….when our bodies come together their body feels nice and light and our bodies fit together snuggly….with other women our bodies and our personalities clearly don't match….I'm not always sure what the problem is, sometimes I feel they might be too short or too tall….some of the women clearly don't want to dance close with me and they stand too far away so that our bodies do not interlink as they should….other female beginners are not carrying their own weight and it feels like I'm a dragging a bus around with me….other women don't smile or look happy and I feel self-conscious and awkward dancing with them…

…the music starts to play and I listen intently to try to hear the rhythm….where's the 'one'?.... oh there it is….ONE, two, three, four, ONE, two, three, four….as the 'leader' its supposed to be my job to initiate the dance and count us in….luckily the teacher does it for us here….we then start to move….everyone in class is trying to perform the same moves….from the sidelines we look somewhat like an army on the march….most of us are moving in unison….a few have messed up already and are crashing into other people….we move around the dance floor and as usual I make a few mistakes….I keep saying sorry and so does my partner….it starts to get annoying, both of us saying sorry every time we make a mistake….after a few changes of partner I eventually start to get the steps.…when I get it right with a partner for the first time we share a big sense of achievement and elation….that was cool, well done us....let's try it again….

….after class there's 'free practice', extra time for people to practice what they've learnt in class....dancers also teach each other new moves and help those with less experience….in the free practice sessions I see the dancers who are addicted to dance, they practice hour after hour….its clear to see that the ones who stay behind after class and attend the two free practice evenings during the week are improving really quickly….most of them are practicing with their dance partner for the upcoming DanceSport competitions….

5.8 DanceSport Competitions

….On the morning of the competition there's a mayhem of rushed preparation....advanced dancers have already applied fake tan the day before but there's still more make-up to put on….there's also clothing to be neatly adorned, numbers to be pinned to the leader's back, gel to be lavishly applied to the hair, accessories to be carefully placed….everyone is trying to look pristine….I notice a few male dancers checking their ballroom posture in the mirrors….I spot a few advanced dancers in a quiet corner stretching….

….I walk backstage to check out the stalls selling tailored dance clothing, dance shoes of every design, and a myriad of accessories….I look at the price of women's ballroom dresses – 'Jesus! That's an extortionate amount of money'….when the tailors aren't busy I introduce myself and my research topic, I ask them questions about the men's clothing range and what styles are in fashion at the moment…

....as the competition gets underway I see dancers perform a range of rituals as they walk on and off the dance floor and prepare to dance…. as a beginner I'm less bothered about performing these rituals and more concerned about simply remembering the routine and staying in time with the rhythm of the music….God, I'm nervous….as the beginners walk onto the dance-floor the advanced dancers keep telling them –

'*smile*'….

….I enjoy watching the good dancers….my eyes are drawn to the bright colours and awesome designs of the dancers' clothing….the ballroom dancers look so elegant and the figure hugging Latin clothes show off the shapes of the dancers bodies and movements…

….the ballroom dances are performed in the morning, the Latin in the afternoon….the couples dancing in the beginner and novice categories dance two ballroom and two Latin, couples in the intermediate and advanced categories dance three….in each dance the dancers are trying to enact specific sets of relationships, emotions, and storylines…. .....these performances range from the smooth, elegant, graceful waltz….

……to the sexy, passionate, provocative rumba….

…I see a wide range of eye-catching, crowd pleasing, dramatic dance moves….dancers from our club purposely perform a dramatic move in front of our section of the audience ….the crowd goes wild shouting their names and number ….the photographers try to capture these moments avidly snapping away….
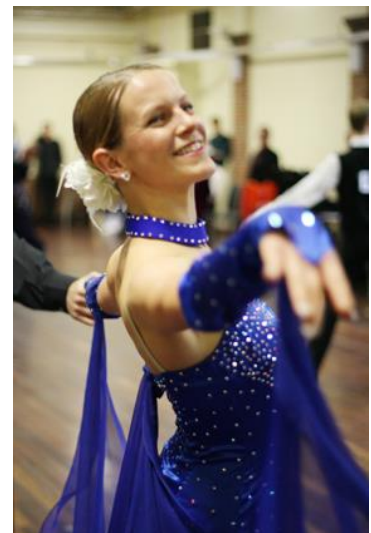
5.9 An emerging ontology of complexity

Through my initial engagements in the field I witnessed and engaged with a cacophony of multi-faceted movement, social interaction, lived experience and performance. In the section above I used personal reflections and photographs to shine a light on this

complexity and vibrancy. My intent was to provide a taste of the dynamic, emotionally provocative, physically intense and sensuously stimulating nature of these realities. In the process of reflecting on these initial fieldwork experiences a number of questions and challenges came to the fore:

- How can I possibly capture, make sense and represent the multiple dimensions of social life in dance classes?

- What aspects of this complex social life are relevant to my research focus on masculinity?

- My initial interest in exploring men's experiences of dance is clearly too broad. I need to tailor the research questions so they are more focused, more manageable and are a better fit with what is actually happening in the field.

- But what is actually happening in the field? I need to know more about the wider culture, history, language and rituals that are informing the actions in class. I also need to talk with other capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers about their experiences and perspectives. To do this I need better rapport and more collaborative relationships with dancers so that I feel comfortable to freely discuss issues that are relevant to the research.

- Will learning to dance and conducting interviews with dancers provide adequate data? Will these methods do justice to the vibrancy of the dance classes and men's multi-dimensional experiences and performances in dance? I want to incorporate another creative method that engages with more than words.

- What creative methods are other ethnographers currently using, and will they work in the dance classes? What creative methods are dancers and dance audiences already using? Could I draw upon them too?

- Visual methods such as photography and video are popular and might work in this research project. There are already dancers and spectators using these methods at special public events like competitions and festivals. Visual methods would offer a valuable way to engage with the visual vibrancy of dance and the visual performance of identities through body presentation and movement.

- However, these methods raise a number of challenges: one, I don't own a good camera or video recorder, two, I have limited technical knowledge about how to use these technologies, and three, I lack the theoretical knowledge and practical experience needed to confidently implement these visual research methods.

- Ok, I need to undertake research training with creative methods, and I need to read widely around ethnography and the use of creative qualitative research

methods.

5.10 Creative engagements with the methodological literature

To respond to the questions and challenges that emerged from my initial experiences in the field, I set about thoroughly engaging with relevant methodological literatures, undertaking specific methodological training and cultivating rapport and collaborative relationships with the dancers in class. Turning first to the methodological literature, my subsequent research pathway was supported and inspired by four sets of methodological literatures. These were:

1) **Performance Studies** (Conquergood, 1991, 2002; Madison & Hamera, 2006; Schechner, 2006; Denzin, 2001, 2003),

2) **Methodological Bricolage** (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011),

3) **Mediated Discourse Analysis** (Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Jones & Norris, 2005), and

4) Michel Foucault's focus on **problematization** (Foucault, 1984a; Deacon, 2000).

I incorporated these methodological theories into the research process at different stages, and each approach added something new to the methodological mix. To be included in the emerging methodological assemblage it was crucial each theory complimented the others and offered points of interconnection. These productive inter-relationships enabled me to construct an eclectic yet coherent interdisciplinary methodological assemblage that was held together by a shared set of theoretical and methodological assumptions.

The first point of connection was that the theories could all be located within the paradigms of social constructionism, post-structuralism and feminism. As such, the theories reject claims for the existence of a single independent social reality that can be accessed through objective research procedures. Moreover, they assert it is impossible for the researcher to step outside of the social world under study and produce an objective and flawless overview of an entire event (Becker, 2007b; Law, 2004). In response, they argue for an ontological position that acknowledges multiple, complex and shifting realities. This position resonated with my experiences in the field and informed my use of multiple research methods. For example, the photos and personal reflections deployed above provide a taste of the complex emotional, physical, sensual,

verbal and visual realities I experienced in the dance classes. The nature of multiple realities also came to the fore when speaking to dancers in class and during interviews. In these conversations dancers produced a range of competing perspectives on the realities of the dance classes, and each version that was offered related to the dancer's specific social positions and individual experiences.

The methodological theories deployed in the ethnography also assumed that the data, the accounts, the findings, the knowledge and the representations produced through the process of conducting research are all socially constructed. This means understanding research methods as a process of creating, composing, crafting, choreographing and enacting (Sparkes, 2002). As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:81) note, "one does not 'see' everyday life like a sociology or anthropology textbook, and one cannot read off analytic concepts directly from the phenomena one experiences in the field". Rather, the researcher must undertake creative work to translate their complex experiences in the field into findings, concepts and theories. These arguments are important as they note that the ethnographic researcher will inevitably take on an active role (Coffey, 1999). Acknowledging this active role involves

> "making visible...the person behind the research, so that other…researchers can
> see how individuals' commitments, purposes, personal theories, experience,
> strengths and uncertainties all play a part in the methodological choices that they
> may make" (Dadds & Hart, 2001:168).

Advocating this approach means that my presence in the field, my subjective interpretations and the historical body I bring with me into the research encounter should be viewed as a resource rather than a hindrance or a contaminant. In this light, my self becomes a research instrument and a place of discovery, my body acts as a mediator of knowledge, and the relationships I cultivate with other research participants provide a potent database for understanding and knowledge construction (Coffey, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pelias, 2005).

The four theories incorporated into the methodological assemblage also support inter-disciplinary and multi-method research. The researchers who originally outlined the main tenets of these different theories constructed them through developing, adapting, and synthesizing existing ideas and methods from different disciplines. In turn, these theorists recognize the potential for other researchers to do the same; to harness their work by making further adaptations, original synthesizes and new blends with other theories and methods. To make this idea a little clearer, I find it useful to draw upon a

metaphor deployed by Michel Foucault. This involves envisaging different methodological approaches as *toolboxe*s, and the specific methods and concepts they offer as *tools*. Therefore, through the process of conducting the current ethnography I have built up my own unique toolbox by rummaging through the toolboxes of other researchers and borrowing their tools in order to use them and combine them in ways that are necessary, relevant and practical for the specific research challenges I encounter.

The shared ontological and epistemological assumptions noted above have provided a solid grounding upon which to bring these different theories together into a methodological assemblage. However, when practically applying and discussing these theories I have tended to deploy them selectively at different stages in the research process and use them to perform specific functions. In this way,

- *Methodological Bricolage* informed my responsive, improvised and eclectic deployment of multiple methods in the field.
- *Performance studies* offered the concept of co-performance to help theorize my diverse research relationships. Performance studies also provided inspirational examples of vibrant and innovative ways I could represent and disseminate the research findings.
- *Mediated discourse analysis* and Foucault's work on *problematization* informed how I structured the formal analysis of ethnographic data (see chapter 4).

In the following sections I will discuss how the concepts of methodological Bricolage and co-performance have underpinned the fieldwork process. I will then go on to show how these have been applied in my use of the four core methods.

5.11 Methodological Bricolage

To make sense of my ethnographic fieldwork practice I will now draw upon the concept of *methodological Bricolage* (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe et al., 2011). Bricolage is a French term that describes "the process of improvising solutions to problems by putting together whatever materials that happen to be at hand" (Carlson, 2004:217). The person who undertakes this approach, the "bricoleur, describes a handyman or handywoman who makes use of the tools available to complete a task" (Kincheloe, 2001:680). This approach goes hand-in-hand with my use of ethnography.

Based upon my experiences in the field I view ethnography as a process of discovery, involving dynamic and diverse fieldwork relations, new physical experiences, a myriad of opportunities for producing data, the ongoing inclusion of new theoretical insights, and a constantly changing fieldwork site. At a conceptual level, methodological Bricolage offered an ideal way to engage with these challenges and opportunities. Bricolage advocates the active construction and deployment of research methods as they are needed in the unfolding context of research (Kincheloe, 2001; 2005). Embracing this approach, I have produced an eclectic, flexible and evolving ethnographic methodology that has moved in multiple directions in response to the pressures of the specific fieldwork contexts.

Adopting methodological Bricolage has acted as a form methodological liberation. The concept assumes there are no universally applicable methodological procedures or guidelines. This means there is no one right way to conduct ethnography (Becker, 1998) and thus no need to force myself into a methodological straightjacket or take on constraining normative blinkers (Sparkes, 2002; Law, 2004). Moreover, qualitative researchers have warned that standardised methods and pre-scribed rules and procedures set limits and restrict researchers' understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of social life (Law, 2004). Methodological Bricolage, then, provides an exciting alternative by proclaiming that bricoleurs "are emancipated from the tyranny of pre-specified, intractable research procedures" (Kincheloe, 2005:340). For Kincheloe (2005), this form of methodological emancipation is a logical step as the complexity of ethnographic modes of inquiry prevents the creation of a step-by-step guide for fieldwork procedures. He notes,

> "the Bricolage exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world… researchers' interaction with the objects of their inquiries…are always complicated, mercurial, unpredictable and of course, complex. Such conditions negate the practice of planning research strategies in advance" (2005, p.324-325).

Using the concept of methodological Bricolage has also been liberating as it helps locate my ethnographic approach within the wider movement in qualitative research towards more idiosyncratic, individualized and stylized approaches (Dadds & Hart, 2001; Bagely, 2009). My ethnographic fieldwork practice has been idiosyncratic in the sense that people related to me as an embodied actor in ways that would be different than if any other person conducted the research (Dadds & Hart, 2001). The research was also individualized in regards to the methodological skills (or lack of them) I brought

with me into the field. Being the first ethnographic research project I had undertaken, I had much to learn when first entering the field. To successfully engage in ethnographic Bricolage I needed to undertake an extensive 'on the job' methodological apprenticeship. As Kincheloe (2004a) notes,

> "For the bricoleur to use the means at hand, the methods that exist, demands that the researcher be aware of them. Such awareness demands that the bricoleur devote time for rigorous study of what approaches to research are out there and to how they might be applied in relation to other methods" (p.4).

When I started this project I became a researcher/bricoleur in training and have since engaged in a continuous process of expanding my methodological toolbox. Over the course of the PhD I have attended twenty multi-media training workshops. These have allowed me to engage with diverse media technologies that have included digital SLR cameras, the digital editing software 'Photoshop', a Victorian style 5x4 format camera, video recording equipment and editing software, sound recorders, book making, stop-motion animation, website design tools, social media tools, and theatrical methods for analyzing and communicating research findings. In a number of the workshops I engaged in group fieldwork exercises where I gained experience of the technical and social practicalities of using these technologies in specific applied contexts. Many of the workshops also included presentations from established qualitative researchers that use multi-media methods in their work. Taken together, the workshops provided me with essential hands-on experience using multiple media and provided an opportunity to reflect on other researchers' practice and incorporate their good work into my own research repertoire.

The next stage in my methodological apprenticeship was to consider how I could implement or experiment with these multi-media methods in my own research. Kincheloe (2005) conceptualizes this process of experimentation and implementation in the ongoing construction of the Bricolage as a form *tinkering*. He notes:

> "We tinker…with our research methods in field-based and interpretive contexts. This tinkering is a high-level cognitive process involving construction and reconstruction, contextual diagnosis, negotiation, and readjustment" (2005:325).

Tinkering, then, describes the process of crafting, negotiating and adapting the use of research methods in response to the dynamic contexts and relationships in research. By engaging in an ongoing process of tinkering with my research methods, I was able to construct a series of *feedback loops* (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). This involved developing and improving my use of research methods through engaging in cycles of

action and reflection. For example, I planned and implemented hands-on activities (such as pilot interviews and testing out the suitability of video recording dance activities), then reflected on and evaluated my experiences of these activities and used these reflections to inform and improve my future activities. This approach was pragmatic and advantageous because it focused on my local contextual practice as I constantly evaluated what was working and what needed further tinkering.

Alongside the implementation of planned research action and reflective tinkering, my research practice also included *unplanned* action or *improvisation*. According to Gray et al., (2010),

> "To improvise is to make it up as you go along, to make do with whatever happens to be available…When you improvise, you create in the moment, responding to the environment and your inner feelings…you open a path to new ideas, new practices, and new behaviours…Improvisation is a way of thinking with your body" (p.24).

Improvisation was a fundamental skill that I cultivated in my everyday activities as a dancer and ethnographer. An embodied example of fieldwork that shaped the improvisational nature of my research practice was playing in the capoeira *roda*. Playing in the *roda* demanded a heightened sense of awareness and anticipation as my opponents would send swift and surprising attacks flying towards my body and I needed to be ready to respond.

When training in class the instructor would teach us a range of escapes and dodges - *esquiva* - that we could employ during the game to stay out of harms way. Through repeated practice these moves were slowly ingrained and embedded into my body and I was able to instinctively perform these moves when an opponent threatened to kick me. The primary goal of these evasion techniques was of course to get out of the way safely. However, if time permitted, there was also room for artistry. Capoeirista could show off their creative skills and embodied imagination by escaping with minimal effort, with aesthetic flair, or by improvising in an unusual or dramatic way.

During challenging games of capoeira it was typical for an opponent to outwit me a number of times. Maybe their move would be too fast for me to react in time, maybe they would deceive me by feigning one way then attacking the other, maybe they would catch me out of position or off balance and threaten to give a slight push to send me toppling over. In the split seconds when I perceived these instances of danger I would

need to improvise and let my body instinctively move out the way. In some instances I would instinctively fall into one of the *esquiva* I had practiced, yet on other occasions I would improvise and inadvertently create new forms of escape. If the escape worked and the kick went flying past my body missing by a centimeter or two, on-looking capoeirista would respond with sounds appreciation. However, if I failed and ungracefully fell over onto my backside, or the opposing player needed to halt or pull out of their kick so not to hurt me, this meant they had got one up on me.

The purpose of describing these capoeira interactions is to shine a light on the process through which I've cultivated the embodied skills of 'improvised play' and 'creative playfulness' by participating in the *roda* (de Campos Rosario et al., 2010). I also want to suggest that this process is symbolic of my wider training in ethnographic fieldwork. In both activities, ethnography and capoeira, I came to rely heavily on my "situational creative judgment" (Dadds & Hart, 2001:169). This involved a willingness to undertake on the spot experiments, to take chances, to improvise, to be attentive and responsive to subtle body language of others, to 'go with the flow', and to make quick decisions in conditions of uncertainty. I will now offer a brief example to illustrate how improvisation and situational creative judgment fed into my activities as an ethnographer and my active creation of a methodological Bricolage.

Below is a small excerpt from an interview with a male novice Latin and ballroom dancer. The interview was conducted in the second year of fieldwork a few days before a university DanceSport competition. The conversation shows a chance opening that allowed me to experiment with a new research method.

Fred.	so you coming to watch on the weekend on Sunday?
Craig.	on Saturday?
F.	yeah on Saturday sorry
C.	yeah (.) its Bunk isn't it?
F.	yeah you coming on the coach like as a spectator?
C.	yeah I am (.) take some photos hopefully
F.	yeah do it (.) >you should take (.) can you take< videos?
C.	yeah I c::an yeah I can yeah (.) why?
F.	can I employ you [to take a video of me because=
C.	[oh ok = well um if you want that that's cool um I'll go over to the library and go and hire a video camera and bring it along
F.	yeah that'd be good cos you improve when you can see yourself dancing [really?] you can see quite a lot

…..

C.   well I'll grab a camera and I'll bring it across on [yeah] on on er::
        Saturday=

F.   =I'm sure they'd be other people who'd appreciate it as well (.) it'd be
        nice to have video footage just to show to other people just kind of for
        yourself (1) um

The edited excerpt above is taken from a longer section of talk where Fred discussed how dancing in front of the mirror and video recording his performances helps him reflect, analyze and improve his dancing. To aid in this process, we struck a deal wherein he would benefit from me video recording him dancing at the competition, and I would benefit from the opportunity to experiment with video as a method of data collection. At the competition I recorded Fred and his partner and other dance couples from our club whilst dancing on the dance floor. This was the first time I had used DV recording equipment and I needed to learn how to shoot, upload, edit, transfer and store the data. I made a DVD copy for Fred and his partner and brought my laptop in to class to show the other 15-20 dancers who I had footage of. A few of the dancers were squeamish and embarrassed by watching footage of them self dancing yet the majority enjoyed it and enquired whether it was possible to get a copy. Eager to build good collaborative research relations I confirmed that I would sort something out. I was hesitant however to go through the same protracted process of copying fifteen DVDs. I needed a more suitable strategy for feeding back the video data to the dancers. I talked the issue over with a member of the club committee who suggested I upload the video clips to the club's new *Facebook* webpage. This would enable the dancers to view the videos and would also help promote the club's activities. I followed this sound advice and uploaded the video clips and 'tagged' the dancers I was 'Facebook friends' with.

When I reflected on this experience experimenting with video, I felt overwhelmed by the quantity of data video produced and I didn't know how to manage, use, analyze or progress with this multi-modal format. Alongside the initial experimentation with video, I also experimented with digital photography. As I will discuss in greater depth in the subsequent visual methods section, I found digital photography a more suitable visual method and thus continued with photography and stopped using video. And so you may ask, what then was the purpose of discussing my brief use of video? The answer is that it illustrates how undertaking methodological Bricolage enabled me "to follow random or chance encounters, to embrace disruptions and unpredictability, to recognize inconsistencies and gaps, and to follow their lead" (Fenske, 2007:364). In this instance, my meandering pathway through different visual methods was influenced by an

opportune moment in an interview. Whilst this impetus to use video did not develop into a suitable method for the current study, it did lead to a crucial break-through for my visual methods practice: recognizing the potential for feeding back visual data to dancers by publishing it on *Facebook*. I will discuss this issue in more detail in the forthcoming visual methods section.

Before I bring the discussion about my use of methodological Bricolage to a close, I wish to raise one final issue. I want to suggest that, in comparison to more accepted forms of qualitative research, methodological Bricolage is a radical approach that places my research practice in a risky situation. My approach is risky in the sense that it is necessary I publicly acknowledge my deployment of 'messy' methods.

Throughout the entire course of this ethnographic research the development of my methodology has been a messy process. At the outset of the research I assumed this was a normal, necessary and inevitable part of conducting ethnography. Engaging in conversations with other qualitative researchers at conferences, workshops and during coffee breaks, I have heard similar tales from researchers struggling to grapple with the complex, messy and dynamic elements of qualitative research. I was somewhat surprised, then, when I began to engage with the qualitative research literature and struggled to find formal publications that discussed or theorized the use of messy methods. From my initial engagements with the literature I noted a silence surrounding chance encounters and uncertainties, the mistakes, failures, and luck in research, the vulnerabilities, weaknesses and tensions, the confusions and the endless changes that abounded in my own work. Instead, the academic publications I read consisted of cleaned up, tidy, ordered and pre-planned work that was thoroughly theorized and rarely deviated from established ethical codes of practice. This formal style of representing research evidently required the performance of a unified identity of a competent and infallible researcher (Crang & Cook, 2007; Finding, 2010). In comparison with my own practice, these representations highlighted a fundamental tension between how researchers were dealing with the process and products of research, between the messy back-stage realities and the polished front stage representations (Galindo, 2011).

It was not until after I completed the ethnographic fieldwork that I found the literature on methodological Bricolage. It was only then that I felt confident enough that I could theoretically justify and publically embrace my use of messy methods. Prior to finding

this literature, I found some initial building blocks in the field of performance studies (Conquergood, 1991) and the work of Law (2004) and Law & Urry (2004). These researchers openly acknowledged that "method is not just what is learned in textbooks and the lecture hall…method is always much more than its formal accounts suggest" (Law, 2004:144). They called for researchers to "widen the notion of 'method' to include not only what is present in the form of texts and their production, but also their hitherlands and hidden supports" (Law, 2004:144). Moreover, they suggested that in the "twenty-first century where social relations appear increasingly complex, elusive, ephemeral, and unpredictable…there is need for 'messy' methods" (Law & Urry, 2004:390). These arguments were crucial in encouraging me to build a methodology that could respond to the multiple connections and mobile trajectories that emerged in my exploration of the performance of embodied masculinities in dance classes. As such, the methodology needed to move from dance classes to public performances in nightclubs, prisons, city centers and schools, from photograph collections on *Facebook* to informal conversations and interviews, from videos on *YouTube* to publicity flyers and newspapers, and finally to dancing by my self in my home. So, to conclude this section, my use of messy methods and methodological Bricolage was a move "not to an anything goes model of research but to a genuinely rigorous, informed multi-perspectival way of exploring the lived world" (Kincheloe, 2004:9)

5.12 Co-performance: Cultivating Rapport, Collaboration and Ethical Fieldwork Relations

Cultivating rapport, collaboration and ethical fieldwork relations with capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers played a fundamental role in conducting this ethnography. My ethnographic fieldwork consisted of relational activity in the form of verbal dialogue, embodied conversations and visual interaction. These relational experiences were a key mechanism in the process of constructing knowledge and data about men who dance (Burkitt, 1999; Mauthner & Doucet, 2008). In the following section, I will draw upon the concept of *co-performance* to help make sense of my diverse fieldwork relationships. The concept of co-performance has been deployed by Performance Studies scholars who foreground performance as a defining feature of fieldwork (Conquergood, 1991; Schechner, 2006). This approach is useful for making sense of how I presented the research to different people in different contexts and how I negotiated my identity as a dancer, ethnographer and academic. More specifically, I will show how co-performance informs the process of establishing roles and identities in the

field, negotiating access with gatekeepers, negotiating ethical dilemmas, and cultivating rapport and collaborative relationships with dancers.

In the established ethnographic literature the most common engagement with co-performance comes in the form of the identity work and impression management the researcher undertakes in the field (Coffey, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnographers typically draw upon the dramaturgical theory of Erving Goffman (1959) to shine a light on how they consciously craft and present their self in the field. Heightened attention is directed toward display and how the researcher looks and acts in the field. These issues are typically highlighted in the initial challenge of establishing an acceptable situational identity and a plausible role in the field (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000; Emerson et al., 2001).

Reflecting on my own practice, I took on a multiple number of shifting identities and roles over the course of fieldwork. When I initially attended the capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes I tried to act like 'just another beginner'. This was an easy and obvious role to take on because I had no experience of the dances and I didn't stand out as someone noticeably different from the rest of the beginners. I also employed an explicit tactical element to not disclosing my desire to conduct research straight away. I did not want to be seen as a random stranger who turned up out of nowhere and suddenly wanted to do research with the group. By participating for a few weeks as 'just another beginner' I was able to cultivate an initial feel for the class dynamics and start to develop rapport with members of the class. This initial period also provided an opportunity to display my interest and enjoyment in the class activities and start to cultivate a more rounded identity that would go beyond simply being a researcher.

After approximately two months of attending class once a week, I formally approached the gatekeepers in order to discuss the possibility of undertaking research with the groups. The gate-keepers were the Brazilian male capoeira instructors and the Latin and ballroom student committee. When I spoke with the gate keepers about my proposed topic of research and my role as a PhD student-researcher I engaged in highly managed co-performances. These performances were influenced by the ethical principles advocated by the ethnographer Aull-Davies (1999). She suggests that the nature and likely consequences of the research need to be explained in a way that is comprehensible to those who will be involved. For me, this meant avoiding unnecessary

academic jargon and making my research intentions clear and transparent. In practice this was a challenging task because my ethnographic approach involved a process of discovery. The research questions, the theoretical influences, the ethnographic methods and the systems of analysis would all change over time. Therefore at the outset I did not know what all the pertinent aspects of the research would be. Responding to this challenge, I presented my initial research proposal as a broad 'exploration of men's experiences of dance'. I noted that my interest related to the traditional stereotype in England that dance is typically viewed as a feminine activity and I was interested in how men negotiated and challenged this. To explore this topic I would regularly attend class, learn to dance and interview dancers who attended class. The gate keepers were supportive of my proposal and gave their consent for me to conduct research with the groups.

In the literature on ethnography and qualitative methods more generally, there is a common argument that gaining informed consent is not a one-off process (Ramcharan & Cutcliffe, 2001; Cutcliffe & Ramcharan, 2002; Wiles et al., 2007). This was relevant to the current project as I needed to speak with the new Latin and ballroom committee members at the start of each academic year to confirm their awareness of my previous research activities and to ask for consent to continue. I also engaged in a continuous day-to-day process of 'coming out' to dancers throughout the entire fieldwork process. Whenever I met new people in class and when I attended competitions and festivals at others venues I would need to consider whether to raise the topic of my research. In the majority of cases I disclosed information about the research in a relaxed manner by letting it arise organically in the flow of everyday conversation. However, in some cases, for example when I approached photographers for advice, I would need to make the research one of the first things I mentioned. Whichever path I took to disclosure, it typically involved a cyclical process of building upon positive feedback. I would initially provide a succinct and accessible summary of the research and if respondents appeared interested and asked questions I would tell more.

5.12.1 Cultivating rapport and collaboration

For Conquergood (1991), co-performance involves engaging in fieldwork as a collaborative and dialogical process. This is a valuable principle that has guided and supported my fieldwork practice. In a general sense I have tried to conduct research *with* or *among* other dancers, as opposed to doing it *on* them or treating them like

research objects (Wolcott, 2001). My first step in trying to cultivate these types of relationships was to develop rapport with people attending class. In practice this involved making conscious decisions to push myself to be more sociable and actively talk to as many people as possible. In reflection, this form of tactical relational work helped me widen my research network by making positive connections with large numbers of people and becoming a more well-known member of the different groups.

For me, rapport involved cultivating a feeling of comfort around people, a feeling that we were supporting one another, sharing good times together and sharing things about our selves. Establishing rapport with dancers opened up opportunities for cultivating collaborative research relationships. The transition from rapport to collaboration required that I actively and repetitively disclose my research interests to the capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers. As more informed and knowing collaborators, these people were then able to engage in co-performances with me wherein we shared stories and reflected on our experiences in everyday class interactions. On occasion I would also explicitly voice how these discussions linked to my research and I would use these collaborative interactions to voice my emerging research ideas and ask dancers for feedback. Capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers also actively supported my research activities by sharing resources. Dancers frequently provide me with useful links to academic and non-academic books, articles, websites, documentaries, *YouTube* videos, DVDs and live performance events.

The discussion above provides a brief summary of positive examples, documenting how I engaged in collaborative research relationships. It is important to note, however, that not all of my research relationships were like this. In truth, I was only able to bring a portion of the capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers who attended class into strong collaborative relationships. As a whole, my research relationships could be plotted across a wide spectrum with the nature and extent of the collaboration varying depending upon the activity, audience and context (Madison, 2006). My cultivation of a broad spectrum of research relationships is a common feature of ethnographic work and is aptly characterized by Wacquant (2005:450) when he notes how ethnographic relationships "range from the instrumental to the affective, from the exploitive to the mutual, from fleeting to lasting, and from shallow to deep". From this perspective cultivating variable research relationships is inevitable, and viewed in a positive light,

they will open up the opportunity to produce a mass of varied and valuable data. As Madison (2006) poetically notes,

> "Some of your co-performers you will love, some you won't even like, some will forget all about you, some you will not remember, some you will never forget, but one thing I know for sure, in the dialogic performative of fieldwork, all that happens there will fill a caravan" (p.323).

5.12.2 Cultivating ethical relationships

The concept of co-performance can also be used to depict the research process as a series of ongoing dialogue and ethical performance events, wherein "different voices, world views, value systems and beliefs…have a conversation with one another" (Conquergood, 1985:9, cited in Denzin, 2003:x). Using this perspective to examine my own practice, I can identify that the research process involved ongoing ethical dialogue and co-performance with:

- my self and my own value system,
- my sense of responsibility to the research and the other dancers in class,
- my understanding of the local discourses and culture,
- the department ethics committee,
- the established academic literature and the BPS guidelines,
- the research participants, and
- the assumed audiences of my publications.

Because the research followed an emergent and unpredictable pathway, the majority of ethical issues I encountered only became apparent as the research unfolded and moved into new contexts (Madison, 2006). To respond to this challenge I continually reflected on the ethical implications of my on-going activities in the field. In some instances I had time to deliberate, seek advice from fellow dancers and academics, or refer to the academic literature and ethical codes of practice. However, on an almost daily basis I was also called on to make moment-by-moment in-situ ethical decisions. In these instances I embraced a contextual approach to ethics, improvising responses to unexpected ethical challenges (Burke et al., 2007).

From the sea of ethical dialogue and co-performance events I engaged with over the course of four years of fieldwork, I will now offer an example to illustrate the complexities of how I negotiated an ethical dilemma in practice. This example focuses on what I consider to be the most problematic ethical issue in this research: maintaining the anonymity of the people, places and groups I conducted research with. This issue first came to the fore in the second year of fieldwork when I was undertaking an interview with a male Latin and ballroom dancer named 'Fred'. We were in a coffee

shop having drinks and cake and I was talking him through the consent form (see appendix 2). The form included the standard ethical protocol for qualitative interviews where I asked the interviewee to make up a fake name - a *pseudonym*. I explained the reasons why I was asking him to do this:

- I would record the interview on tape, type it up into a word document, and email him a copy. He would have the ability to read, clarify and make changes where he saw fit.
- It was likely that I would quote some of his words directly, and along with quotes taken from other interviews I would use them to make an argument in my thesis about some aspect of men who dance.
- The standard research practice when doing interviewing is to make the interviewee anonymous. This involves changing the name of the interviewee so that they cannot be identified by external parties.
- The purpose of this is to protect the interviewee from any potential harm or embarrassment deriving from the publication of things that they say or do.

After this explanation Fred said there was no need to change his name, he wanted to use his own name in the research. At the time I was not aware of any ethnographic research wherein the researcher had allowed interviewees to use their own name. To my knowledge, anonymity was a methodological given that qualitative researchers must follow (Walford, 2005; Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011). Hence, my initial reaction was to repeat to Fred that using a pseudonym was common practice and would help protect him from any potential harm caused by having his words publicized. In response Fred once again insisted he wanted me to use his real name. He said he understood what I was saying but he was not concerned if other people read what he said. He also said he could think of no reason why I would do him harm or how his published words would do him harm. At the time I appreciated that Fred wanted to take public ownership of his own voice, thoughts and feelings, and I was aware my tactics to persuade him otherwise weren't working. My repeated encouragements for him to choose a pseudonym probably sounded patronizing and I noted that he was starting to look agitated and dismayed. I assumed this was because I wasn't ceding to his wishes, so after this second attempt I stopped. I didn't want to put him in a bad mood prior to starting the interview. We had previously established a good rapport and collaborative relationship in class and I wanted this to blossom in the interview. I therefore said it was ok for him to use his own name and we carried on with the interview.

Reflecting on this ethical co-performance event, I recognize that my anxiety to follow what I saw as a prescribed ethical norm caused me to temporarily loose sight of Fred as an independent actor who possessed the power to consider the ethical implications I

outlined and respond accordingly (Etherington, 2007). In turn, when I did accommodate his request to use his real name this prompted me to formulate an imaginary ethical debate in my mind. I started to picture an imaginary academic who would criticise my approach for not following the normative ethical procedure. Using the words of Tilley & Woodthorpe (2011), I felt like a researcher

> "walking the tightrope between doing what they feel is right by their own research and what is expected of them according to the professional ethical codes of the academic profession" (p.208-9).

To help negotiate this quandary I sought advice from an academic in my department who sat on the ethics committee. She suggested that I get 'double consent' from the interviewee by speaking to them again before the thesis was completed to double check they understood what they were wanting and allowing in terms of using their name in the research. I integrated this suggestion into my subsequent practice. I also went further by changing the way I explained the use of pseudonyms in my research. In subsequent interviews I began offering the interviewees the option to use either their real name or a pseudonym, and I explained the implications of both choices. From the thirty interviews I conducted approximately two thirds choose a pseudonym and one third chose to use their real name. When I deploy interviewee quotes in the thesis text and state the interviewee's name I do not reveal to the reader whether it is a pseudonym or a real name.

As the research progressed, issues surrounding the negotiation of anonymity also came to the fore through my use of visual methods and my dissemination of the research findings through multiple channels. For example:

- I have published nearly a thousand research photos on my *Facebook* account. The photos are in folders ordered by year and the name of the city where the photos were taken. The photos show the bodies and faces of literally hundreds of capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers. The photos also depict signs, posters, flyers and clothing that clearly detail the specific clubs and groups with whom I conducted the research. Dancers frequently 'tag' their names onto these photos so that the photos appear on their own profile. The photos uploaded to my profile are accessible to viewers who are my *Facebook* 'friend' or 'friend of a friend'.

- In this written thesis I have inserted a large number of photos that clearly depict dancers in action. I have also disseminated my research through public photography exhibitions using large scale full body shots of dancers in action. In both instances, faces or distinguishing features have not been hidden.

- My PhD research has been promoted through a university press release and commented upon in an article in the local newspaper. Both sources explicitly say

where the Latin and ballroom research was conducted. This was necessary because the articles not only promoted my research findings, but also Latin and ballroom dancing in general, the specific club where the research was undertaken and the teachers who teach the lessons. Both articles are easily accessible through an internet search and I have added links to them on my CV and 'LinkedIn' profile as evidence of the wider 'impact' of my research beyond academia.

The examples above show that for readers of my work, whether academic scholars or active participants in the UK network of capoeira or university Latin and ballroom DanceSport competitions, it would take little effort to search the internet to find out the specific sites of my research. In some instances, the reader of this thesis would only need to pay close attention to the detail of a photo or a video clip to identify where the research was conducted. And any person who wants to be my 'Facebook friend' will have access to my entire research photo repository and will be able to make links between dancers' names and their visual appearance. Taken together, these examples highlight how my ethnographic approach fundamentally challenges the standard ethical procedure for upholding a blanket policy of anonymity. To respond to this challenge I follow the lead of researchers such as Walford (2005) and Tilley & Woodthorpe (2011) who make a case for problematizing the prevailing orthodoxy surrounding anonymity.

In the course of the research process I have found it necessary to undertake a more flexible and reflexive approach to anonymity that respects participants' informed decision making, considers the practical and aesthetic challenges of anonymising multi-media data, and appreciates the growing requirement for researchers to disseminate their research widely through online and multi-media formats (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011; Wiles et al., 2008). From one perspective, this ethnographic approach shows how the category of anonymity has become less meaningful (Coffey, 1999). However, this does not mean that I have ignored anonymity as an ethical concern. Rather, by navigating an alternative ethical pathway I have needed to raise my level of responsibility. For me this has involved frequently engaging in the (re-) negotiation of informed consent. Thus, for many of pieces of non-anonymised data I have published elsewhere and/or used in this thesis, I have sought to negotiate informed consent with the dancers involved by openly and transparently explaining how I want to use the data. Being *Facebook* friends with most of the interviewees and the dancers pictured in the photos, I have been able to harness *Facebook* as an efficient method of contacting dancers to discuss these ethical dilemmas as they arise.

5.13 Embodied fieldwork in the form of learning to dance

5.13.1 A conceptual move from 'participant observation' to 'embodied fieldwork'

Participant observation is typically viewed as an essential ingredient of ethnography and an "obligatory rite-of-passage for all ethnographers" (Conquergood, 1991:180). According to Aull-Davies (1999), participant observation consists of "long term personal involvement within a local setting or community of participants" (p.71). The purpose for undertaking the extended period of personal involvement is to allow sufficient time for the researcher to become deeply immersed in the local culture and cultivate an insider perspective (Lather, 2001). In practice, this means developing an intimacy with the practical everyday ways people enact their lives, for example by sharing similar experiences, activities, sensations and feelings (Gersen & Horowitz, 2002; Sands, 2002). These initial arguments provide support for my approach to fieldwork.

Participant observation is also often conceptualized as a blend, a dialogue or an iterative movement between two interconnected strands of action (Gold, 1858; Junker, 1960; Aull-Davies, 1999; Paterson, Bottorff & Hewatt, 2003). These actions involve:

1. *Participation* - whereby the researcher personally engages in more 'involved' activities such as physically participating in group activities, and

2. *Observation* - whereby the researcher undertakes more 'detached' activities such as visually observing events from a distance, taking notes with pen and paper, and engaging in reflexive contemplation.

Described in this way, the concept of 'participant observation' does not offer a flexible enough way to make sense of the diverse activities I undertook and experienced in the field. In its place I want to use the concept of *embodied fieldwork* (Conquergood, 1991; Coffey, 1999; Okely, 2007). The purpose for using this concept is to focus on how my body was central to my everyday activities in the field and to allow for more flexible and eclectic experiences and understandings of being in the field to emerge.

5.13.2 The centrality of the researcher's body

One of the most obvious and indispensable tools I used to explore the performance of embodied masculinities in dance classes was my own body. My embodied fieldwork involved engaging my body in a form of apprenticeship, learning the bodily crafts of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. Explicit in this approach was the epistemological understanding that my active body acted as a medium and mechanism

for producing ideas, understandings, performances, feelings, emotions, desires and sensual stimulation. Performance studies theorists such as Dwight Conquergood (2002) conceptualize these experiences as forms of *embodied knowing*:

> "knowing that is grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection: 'knowing how' and 'knowing who'. This is a view from ground level, in the thick of things. This is knowledge that is anchored in practice" (p.146).

From this perspective, cultivating embodied knowledge required examining how my body played a role in the practical conduct of fieldwork and in the process of constructing knowledge (Browning, 1995; Risner 2000). For me, this meant engaging in a form of 'multi-sensory ethnography' (Sparkes, 2009a). Building on the work of Stoller (1989) and Merleau-Ponty (1948/2004), Sparkes (2009a) encourages ethnographers to re-discover and re-awaken the sensual aspects of their research encounters by paying attention to the relationships between their own (and others) sensuous bodies and the practices performed in the field. Attending to the senses involves recognizing how they are shaped by a mix of biological, social, cultural, psychological and biographical influences. This means that a person's senses are part of their historical body and can be adapted and transformed through the process of learning new body techniques. For example, in chapter six I explore how male and female beginners are initially apprehensive about engaging in intimate forms of touch when ballroom together dancing in closed-hold. By examining how dancers negotiate this sensual encounter, I provide insights how dance class technologies work to transform dancers' experiences of their senses and transform how gender relations and embodied masculinities are performed through tactile interaction.

5.13.3 Undertaking flexible and eclectic embodied fieldwork

My experience of undertaking embodied fieldwork involved actively and intensively engaging my body in an eclectic range of fieldwork activities. This approach to embodied fieldwork reflected my broader investment in methodological Bricolage. As such, I responded to the challenges and opportunities that arose while conducting fieldwork by planning, tinkering and improvising a flexible and eclectic bunch of messy embodied methods. By adopting this open approach, I immersed my body in the field in whatever ways I thought were available, useful or necessary for trying to comprehend something that was new to me (Conquergood, 1991; Sands, 2002). For example, in class I engaged my body in leading and following other bodies, moving to music, listening to music, clapping, feeling rhythms in my body, stretching, singing, learning new dance

vocabularies, learning to play musical instruments, watching live dance performances, and talking face-to-face with other people. Taken together, these embodied activities can be viewed as a form of immersive ethnography (Sands, 2002; Wacquant, 2004, 2005). Moreover, engaging in such a wide range of embodied fieldwork activities made me feel like I was living the research (Dadds & Hart, 2001).

It is important to note that the majority of embodied fieldwork activities I undertook had a relational and social element. Put another way, I engaged in a collective apprenticeship that involved embodied co-performance, intimate connections, and the "direct body to body transmission of cultural knowledge" (Samudra, 2008:667). Through undertaking diverse body to body fieldwork activities I was able to explore the emerging interconnections between my own and other dancers' embodied performances and experiences in the field. This allowed me to position my own embodied performances and experiences within wider collective patterns, transitions and acquisitions of embodied identities that emerged across the multiple bodies engaging in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes (Samudra, 2008).

5.13.4 Reflexive embodied fieldwork

Interlinking with the issues discussed above, *reflexivity* has played an important part in my embodied fieldwork practice. George Herbert Mead (1962) first alluded to reflexivity as a turning back of one's experience upon oneself. He argued this could be achieved through a circular or spiral process of reflection (cited in Steier, 1991:2). Issues surrounding the use of reflexivity have been widely embraced and developed by feminists and qualitative researchers who try to "consciously and actively identify the lenses through which they are seeing" (Kennedy, 2009:72). These researchers argue that reflexivity facilitates greater openness and transparency about their active role in the production of knowledge. They also suggest that reflexivity enables symbolic dialogue with the reader and generates greater confidence in their work (Oakley 1981; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Etherington, 2007; Docuet, 2008).

In relation to my own embodied fieldwork, it was important that I was reflexive about the historical body I brought with me into the research site. Before entering the field I had already accumulated a collection of bodily knowledge from my past experiences. I had bodily qualities, experiences and skills that would form part of my research toolbox and inform my interactions and interpretations in the field (Delamont, 2005; Okely,

2007). It is important that I now ask 'what parts of my historical body were worthy of note and relevant to the shaping of the embodied fieldwork?' For starters, my relatively young and athletically fit body enabled me to engage in dance activities which were frequently physically demanding. For if a more mature or less physically able researcher tried to undertake embodied fieldwork of this nature they would likely encounter serious obstacles. This is not to say that these researchers wouldn't gain fascinating experiences and insights, but it is likely that this would result in significantly different ethnographic relationships and findings.

My athletically fit body had been developed through a history of playing a wide range of sports from a very young age. I had played over a dozen sports to club level during my youth and university career. These experiences enabled me to develop a physically adaptable body which was quick to pick up new physical skills and techniques. Despite extensive experience in sport, I started this research with limited dance experience. Apart from causal and often drunken dancing at parties and nightclubs, I hadn't attended a single dance class before undertaking embodied fieldwork. And so, I began this PhD research with a body that had been physically trained through playing sport with other boys and men.

Another aspect of my historical body that I need to be reflexive about is my heterosexual identity. This part of my embodied identity undoubtedly influenced relationships in the field and influenced the production and interpretations of fieldwork data. I will now provide a particular example to draw out the complexity of how my heterosexual embodied identity seeped into the research. This example focuses on my concern during the early stages of the research that I didn't want to look camp when dancing. Re-reading my Latin and ballroom field-notes from the first two years of research I have spotted numerous entries where I have referred to the issue of myself or other male dancers looking camp when performing Latin dances. On some occasions I remarked on how looking camp, or looking excessively camp, was undesirable and something that I needed to manage or avoid. When discussing this issue with colleagues they have highlighted the danger of me voicing this opinion in interviews. As such, in three interviews with male Latin and ballroom dancers I used an unplanned prompt that took for granted that other male dancers would also want to act in opposition to looking camp. In this way my colleagues were concerned how this might constrain or over determine the kinds of responses I would receive from interviewees. Furthermore, they

suggested that my association of 'camp' with negative connotations might be conceived in itself as being prejudiced. From this perspective, it is only a small discursive step from positioning 'looking camp' as a negative to 'looking gay' as a negative. Reflecting upon these comments, I have tried to understand how and why I have developed this view. Currently, my feeling is that years of exposure to orthodox discourses of masculinity have had an impact upon on me and have become unknowingly ingrained into my historical body. This poses a challenging ethical dilemma. On the one hand, I have an underlying political goal to use my research to present stories, knowledge and understandings that may actively help challenge homophobic discourses and practices, and promote more inclusive masculinities. As argued in chapter three, research clearly demonstrates that homophobic discourses and practices limit the range of physical and self expression for all men, me included. Despite knowing this, during the early stages of fieldwork I still stubbornly held on to a desire not be seen as 'camp', a style of embodied performance synonymous with the enactment of gay masculinities.

In light of this tension, I will now tell a short story from my embodied fieldwork that brings this issue to life. This story is set in a Latin and ballroom dance class in the second year of my research. The lesson had finished and I stayed behind to practice the *cha cha cha* with my friend 'Stefanie'. We were having lots of fun dancing together but I complained that my brain was tired of having to constantly think about what moves to lead next. Stefanie offered to swap positions and take the lead and I excitedly took up the chance to follow. It is important to note that 'leading' is the role traditionally designated for male dancers and 'following' is traditionally designated for female dancers. With little previous experience following, I was enjoying the sensation of being moved and spun around by my friend. Unfortunately, this fun experience was called to a halt when I heard a male dancer - 'Jerry' - call to me from the sidelines in a loud and what I interpreted as a 'piss-taking' voice, "*Craig you look camp*". Looking back on this incident, dancing the cha cha cha in the traditionally female designated following role, I was no doubt a long way from performing an orthodox style of masculinity. Nevertheless, at that particular moment Jerry's comment really annoyed me. With emotions high I walked over to Jerry and did a spinning round house *armarda* kick that I had learned in capoeira class. As intended, my kick spun only inches past his nose. In essence I was telling him (without words) "do I look camp now?" Unsurprisingly, Jerry was aggravated by my threatening behavior and he responded by

putting his head down and charging at me like he was tackling one of his rugby team mates. After a short grapple we disentangled and went off in separate directions.

A week after this incident, as a somewhat delayed reaction, it occurred to me that my heterosexual identity had played a powerful role in the shaping of this experience in the field. In this dramatic example, a mere verbal challenge to my masculinity and/or heterosexuality had provoked me to such emotionally charged aggression. I realized shortly afterwards that I shouldn't have reacted the way I did. This is reflected in an extract taken from my field note diary taken a week after the incident:

> *"What an idiot, what was I doing?..... Fair enough I probably did look camp, by why did it piss me off so much being called camp? It's not really surprising that a rugby boy would say something like that..... but I shouldn't have reacted the way I did. Resorting to aggression is not good. Come on, you're supposed to pride yourself on your secure and flexible masculinity and openness to try different things......Also it's a bit shameful letting him catch me with the rugby tackle, a true capoeirista would have dodged that attack. Lol. No com'n seriously, why was being called camp such an issue? I need to consider this more"* (12/2007).

I will return to the issue of looking camp later in the thesis, but for now I just want to finish the story by noting that an almost exact copy of the incident occurred for a second time a month later. In the time between the first and second incident, as demonstrated though my field-notes, I had reflected on my original reaction. Thus when it occurred for the second time, I was still agitated, but I gave a Jerry a much calmer verbal response, stating "we're having a good time, what's your problem?", and then we continued dancing.

Re-telling this tale of embodied fieldwork, I now want to reflect on the numerous things I learned. First, I was able to identify my own concerns about looking overly camp and then explore how this was shared by a number of male Latin and ballroom dancers who wanted to appear straight. From a methodological perspective, telling this story also offers support for Coffey's (1999:158) argument that ethnographers'

> "emotional connectedness to fieldwork, analysis and writing is normal and appropriate. It should not be denied, nor stifled. It should be acknowledged, reflected upon and seen as a fundamental feature of well executed research".

As such, the story demonstrates that, even with altruistic motives, my (sometimes unacknowledged) biases, prejudices and insecurities seeped into all manner of research relationships. In addition, this story also highlights that reflexivity will take different shapes and forms for different people. For me it seems that the process tends to be slow, interactive and fragmented, with insights coming in fits and spurts. Taken together, it is

clear that by trying to be reflexive I have learnt more about my self, the nature of ethnography and the performance of masculinities in dance classes.

5.14 Writing field notes & collecting multi-media artifacts

Over the course of the research process my embodied fieldwork was interlinked with diverse forms of textualisation. My emerging methodological Bricolage included the cultivation of an ever growing repository of vibrant multi-media texts and artifacts. At the outset of the project I began by writing field notes in a research diary. As the research progressed, I produced a wider range of multi-media texts and collected a range of multi-media artifacts from the field. These included flyers, posters, photos, clothing, musical instruments, stretching and massage equipment, *YouTube* videos, DVDs, digital music and digital sound recordings. These texts and artifacts formed an evolving network of research data that connected and inter-linked with my embodied fieldwork in different ways. By re-engaging with this data on multiple occasions over the course of the research, I was able to cultivate a deeply embodied and reflexive relationship with the data that helped shape my analysis and writing of the thesis.

5.14.1 Writing field-notes

At the outset of the project, alongside my initial entrance into the dance classes, I started writing field notes. I had been advised by my supervisor that making field notes and keeping a research diary was an essential part of ethnographic research. Reading around the topic, this advice was supported by published ethnographers who assert that field notes should be at the heart of an ethnography because they act as "an expression of the ethnographer's deepening local knowledge, emerging sensitivities, concerns and theoretical insights" (Emerson et al., 2001:355). Ethnographers also highlight that field notes can be returned to over and over again to stimulate reflective thinking about the research and they offer a valuable written account of the developmental nature of the researchers' reactions to embodied fieldwork and the conduct of research more generally (Coffey, 1999; Emerson et al., 2001; Newbury, 2001; Wolfinger, 2002).

Throughout the PhD process I carried my research diary around with me in my backpack. It was there ready for whenever I wanted to jot something down. Despite being at hand, I rarely got the diary out in class. This was a deliberate tactical decision undertaken for two reasons. First, my primary focus in the field was on engaging in embodied fieldwork. I needed to build rapport and collaborative relationships with

dancers and I wanted learn how to dance. This required I engage myself physically and socially in the dance class activities as much as possible. As I've already described, my embodied experience of learning to dance required considerable energy and concentration and involved a multi-sensual engagement with other dancers, with the music and with my own body. With such an intense focus on the activities at hand it was only after the immediate experience had come and gone that I could try to make sense of it and write down my thoughts, feelings and understandings about what had happened (Okely, 1992; Markula & Denison, 2000). The second reason for not taking notes in class is that I did not want to stand out as someone noticeably different from the rest of the students. I did not want to be viewed on an everyday basis as a researcher or a note taker. I also did not want to take on a marginal position, so often advocated by more classical ethnographers, and sit in the corner of the room scrawling on a note pad (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Instead, I made a conscious effort to write field notes when I returned home from class.

In my research diary I would write whatever things struck me as interesting or significant from my experiences in class. What made an event 'interesting' or 'significant' is hard to pin down. Like ethnographers before me, my field note writing was messy, subjective and idiosyncratic (Coffey, 1999; Wolfinger, 2002). My use of field notes included writing down thoughts, feelings and emotions about my own and others activities. I would describe scene settings, people's clothes, actions and interactions. I would try to recollect short quotations or small snippets of conversation that stood out. These quotations were rarely word perfect, yet following the approach advocated by Steier (1991), I did not worry too much about capturing the exact wording. I focused instead on trying to capture the flavor or essence of what was said. My research diary also included more than just field notes. When I attended lectures, workshops, conferences and supervisory meetings, I would write all relevant information into my diary. So ultimately, my research diary acted as melting pot for a wide range of academic activities (Newbury, 2001).

On numerous occasions during the first two years of fieldwork I found writing field notes an arduous task. It was something I felt obliged to do and I often had to consciously force myself to write. In the third year of research I found support in the academic literature that liberated me from the feelings of guilt and annoyance that had started to manifest in my relationship with writing field-notes:

"There are no rules as to how research diaries or field notes should be compiled, the prime consideration is finding a format and style that fits with the needs of the research project, and which is found to be workable and useful by the researcher" (Newbury, 2001:4).

Newberry's (2001) argument provided a building block in my move toward cultivating my own creative idiosyncratic ethnographic practice. This position allowed me to justify following a less regimented and more relaxed approach to writing field notes that was free from obligation and guilt. Newberry's argument also provided impetus for me to collect multi-media artifacts that were available and helpful for shedding light on the diverse ways in which masculinities where being performed and represented in dance classes.

5.14.2 Collecting multimedia artifacts

By collecting a diverse range of dance-related multi-media artifacts, I opened up new possibilities for exploring how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. One way in which I engaged with multi-media artifacts was by collecting flyers, posters and dance memorabilia from the field and making them into a dance wall. This was an unplanned activity that evolved into a research method as the research progressed. When I first started attending dance classes I picked up a number of interesting flyers and stuck them to the wall in my flat. Week by week, event by event, I continued this process, adding the most relevant and aesthetically pleasing posters, flyers and memorabilia to the wall, and storing the rest in a separate folder. The photos below show the dance wall two and a half years into the research process.

My dance wall (May 2009)   Close-up photo of the dance wall

Through the process of constructing the dance wall I became thoroughly immersed in the material I had collected. I performed an informal day-by-day analysis whereby I casually looked again and again at the images and artifacts and over time new things popped up and caught my eye. I found constructing and analyzing the dance wall somewhat strange because it didn't feel like I was undertaking a formal academic analysis. Whilst I certainly did analyze the material critically, it felt more like a creative and enjoyable activity arranging the artifacts on the wall and looking at aesthetically pleasing images.

My analysis of the dance artifacts was akin to a loose form of multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006; Dicks et al., 2006). I paid attention to how different elements of the artifacts were composed, and I paid attention to how the representations of dancers' bodies were invested with a wider representational role in terms of gender, sexuality, age and ethnicity. In this way I tried to connect the composition of the artifacts to wider social issues and gender identities (Hall, 1997; Rose, 2009). More specifically, I asked questions such as:

- What modes and media repeatedly re-occur in artifacts, what are the common themes within dances and across dances? What are the inter-textual relations between groups of artifacts? How do the artifacts compare when placed next to one another?

- Is the primary function of this material to act as a form advertising, promotion and marketing? How do they attract people to attend class? What kinds of gaze do the visual images invite? Who is looking at whom and why?

- How are men and women presented? What roles are they given? What messages do the dancer's bodies convey? Is there a sexual meaning to the visual image? Are there subtle or obvious ideological effects? Are these effects manifested in dancers' posture, poses, expressions and clothing, or in the form and spatial relationships of the picture?

In the subsequent analysis chapters of this PhD thesis I will deploy and discuss specific images and artifacts from the dance wall. For now, it is useful to point out that I classified the dance wall artifacts as a genre of 'advertising dance media'. This genre was based upon a resounding focus on the human body performing dramatic moves. In nearly every visual text there was a striking image that aimed to catch the eye and entice people in by focusing on the drama of physical action and the idealization, glamorization and seduction of performing bodies (Rowe, 2004).

It is interesting to note that the dance wall also had a powerful performative effect. In the same way that sociologists have highlighted the significance of people displaying family photographs in their homes (Hurdley, 2007), the dance wall became a sign of my identity as a dancer and dance researcher. Thus whenever friends visited my flat for the first time they would always comment on one artifact or another on the dance wall. This would spark conversation and instigate an informal form of collaborative analysis. I was therefore privy to an array of alternative interpretations and ways of making sense of the dance artifacts. In the third year of the research, shortly after the photos posted above were taken, I moved to a new flat. I considered it too much effort to re-create a second dance wall so I decided to digitize the dance wall instead. I took photos of the texts and artifacts I had already collected and uploaded them to a public folder on my *Facebook* profile. As the research progressed, the folder acted as a data repository for the digital photographs of texts and artifacts I continued to collect.

https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.89417715284.171410.517940284&type=1&l=99351efa06
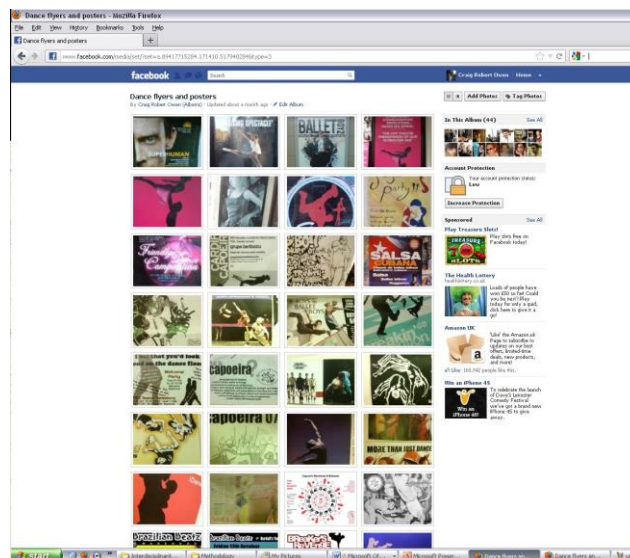
Ultimately, my collection and analysis of multi-media artifacts provided a valuable sketch of the wider discursive field in which capoeira and Latin and ballroom were being represented and marketed. From analyzing these artifacts it also became clear that the visual display of male and female bodies performing dramatic eye-catching moves played a central role in the representation of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. In order to build upon this form of visual analysis, I also used digital photography to explore the visual practices and performances of gender in class.

5.15 Digital Photography

During the first year of fieldwork I became aware of the crucial role the visual played in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance practices and in the performance of masculinities in class. In order to document these visual practices and performances, in the second year of fieldwork I took up digital photography as a research method. Digital photography provided a means to sharpen my visual focus and slow down the way I visually observed dance activities and gender performances (Hurdley, 2007; Prosser, 2008). Producing photographs also encouraged me to engage in a more active process of looking by considering where to point the camera, what to focus on, and how to frame, compose and produce the photographs (Harper, 2003). The development of my photographic practice also included a reflexive element whereby I critically examined how my presence as a photographer and the dissemination of my photographic material was perceived by members of the capoeira and Latin and ballroom groups.

5.15.1 My photographic practice

By initiating my photographic practice twelve months into the research process, I was able to build on my existing knowledge and experience of the local culture and build on the rapport and collaborative relationships I had already established with capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers. When I openly engaged in photography at dance events it changed the nature of my immediate interactions with other dancers and it added a new element to the performance of my identity as a dancer and researcher. Undertaking photography also provided another means for me to make my role as a researcher more obvious, explicit and transparent (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998; Pink, 2007).

In order to smoothly integrate my photographic activity into the local settings, I started taking photos at DanceSport competitions and capoeira festivals. These were public events where other photographers were already active. I initially used my Sony Ericson cyber-shot 3.2 mega pixel mobile phone camera. I always carried this camera around with me and throughout the project the camera was handy for taking photos of flyers, posters, billboards and other close-up things that were not moving. I quickly realized, however, that my camera phone was not up to task of producing quality images of dancers' rapid, dynamic and often unpredictable movements. At the DanceSport competitions and capoeira festivals I noted other photographers were using digital SLR (single lens reflex) cameras. From viewing their photos it was clear that these cameras produced vastly superior image quality and opened up potential for a range of

photographic effects not achievable with my camera phone. Recognizing the potential of the digital SLR, I sought advice on which camera to buy and how much to spend from my friend, 'Ed', who was an accomplished photographer.

5.15.2 My digital SLR camera and lenses

At the start of the second year of the project, I purchased a digital SLR camera for just under £400. The camera was a Canon EOS 1000D with an EFS 18-55mm IS f/3.5-5.6 lens. In short, this could be considered an entry-level digital SLR camera with a basic zoom lens.

A year after this initial purchase I decided to buy a second lens. My desire to buy the second lens was sparked by looking through a set of dance photographs Ed had posted on *Facebook*. He had taken the photos at a dance event we had both attended and I was interested to see what types of photos he was producing. Searching for ideas and inspiration for how I could improve my own photographic practice, I spotted the amazing photo pasted below.
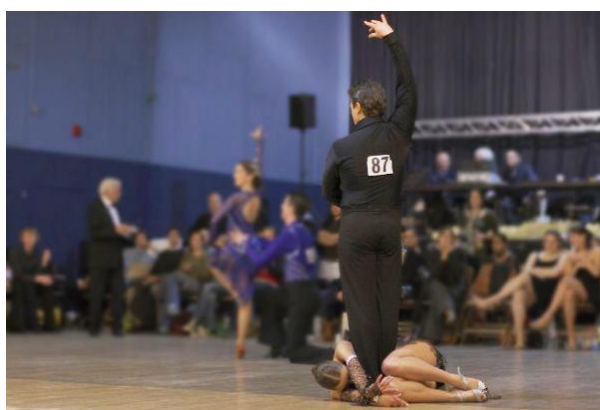
I was impressed by how Ed had produced an aesthetically pleasing and ethnographically revealing representation of the performance of gender relations in the Paso Doble. This image depicts a couple performing their final dramatic pose with the female dancer curled up at the male dancer's feet. From a photographic point of view, I was intrigued by how Ed had been able to focus on the dance couple and blur the background. Not

knowing how to do this, I sent Ed a *Facebook* message asking for guidance. He informed me that I needed to buy a lens with a low 'f' number and he recommend the Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 ii, which at £80 was the cheapest lens with this facility.

Following this advice I purchased a lens with an 'f' number of f/1.8. This meant that it had the ability to produce a shallow depth of field. 'Depth of field' refers to the size of the area in a photo that appears sharp and in focus, whilst the area in front and behind the depth of field appears blurry and out of focus. Hence, in the photo of the Paso Doble dancers, the shallow depth of field is effective for emphasizing, isolating and focusing on the two dancers, while blurring the crowd, the judges and other dancers in the background. From an analytic perspective, I recognized that this style of photography would be useful for highlighting a point of interest in the field. It would give me more control to direct the gaze of the viewer towards what I want them to focus on. In addition, this type of lens was said to be good for producing portraits and good for low light indoor photography without a flash. Both of these styles of photography would make important contributions to my subsequent photographic research practice. The only notable limitation of this lens was that it had no zoom feature. This meant that I had to physically move around a lot more, getting closer or further away from the subject depending on the type of photo I wished to take.

5.15.3 Learning to be a digital photographer

Learning to be a photographer added another valuable tool to my ever growing methodological toolbox. The learning process was characteristic of my general approach to methodological Bricolage, as I carved out a meandering, reflexive, interactive and improvised photographic pathway. At the outset I was completely new to digital SLR photography and my first practical experiences were at the research methods training workshops Live Sociology (2007), Using New Technologies in Qualitative Research (2007), Re-visiting Brick Lane (2008) and Multi-Modal

Qualitative Research (2008). At each of these events I worked with a small group of researchers in fieldwork settings. We were given social research tasks and were able to experiment with digital SLR cameras and other multi-media technologies. Reflecting on these initial experiences using digital SLR cameras, I found the technical side intimidating. There were so many buttons on the camera and a plethora of modes and options that I didn't understand. I also had to work out simple things like what to do with the camera strap and how to feel comfortable holding the camera. When I used the camera in the field I also experienced a sharp learning curve in terms of the social skills required to negotiate producing photographs with members of the public.

After I completed the training events I started undertaking photography in my own research fieldwork sites. From the outset I avidly sought advice and guidance from other dance photographers. At capoeira festivals and DanceSport competitions I approached photographers with expensive looking digital SLRs. I interpreted their cameras as a sign of their identity as serious and knowledgeable photographers. Over the course of the fieldwork, every photographer I approached and asked for advice was helpful and supportive in response. Part of my success in achieving unanimously positive responses might be down to the fact that I always started these conversations by offering the photographer a compliment about their camera or the photographs they'd produced. This initial stage-managed compliment was however followed more genuine interest and questions about our shared interest. In turn, the photographers seemed happy to share information about the basic principles of photography and local photographic practices, they would offer me their views about what made a 'good' dance photograph and they provided advice about how I could use different techniques to achieve different visual effects.

Another valuable strand to my emerging photographic methodology involved learning the skills of digital image manipulation. I attended a twenty hour training course where I learnt how to use the basic functions of *Photoshop* to edit and combine digital images. These skills were great for fostering my digital creativity and for improving the presentation of my research photographs. I learned simple skills such as how to crop images and make adjustments to the lighting, colour and saturation of an image. These skills were useful for 'tidying up' photographs in ways that would not be recognized by the viewer. I also developed *Photoshop* skills that enabled me to overcome, or at least play with, the static limitations of photographs. As such, one of the potential criticisms

of dance photography is that it offers a frozen representation of dynamic movement (Ewing, 1992; Reason, 2003). In an attempt to negotiate this limitation I learned how to synthesize a series of photos together so they depict a strip of consecutive actions (Vanvolsem, 2008). In some instances I simply placed photographs side-by-side to create a crude action sequence. In other cases I was able to combine the digital images smoothly so they created an optical illusion of a sequence of movement captured in a single photograph. The example below, depicting a dance couple performing the 'Chicken Walks' in the Jive, is a particularly noteworthy example. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, this image serves a useful ethnographic function, namely, to provide a visual insight into how gender and sexual relations are enacted on the dance floor through the performance of short gender stories or theatrical choreographies.

By the time I came to the final year of fieldwork, I had been photographing dance activities for over two and half years and I had dramatically improved my photographic practice. At this point, I had also successfully cultivated rapport and collaborative relationships with a large number of dancers. Building upon my success in these important areas, I had the confidence to move my photographic practice from the public arenas where photography was common, into the capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes where photography rarely took place. With consent from the gatekeepers I attended two capoeira and two Latin and ballroom classes with the sole objective of photographing the embodied fieldwork activities and co-performances I had previously been engaging in first-hand.

5.15.4 Where was I pointing the camera and what was I focusing on?

The digital nature of my photographic practice was advantageous for allowing me to cast my net widely, to try out different creative photographic experiments and take literally thousands of photos with no additional financial cost. In this way, my photographic practice resonated with the approach advocated by the experienced photographic researcher Howard Becker (2007a). He states:

> "I learned, as all photograph students do, that the most important thing a photographer can do is photograph and that making thousands of bad photographs is no disgrace as long as you make a few good ones too and can tell the good from the bad…All that counts is the final product and…no one will criticize you for false starts and wrong ideas if you find something good in the process" (p.104-5).

Now I have completed the research project I am able to provide a critical overview of the different types of photographs I produced and I can explain how they have been deployed in the final thesis. One of my first uses of photography was for *ethnographic note-taking*. This approach involved recording and compiling 'souvenirs' of artifacts, décor, physical structures and events that I thought were important (Bourdieu, 1999b; Pink, 2007). This was a highly efficient and effective method of note-taking as "photographs…let you see what things look like; they give you a lot of visual detail that resembles what you would see if you were there to see for yourself" (Becker, 2007b:104). I used these photographs in a similar manner to my written field-notes. I would look back over them time and time again, using them to trigger reflective thinking, to help me recall specific events and feelings, and to make connections with other pieces of data (Sands, 2002).

In a similar vein to the artifacts I collected and posted on my dance wall, my approach to photography in the field also paid significant attention to *focusing on the body*. More specially, I focused on producing full body shots of dancers in action. The purpose here was to try to capture the visceral, dramatic and aesthetic power of dancers' performances (Reason, 2003).

Through the course of my photographic research apprenticeship I gained valuable feedback and support from an experienced dancer and photographer called 'Grant'. During a Latin and ballroom competition at which we were both taking photos, Grant looked through the photos I had produced and commented that I was pre-dominantly taking full body shots. He suggested I also could expand my photographic repertoire by *focusing on dancers' faces* whilst they were dancing. He showed me examples he had produced where the dancers' facial expressions clearly displayed a sense of the emotions they were feeling and performing at the time. With wider reading around this issue, I found support for this approach in the academic literature. Indeed, a number of visual ethnographers argue that portraits and close-up photographs have the potential to connect with the viewer and invite them to engage on a personal and empathetic level

with the embodied, sensual, emotional and relational experiences of the people represented in the image (Harper, 2004; McDonagh, Goggin & Squier, 2005; Pink, 2007). Encouraged by these arguments, I took up Grant's advice and started zooming in and get physically closer to dancers in order to produce evocative shots of dancers' facial expressions.

Linking back to my research interest in the performance of masculinities, my intention with the close-up photos was to provide a fresh insight into dancers' performances of intimate visual and embodied gender relations through the means of facial expression. I have inserted below a series of close-up photographs that show capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers in various forms of embrace. From an analytic perspective, I suggest that these images provide valuable visual insights into the types of tactile and emotional relationships dancers cultivated and performed through their relational engagements in and around the dance floor and the capoeira roda.

After I became explicitly aware of the benefits of focusing on dancer's facial expressions, I also started to consider how gender relations were being played out, experienced and co-performed across *different parts of the body*. For example, I shifted

my photographic attention toward how dancers were using their arms, theirs fingers and their hand shapes to perform their gender identity and their identity as a dancer or capoeirista. This issue is exemplified in the two photographs below. The photo on the left shows a male and female ballroom couple walking off the dance floor linking arms in a traditional gentlemanly and lady-like upper-class manner. If we compare this to the photo on the right, where a male and female capoeirista are shaking hands before they enter roda, we can start to explore how the repeated performance and normalisation of these particular forms of touch may influence the development of male and female capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers' embodied ways of being.
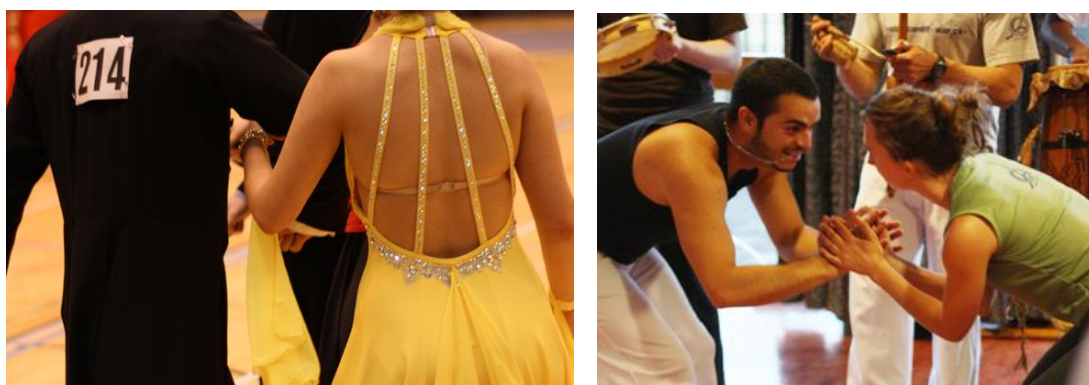
Another technique I frequently use when deploying photographs in this thesis is to accompany them with *telling a story*. When I use storytelling I actively provide information about how the photograph was produced and I place the image within a wider social and theoretical context in which it can become meaningful (Pink, 2007). Telling the photograph's 'back-story' is useful for negotiating one of the limitations of photography, namely that you cannot see outside of the view of the lens (Reason, 2003). Therefore, by combining an image with a story I can draw attention to the "complexity of the drama that unfolds on either side of the lens" (Back, 2007:102); I can shine a light on the co-performative relationship between the photographer and the subject of the photograph.

5.15.5 Co-performance: performing *with* the camera and performing *to* the camera

From reflecting on my experience of photographing dancers in action, I make sense of the in-situ production of photographs as a form of co-performance. This concept is useful for directing attention to the relational dynamic between the photographer who performs *with* the camera and the subject who performs *to* the camera. For example, on numerous occasions when I undertook photography in the field, I noted how my

presence as a photographer incited dramatic reactions and changes in dancers' behaviour. Dancers sometimes explicitly asked me to take photos of them performing dramatic poses and elaborate movements. On other occasions during DanceSport competitions, couples from our club would dance close to wherever I was located on the edge of the dance floor and perform a dramatic dance move directly in front of me and my camera. At other times, as I casually walked round the fieldwork sites, people would spot that I was holding a camera and would send cheeky smiles and seductive poses my way, almost tempting me into taking photos of them. Reflecting on these wonderful moments in the field, I like to think of them as mutual exchanges (Back, 2004; 2007). From this perspective, I was not 'taking' or 'stealing' the photographs, but rather working together with the dancers, collaborating in a brief moment to produce the photograph. Some of the subjects who were pictured performing to my camera were aware that I was undertaking photography as part of a research project. However, other dancers who were unknown to me probably presumed I was just another dancer-photographer taking photos. Either way, I make sense of these ethnographic interactions as staged co-performances. Making sense of them in this way, I appreciate that how dancers presented themselves in front of my camera provided fascinating insights into how they perceived themselves and how they wanted to be perceived by myself and others (Pink, 2007; Holm, 2008; Monahan & Fisher, 2010).
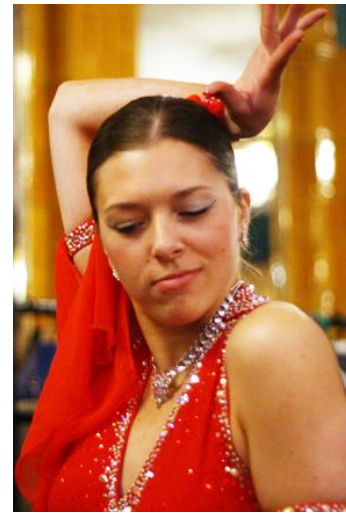
To gain a fuller understanding of how the photographs above were produced through photographic co-performance, I also need to examine how I performed *with* the camera. In the course of my photographic apprenticeship, I learnt early on that it was crucial for me to perform confidently with the camera (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). Performing confidently meant smoothly navigating the technicalities of the camera at crucial moments when I needed to grasp a fleeting opportunity to capture dancers in action. I also needed to act confidently when I approached subjects who I wished to photograph. In these moments I needed to draw on my skills for cultivating rapport and 'banter' with people so that I could quickly build trust and put the subjects at ease. Finally, I needed to have sufficient knowledge of the photographic values and practices that existed in specific fieldwork settings. By embodying this knowledge I was able to act confidently with the camera, improvising, intervening in activities, and generally having a license to be more creative with my photographic practice. At the same time as I undertook these creative activities, I also had to tacitly monitor whether my photographic performances were respecting the ethical, moral and visual values of the local culture.

5.15.6 Facebook publishing

The final strand of my photographic practice involved publishing my research photographs on *Facebook*. This was an innovative methodological move which resonated with my wider approach to methodological Bricolage. In this way, publishing photos on *Facebook* emerged as a creative response to the ongoing challenges and opportunities that arose throughout the research process.

During the period in which this research was conducted, *Facebook* transformed from a social networking site used solely on American university campuses into the largest

social networking site in the world. The emergence of *Facebook* as a global phenomenon has been a leading force among the younger generations towards openly sharing and presenting parts of their lives on-line (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008; Hogan, 2010). I first became aware of *Facebook* during the first year of my PhD. Along with millions of other people, I signed up to *Facebook* and started building my own personal profile page and connecting with friends. At the time of writing this thesis, I currently have three hundred and eighty four 'Facebook Friends' and approximately 80-90% of all my close friends throughout my entire lifetime have *Facebook* profiles. In addition, approximately 80-90% of the capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers who I built up rapport and collaborative research relations with are now my 'Facebook Friends'.

In the current project, I engaged with the emerging *Facebook* technologies by weaving my photographic practice into the everyday online sharing and networking activities of the young people I was conducting research with. My first use of *Facebook* as a research tool involved uploading snippets of video recorded data from a DanceSport competition to the Latin and ballroom dance club's *Facebook* page. In the following months, I continued to experiment with *Facebook* and started publishing all my dance research photographs to my own *Facebook* profile. In this instance I used *Facebook* as a digital repository, an online photography exhibition, and as a means for feeding back visual data to the people who were pictured in the research photographs. My approach was informed by explicit ethical considerations. As such, one of my primary reasons for choosing to publish on *Facebook* was to promote an openness and transparency about my photographic research practice and the visual data I produced. Moreover, by making the photographs publically available I hoped to alleviate any potential danger that my photographic research practice would be perceived as an act of surveillance by members of the dance classes (Mellor, 2007).

Publishing my research photographs on *Facebook* provided a means for promoting my research, broadening my network of relations with dancers and becoming more fully immersed in the clubs' community. In this vein, a common *Facebook* practice employed by myself, other dance photographers and wider *Facebook* users was to 'tag' the people who were in the photographs. I would initially 'tag' the people I was *Facebook* friends with and within a few hours I would have numerous requests from other dancers for me to authorize the tagging of other people I was not *Facebook* friends

with. Once I had responded to these requests I typically sent these people a short *Facebook* message to let them know about my research, and more often than not they would offer their support and we would become *Facebook* friends. It is important to note that if dancers did not like the photos they were tagged in there was a *Facebook* feature that allowed them to 'de-tag' themselves. This meant that the image would be removed from their profile but the original photograph would remain in my folder and not be deleted. To go a step further, I also wrote an ethical statement on each of the published dance photography folders in order to 'play safe' with ethics. At the time when I initially wrote these statements there was little or no published academic literature to guide how I should navigate the ethical challenges of using *Facebook* as a methodological tool. In response, I followed the lead of other dance photographers who were publishing photos of *Facebook*, and I adapted the wording of their ethical statements to my own needs:

> "Feel free to tag yourself. If you want an original copy of a photo let me know and I will email it to you. If you want me to delete a photo of you let me know".

Over the course of the research only one dancer asked me to delete photos of her. I obviously ceded to her wishes, but I did enquire why she wanted them deleted. She informed me that the three photos made her look fat.

Publishing my research photographs on *Facebook* enabled dancers to actively engage with the photos and it opened up new avenues for me to explore how masculinities were being discussed and performed through online comments and the wider use of the images. Over the course of the research, in the region of forty to fifty capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers used one of my photos for their own *Facebook* profile photo. The most common type of photograph chosen for *Facebook* profiles depicted the person performing a dramatic, athletic, exciting and/or aesthetically pleasing physical action or pose. Many of these photos also appeared in a cropped format. Evidently, dancers were using the *Facebook* cropping tool to edit the photographs I had produced in order to focus in closer on them self 'looking good'.

Publishing the research photos on *Facebook* also offered people the opportunity to comment on the images. This in turn facilitated written exchanges where capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers would debate the meaning or significance of specific images. The comments and exchanges typically centered on

1. the critique and praise of dancer's technique and performance skills,
2. jokes and banter about the depiction of funny facial expressions and unusual

body shapes,

3. recommendations for dancers to use a photo as their new *Facebook* profile image, and
4. praise for photographs that people liked.

Towards the end of the research project, after I finished participating in fieldwork and had started to write up my thesis, I found an excellent quote in an academic article written by the infamous TED speaker Ken Robinson (2003). I wanted to share this with the capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers who had helped me with the research. Drawing together photographs I had produced, artifacts I had collected, and employing my skills with Photoshop, I produced the image below. I uploaded the image to *Facebook* and tagged approximately fifty people. I wanted to tag more but could not exceed the limit imposed by *Facebook*.

"I believe children should be taught dance everyday of the week just as they are taught math everyday. The fact that many people would find this an odd idea is very significant. Presumably they assume that math is 'obviously' more important than dance. But is that so obvious, really? We all have bodies; we all make sense of the world kinaesthetically; we relate to people physically. Dance is the art form of kinaesthetic intelligence and of interpersonal space. Yet it's right at the bottom of priorities in schools, systematically passed over in favour of traditional 'academics'".

http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151029229045285&set=a.89417715284.171410.517940284&type=3&theater

Within a few hours of posting this image on *Facebook* I received an amazing response. The image incited a wonderful debate with capoeirista, Latin and ballroom dancers, breakers, school PE teachers and other dancers I didn't even know contributing to a discussion around this topic. The people who responded to this image contributed their own stories and interpretations and reflected upon their own experiences. The responses where academically insightful and emotionally evocative, and combined forms of

sociological, psychological, pedagogical, political, biographical, and experiential analysis.

Reflecting upon my ethical use of *Facebook* as a research tool, it is important to note that I did not publicly state that people's comments on the photographs I published would be treated as data. I wanted people to engage with the images how ever they wished and I did not want to give the impression that I was lurking or monitoring what they said. However, when I did find a revealing comment or a sequence of dialogue that I wanted to explicitly reproduce in my academic work, for example in a lecture, a conference presentation or in this thesis, I always sent the relevant people a message asking for their informed consent to cite their words. In these instances, I explicitly told the people how I would use the photograph and their comments, and what interpretation and arguments I would make. I also asked if they wanted to offer their own interpretation, to add to or challenge my own.

Finally, to negotiate the limit to which online 'strangers' could access and comment on the photographs, I restricted the privacy settings for the research photograph albums to 'Friends of Friends'. This meant that all my 'Facebook friends' could access the photographs, and all their 'Facebook friends' could also view them too. I opted for this privacy setting (as opposed to 'Friends' or 'Public') as it was helpful for connecting me with dancers who I had photographed at competitions and festivals but whom I did not know personally. As such, it was often impractical and unnecessary to ask permission to photograph capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers during their live public performances, yet via my *Facebook* network they were frequently able to find, view and tag the images of their self published online. On the rare occasions when I wanted to use a photograph of an unknown dancer who had not been tagged, I would send a *Facebook* message to members of the appropriate dance club to ask if anyone knew who they were. I would then contact them to ask for informed consent to use the image.

5.17 Ethnographic Interviews

I used interviews in this project to help explore the intricacies of individual's relationships with capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing and to provide a means for examining how wider changes in gender relations were being experienced, interpreted and shaped by the actions of strategic social actors (Gersen & Horowitz, 2002). My use of interviews was also based upon the theoretical argument that masculinities are

performed, in part, through talk (Butler, 1999; Speer, 2005). Therefore, the interview data acts as the primary source for answering my second research question that includes a focus on how masculinities enabled through talk.

5.17.1 The interview sample

In total I interviewed thirty people, fifteen capoeirista and fifteen Latin and ballroom dancers. The interviewees' gender and varying levels of experience are detailed in the table below. The purpose for interviewing a range of dancers with differing levels of experience was to obtain a variety of interpretations and perspectives (Aull-Davis, 1999). As such, my approach to interview sampling is based upon the assumption that there are no perfectly knowledgeable informants who can convey a full account of the topic under study (Crang & Cook, 2007). Rather, I see interviewees as providing partial and situated perspectives, and by interviewing multiple people I will be better placed to gain multiple and competing understands of how masculinities are enabled in dance classes (Becker, 2007b). My job as a researcher is then to make sense of the inter-relations between these different versions of reality.

	Capoeira - Male	Capoeira - Female	Latin & ballroom - Male	Latin & ballroom - Female
Instructor - teacher	2		1	
Advanced: < 3 years	3	1	3	1
Intermediate: 1- 3 years	3	2	4	2
Beginner: > 1 year	3	1	3	1

It is important to note that the research benefits from the inclusion of female capoeirista and female Latin and ballroom dancers in the interview sample. The purpose for their inclusion was to avoid the 'over gendering' of male dancers (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). In other words, by comparing male and female dancer's perspectives on masculinities I would be able to avoid assuming that issues that preoccupy both genders are only of interest to male dancers.

If this sample has a limitation it is that I was unable to interview male Latin and ballroom beginners who were struggling to learn to dance. My desire to interview this

group of dancers was to explore whether their struggle to learn new body techniques produced talk of embodied discomfort and gender trouble. Unfortunately, most of the male beginners who were clearly struggling stopped coming to class before I could build up sufficient rapport to ask them for an interview. On the two occasions when I did take the opportunity to ask I got turned down. One beginner responded, "Why do you want to interview me? I'm crap!" In my head I thought, 'well that's exactly why I want to interview to you', in practice I politely responded, "I'm interested in a broad range of dance experiences". With further encouragement and explanation of the research agenda he continued to be reluctant to be interviewed so I ceded to his wishes.

I did receive one written account, however, from a male beginner who described how he was struggling to learn the body techniques in the Latin and ballroom class and as a result was experiencing considerable emotional discomfort and gender trouble. Specifically, he commented on the pressure he felt as a male beginner struggling to learn the basic steps and then being expected to 'lead' a female dance partner. He also commented on his feelings of embarrassment and apprehension asking female dancers to dance because he was not secure how to perform the correct moves. Crucially, this account was sent to me via email by a dancer who did not give his name and who asked for me to keep his identity secret if I worked out who he was. He said that he wanted to share his experiences with me because he assumed more critical voices would be under-represented in my research. Interestingly, this anonymous male dancer was correct in assuming that more critical voices were under-represented in my research. As I've already noted, there was a high drop out rate in class and these are the people who I expect had more critical views of class activities, yet crucially they were also the people who were most difficult to interview. In spite of this limitation to my interview sample, the issues that the anonymous male dancer raised did emerge in other areas of my fieldwork and some of these issues are explored in greater depth later in the thesis.

5.17.2 The interview structure

I conducted the majority of the interviews in coffee shops and pubs, providing the interviewees with coffee and cake or a pint of beer as a gesture of thanks. I also conducted one interview in a public park, one at the interviewee's home and one at my home. The interviews lasted from between 40 minutes to 110 minutes, with the majority lasting approximately one hour. The interview questions where structured into a loose narrative and semi-structured format. The narrative format involved asking a series

questions that explored the embodied history of the interviewee and what brought them to take up capoeira or Latin and ballroom dancing. Next I asked a series of questions about their current participation in dance activities (what do they like, dislike and what does dancing feel like). I then asked a series of questions that specifically focused on gender and dance. The purpose here was to discover the range of contexts in which interviewees 'do' gender by asking how their experience of dance differed in different contexts. Finally I asked questions about their future intentions to engage in dance. The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that the sequence of questions was flexible to allow interviewees room to move and jump forward and backwards in time as they wished.

One of the primary goals of the interview structure was to encourage the interviewees to produce 'thick descriptions', to produce elaborated and detailed answers that traced how they made sense of specific dance events, experiences and gender performances (Heyl, 2001; Rapley, 2004). To do this, I had a cluster of pre-prepared prompts written down ready to be used depending upon interviewee responses. I also used improvised prompts to tease out the meanings of specific words interviewees used and to encourage interviewees to provide specific examples to illustrate points they made (See appendix 3 for interview questions).

5.17.3 Ethnographic interviewing

Following the work of Heyl (2001) and Ellis and Berger (2003), I conceptualize my use of interviews as 'ethnographic interviewing'. The two factors that distinguish ethnographic interviewing from other forms of interviewing are:

1) the knowledge and experience of local culture the interviewer brings with them from their time spent in the field, and

2) situating the interview within the ongoing relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

The benefit of conducting ethnographic interviews was that I could draw upon my extensive experience of embodied fieldwork to inspire the types of questions and probes I would use. My experience and identity as a dancer also facilitated greater rapport and empathy with the interviewees. We had accumulated a stock of shared embodied and relational experiences from undertaking class activities and this provided me with the option to openly voice my own stories, experiences and interpretations to compare,

contrast and connect with theirs (Sands, 2002; Ellis & Berger, 2003; Rapley, 2004). Given the intimacy of some of the details being shared by the interviewees, I often felt a relational desire and an ethical obligation to reciprocate and engage in a more open and active interview style, sharing my own personal stories and experiences. During the majority of interviews the interviewees also actively asked me to share my thoughts on the questions I was asking them. As a result, maintaining a completely neutral and non-biased approach seemed inappropriate. The interviews therefore served a dual function of producing data and continuing the cultivation of collaborative relationships between my self and other dancers.

Whilst the interviews were an excellent tool for fostering closer collaborative relationships, there were still significant challenges to overcome. For example, when I interviewed dancers I considered 'good friends' I often found the relational dynamic of the interview somewhat strange. This first came to the fore when I interviewed 'Steffen' and we engaged in an unusual conversational dynamic. I remember feeling like I was always holding back from participating in 'normal' everyday conversational talk. And Steffen kept sending me funny glances and cheeky smiles that I read as signs of him also finding the interview dynamic an odd experience too. This became more explicit at the end of interview when I turned off the tape recorder and we slipped straight back into our usual conversational turn-taking repertoire. A couple of minutes into this conversation Steffen raised the topic of his aversion to the style of clothes men wear in Latin DanceSport competitions. This was a topic we had not discussed during the interview. Steffen started to laugh and get animated about this issue and I could see his reaction offered an interesting contrast to his previously assured and unproblematic account of his relationship to the masculine role and requirements in Latin and ballroom dancing. I asked Steffen if we could turn the tape recorder back on so I could record what he was saying word for word. He agreed:

> C.   <ok Steffen> (S. laughs) [is it on?] what do you think of the Latin clothing for the guys?
> S.   is it on?
> C.   yeah it's on you gotta com'n you was just about to say something really good
> S.   yeah I know that's cos it was off (both laugh)
> C.   ok just ignore it

This short section of dialogue provides a succinct example of one of the common challenges of conducting ethnographic interviews, namely, that the co-participants share

a previous history together and they need to re-negotiate their relationship, taking on new temporary roles and identities as interviewer and interviewee (Garton & Copland, 2010).

My experiences of using the Dictaphone and trying to re-negotiate my research identity were two prominent examples from my ethnography that made it clear to me that conducting a successful interview had an artful quality to it (Rapley, 2001; Mason, 2002). Indeed, as a novice interviewer at the outset of the project, the process of conducting interviews enabled me to cultivate new listening and talking skills. These skills evolved in practice through critically reflecting on the interview, both, in process, and after it was completed. Ultimately, I have come to the conclusion that it is important to be flexible when interviewing, to be able to switch back and forth from a more neutral and facilitative approach to a more active and engaged approach in response to the ongoing interaction with the interviewee. This flexible and emergent approach fits with my general philosophy of methodological Bricolage and is supported in the work of Turkel (1995, cited in Rapley, 2004:30) who posits that when conducting interviews "you do it your own way. You experiment. You try this, you try that. With one person one's best, with another person another. Stay loose, stay flexible".

5.17.4 Interviews as co-performance

I have found it useful to theorize the verbal dialogue that emerged from the interviews as co-performances and co-constructions (Rapley, 2001; Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002; Davison, 2007). From this perspective I can argue that "speech is performative. It is action. The act of speech, the act of being interviewed becomes a performance itself" (Denzin, 2001:27). This argument becomes clearer if we look back on how Steffen's talk was produced in negotiation with my own, and how the turning on and off of the tape recorder facilitated the presentation of different versions of his experiences, different account of him self and different co-performances with me as interviewer and friend (Speer & Hutchby, 2003). Acknowledging these influences, I then set about analyzing how dancers' gendered experiences and their views on the gendered realities of dance classes are conveyed through their deployment of specific stories, discourses and recollections that emerge in the process of the co-constructed interview.

As a researcher I also have a role and responsibility to reconstruct the voices of the dancers I interviewed by creatively selecting, editing and representing their spoken

words into a format suitable for publication in the final thesis text. This process involved writing-up the sound recorded interview conversations using an appropriate transcription system. I reasoned that a relatively detailed transcription system was needed, because if I focused solely on the specific words that were said in the interviews I would miss a wealth of important meaning making activity. I therefore examined the common transcription systems used in discursive psychology and conversation analysis. In varying degrees of detail, these approaches require the interviewer to transcribe the para-linguistics and extra-linguistics involved in face-to-face conversation, highlighting the pauses, silences, stutters, laughs, sighs, coughs, whispers, and other intricacies of talk that may be significant in supporting or contradicting the content of what is said (Potter & Wiggins, 2007).

O'Connell and Kowal (1995:98) argue that "only those components of spoken discourse which are to be analyzed should be transcribed". Following this suggestion, I employed a transcription system that provided sufficient detail for the analysis of how masculinities were being enabled, performed and negotiated in talk, whilst at the same time not overloading myself with information that was not helpful for the analysis. I also wished to employ a form of transcription that would be accessible to the majority of academic audiences. In response to these demands, I based my transcription style on system outlined in Susan Speers' (2005) book *Gender Talk*. I followed Speers' approach because my supervisor suggested it would give me more credibility rather than making up my own system. However, when engaging with Speers' transcription system, I only took what I needed and left the rest. Ultimately, then, I employed an efficient system that was suitable for the purpose of the interviews, namely, to examine the discourses, stories and co-performances of masculinity that emerged in the interview talk.

6

Dancing with Women

In this chapter I focus on the most taken for granted masculine practice in Latin and ballroom dance classes – *dancing with women*. Set against an historical backdrop where orthodox discourses of masculinity have positioned dance as a potentially problematic practice for men, the dance club's advertising campaigns and male dancers' conversations with their non-dancing male friends worked to entice new male recruits to class with the lure of *dancing to meet girls*. These marketing strategies drew upon a central discourse of orthodox masculinity to position Latin and ballroom dancing as a heterosexual practice. The dancing to meet girls discourse was not sufficient in the long term, however, and intermediate male dancers demonstrated a shift away from using this discourse towards talking about their enjoyment and pride in dancing. When male dancers entered class they were also confronted with new embodied and relational challenges in performing their masculinity. As such, male beginners were required to learn the body techniques necessary for dancing with women. One technique that was particularly problematic for beginners was dancing in closed ballroom hold. Here, male-female couples needed to negotiate forms of intimate physical contact and male dancers were required to perform a style of inclusive masculinity that demonstrated respect for their female partners. In turn, by learning to dance in closed hold, male dancers cultivated new embodied relations with female dancers and engaged in non-sexual forms of touch that functioned as technologies of the self. Finally, by successfully negotiating these embodied and discursive challenges, new opportunities opened up for male dancers to visually enact more traditional forms of gentlemanly masculinity whilst ballroom dancing with their female partners at university DanceSport competitions. Ultimately, by outlining these transitions in the process of learning to dance with women, I demonstrate how male dancers' engaged in shifting performances of masculinity that combined a dynamic mix of elements of orthodox and inclusive masculinities.

6.1 Re-positioning dance as a heterosexual practice

Talking to male Latin and ballroom dancers in interviews and informal conversations, the vast majority said they had little or no previous dance experience when starting Latin and ballroom dancing. Instead, their physical activity backgrounds consisted of

participating in typically male dominated sports and martial arts such as football, rugby, cricket, karate, climbing, cycling, golf and sailing. In contrast, the four female dancers I interviewed said they had extensive experience participating in a wide range of different dances. These included ballet, ice dancing, Latin, show dance, contemporary, hip hop, street dance, jazz and traditional Chinese dance. From further informal conversations with dozens of female Latin and ballroom dancers, I would approximate that at least two thirds said they had some form of previous dance experience before starting Latin and ballroom dance classes. These findings suggest that, like the capoeirista I spoke to, the historical bodies of the Latin and ballroom dancers had been profoundly shaped by orthodox discourses of gender and technologies of domination. In other words, the dancers had cultivated historical bodies that were (in part) physically trained through engaging in 'gender appropriate' forms of physical activity, with boys primarily playing sport and girls dancing.

To further explore the influence of Latin and ballroom dancers' gender delineated embodied histories, I asked all the interviews, "have you ever come across the idea that dance is associated as more of a woman's activity or if men dance they are stereotyped as gay?" In response, every interviewee acknowledged they were aware of this discourse to a lesser or greater extent. I found this fascinating because, despite the resounding awareness that orthodox discourses positioned dance as a problematic activity for men, the numbers of male beginners starting Latin and ballroom dancing was extremely high. During my four years of fieldwork the dance club had in the region of 120-150 new beginners starting every year, with approximately a third (40-50) being young men. Thus there seemed to be a tension between orthodox discourses of masculinity and the seeking out of opportunities to learn how to dance Latin and ballroom. In this context, how was their participation justified?

Male dancers offered a variety of reasons why they took up Latin and ballroom dancing. These included being inspired by watching dancers on television programs such as Strictly Come Dancing, being impressed by the visual spectacle of professional Latin and ballroom dancers performing live, and being impressed by the demonstrations of intermediate and advanced dancers performing on campus. Other male dancers said that their friends were going along to one of the taster sessions held in fresher's week and they tagged along, enjoyed it and stayed on. A couple of male dancers also reflected on how going to university provided a more liberal space that provided the opportunity to

more easily try out new activities that may have been problematic if they had taken them up when they were teenagers living in their small town or village. These different responses offer a number of interesting starting points that could be explored in greater depths. However, there was one further justification that was more frequently cited than all the other responses; this was the desire to start Latin and ballroom dance classes in order '*to meet girls*'.

The framing of men's participation in Latin and ballroom in terms of *dancing to meet girls* was reflected in two main ways: first, through the marketing practices of the Latin and ballroom dance club, and second, thorough informal conversations when male dancers tried to attract their non-dancing male friends to class with talk about the benefits of learning to dance. Looking first at the marketing practices of the dance club, I have inserted below a photograph that depicts one of the flyers handed out during Fresher's Week. This flyer was used in the second year of my field work and was also replicated in the third year but with a blue background and a male-female dance couple performing a different dance move. Larger posters with the same image and without the main body of the text were also put up in strategic places around the university campus.
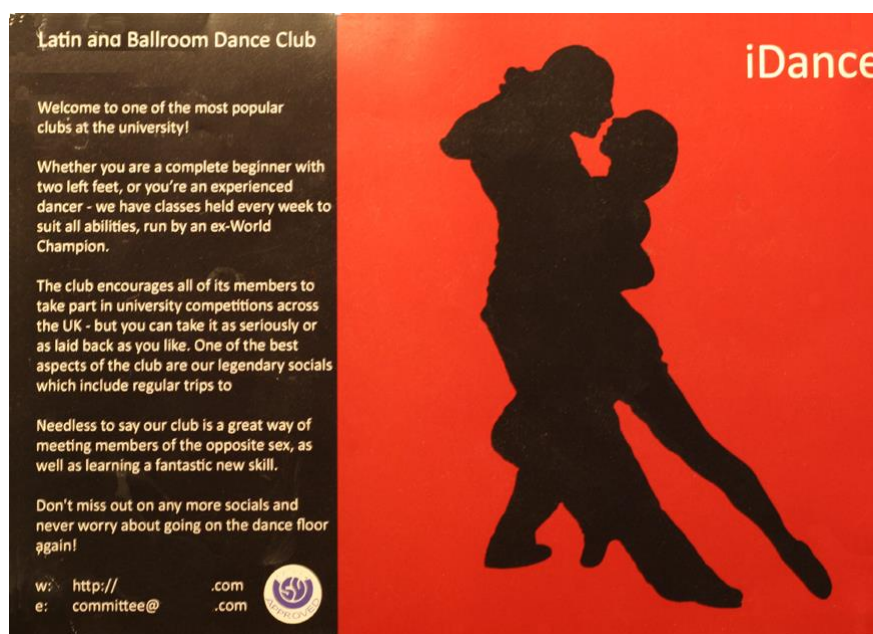
The first thing I noticed when viewing this flyer was the obvious referencing of the Apple iPod and iTunes silhouette advertising campaign. This campaign included a series of television commercials and print advertising that ran in the UK at the same time as this flyer was being distributed. The YouTube video inserted below shows a

compilation of the entire collection of short silhouette videos produced by Apple, and the Google search findings show a collection of the accompanying Apple posters.

Apple COMPLETE iPod "Silhouette" ad campaign compilation (2004-2008)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQw3mVWXncg

Google images search for 'apple iPod dancers'
http://bit.ly/W5HPrF

The silhouetted images of the iPod dancers provided the Latin and ballroom dance club with an ideal point of cultural reference to draw upon in their advertising campaign. As such, the sheer extent of Apples' advertising campaign had culturally ingrained these images to such as an extent that they became instantly recognisable iconic visual images (Cooper, 2009). The simple composition of the images was also effective for both for iPod and the dance club to catch-the-eye of the viewer. In turn, the introduction of a simple but playful parody, changing the words 'iPod' to 'iDance', also worked to attract viewers to engage with the flyer, implying that dance had the potential to become a fundamental part of one's personal identity.

In the dance club's marketing strategy, the flyer also used the visual spectacle of dancing bodies as a central means to hook the viewer. Here, then, we see a repetition of the visual design and marketing strategy employed in the capoeira flyers, where male capoeiristas were depicted in a central position performing 'awesome moves' (see chapter seven). In the capoeira flyers, dancing bodies take up the largest space on the flyer and the bodies are positioned in the centre of the composition. However, in this instance, in the Latin and ballroom flyer, we see two people - a man and a woman - dancing together in closed hold.

The silhouetted couple are performing a movement from the Argentine Tango called a Gaucho. Whether or not the viewer is knowledgeable about the specifics of this particular dance move, there is little doubt that the visual representation works to convey a form of heterosexual passion, seduction and sensuality. This can be seen through the depiction of body-to-body contact where the mid-sections of the two dancers are inseparable, the female dancer's leg is wrapped around the man's, and the two dancers' faces are held close together but not touching. To comment on the function or the effect this image might have in terms of attracting male university students to class, I suggest that the image works to position Latin and ballroom dance as an activity which men can use as a tool to seduce women and vice versa, or at the very least to

engage in intimate forms of embodied interaction that enable the enactment of explicitly heterosexual and hetero-sexy performances on the dance-floor.

Throughout my four years of fieldwork, whenever I attended Latin and ballroom classes or DanceSport competitions I always scooped up the advertising flyers and posters. From analysing my sizeable collection of multi-media artefacts there was one resounding commonality that ran throughout, namely that the images always depicted a male and female couple dancing together. Not once did I see an advert with the image of a same-sex couple dancing together (this is despite same-sex coupling being a regular occurrence in class, at least for female dancers). The iDance flyer, then, is indicative of a wider genre of advertising dance media that explicitly drew upon the traditions of Latin and ballroom dancing as a heterosexual courting ritual. In turn, this worked to establish a visual discourse that thoroughly supported one of the central tenets of orthodox masculinity with the representation of heterosexual relationships on the dance floor. And in the case of the iDance flyer, if the visual representation of a male-female dancing couple was not obvious enough, the benefits for male beginners of learning to dance were made completely clear in the accompanying text: "*Needless to say our club is a great way of meeting members of the opposite sex, as well as learning a fantastic new skill*". Taken together, then, the dance clubs' advertising campaign undoubtedly called upon heterosexual subjects and gave little or no indication that it was gay friendly space.

Alongside the dance clubs' advertising campaign, the dancing to meet girls discourse was also frequently deployed by male beginners seeking to justify learning to dance and by male dancers who tried to entice their non-dancing male friends to class. This discursive strategy once again drew upon a central tenet of orthodox masculinity to construct Latin and ballroom dancing as an unequivocally heterosexual practice. The interview quote below provides an example of how this discourse was put into action. Prior to this section of talk I had asked 'Barry' what he liked about Latin and ballroom dancing. He first briefly talked about the social side of dance and how it enabled him to meet lots of people. He then switched to talk about the specific benefits of being a male dancer in Latin and ballroom classes.

'Barry' is a British white male beginner Latin and ballroom dancer

B.   and there's always the fun of choosing a partner as well (.) it's like who:: shall I go with her or her? (C. chuckles)….there's a lack of boys so we're always in demand

C.   it is a bonus isn't it?

B.   oh yeah that's another definite positive definite reason to come lack of boys (.) its like ahh↑ who wants to dance with me now (both laugh) floods of girls coming towards you you're like ahh (softly) >one at a time one at a time< (both laugh)

C.   so modest aren't ya (both laugh)

B.   (1) joking but it is its nice to be wanted [mm] bit of a shame for the girls to have to stand there and watch (.) but it's what you'd expect isn't it always to be more girls keen on dancing

Reflecting on his experiences of choosing a partner in the beginners' lessons, Barry asserts that male dancers are in demand due to their lesser numbers and he constructs a scene where he has lots of women wanting to dance with him all at once. Notably, this scene is presented in a humorous way with Barry almost having to fight girls off whilst telling them "one at a time one at a time". In turn, at numerous points in this section of talk, myself and Barry laugh together. The reason why I was laughing with Barry was because I too had personally seen and experienced instances not too dissimilar from the extreme case Barry had constructed. Indeed, at other times throughout the fieldwork, I had engaged in similar instances of talk and banter with fellow male dancers where I had shared my own humorous stories and personal anecdotes of dancing with women. As a male researcher and male dancer I was thus in a privileged position to access and engage in this form of talk, and in the interview with Barry my laughter worked to buy into his talk and support his depiction of dance class events.

Ultimately, by discussing the benefits of dancing with women through the means of humorous male banter, Barry and other male dancers were able to employ a rhetorical strategy that worked to deflect the potentially problematic nature of engaging in a female dominated environment by turning it to their advantage. Thus the common imbalance of having more females than males in class was re-presented as an attraction for young men to take up dancing, providing them with a wealth of opportunities to meet with and potentially 'pull' female dancers. Similarly, on numerous occasions, I heard male dancers bragging to other male dancers about attending dance events where they had had the opportunity to dance with famous and conventionally attractive professional female dancers. Drawing upon the theory of inclusive masculinity, these examples of male talk can be viewed as forms of 'conquestial recuperation' (McCormack & Anderson, 2010). In other words, by sharing the stories of their conquests on the dance floor, male dancers were able to display their traditionally

masculine credentials, 'come out' to other men as straight, and allay possible concerns that other men in class might be gay.

I have included below another example of a male dancer deploying the dancing to meet girls discourse, yet crucially in this instance he also demonstrates a shift in talk where he subsequently disavows and moves away from this discourse.

'Flash' is a White British male intermediate Latin and ballroom dancer

C.   have you had any other significant experiences or certain people that have influenced your dancing or for you to take up dancing?

F.   …yeah I didn't see it on TV (.) I never watched any of the ballroom shows or anything like that it was just um (.) it was just that (.) well to be honest Greg said it was a great way of meeting girls (both chuckle) [mm] and so did Benny who was my friend [right] so that was how it all started (.) but then it changed afterwards that was not the reason why I carried on going (both laugh) just why I started going

C.   so what was the reason why you continued then?

F.   um (1) I just kinda fell in love with the whole thing

In this section of talk Flash describes how his impetus to enter a dance class for the first time was aided by existing male dancers who assured him that learning Latin and ballroom dancing provided a great way of meeting girls. As with the case of Barry, this discourse works to assert the heterosexuality of Flash and his male friends. However, unlike Barry, Flash demonstrates signs that this discourse may also be problematic. As such, Flash initially demonstrates apprehension or hesitation about citing dancing to meet girl as the reason why he started dancing, "it was just um (.) it was just that (.) well to be honest". Flash then demonstrates a sudden shift in talk away from this discourse. During the interview this shift was so obvious that we both laughed. Evidently, then, through his initial hesitation and his sudden shift away from using the dancing to meet girls discourse, Flash's talk suggests there may be something potentially problematic about deploying this discourse to explain male dancers' continued engagement in dance.

In the forthcoming sections, where I analyse male beginners' process of learning the appropriate body techniques to dance with women in closed ballroom hold, I demonstrate how the introduction of new relational and embodied requirements encourage men to cultivate a form of inclusive masculinity. It is this additional process that may have a 'knock-on effect' to position the dancing to meet girls discourse as either problematic or no longer necessary. For now, though, I will start by attending to

the alternative justification Flash provides for continuing to dance, namely, that he fell in love with dance, as opposed to a woman.

When I first analysed the transcript from the interview with Flash, I thought that his sudden shift in talk was significant. In response, I therefore started to explore whether other male dancers demonstrated similar shifts in their talk over time, and I explored whether experienced male dancers' demonstrated through their behaviours and performances in class something akin to a 'love' of dance. Discussing this issue with one of the male teachers and with a number of intermediate and advanced male dancers, they offered similar responses. They suggested that whilst men were more reluctant than women to initially try Latin and ballroom dance classes, once they got over this the initial hurdle they were seen to be more enthusiastic and more dedicated to becoming good dancers. An example of this explanation is voiced in the interview extract below:

'Darren' is White British male advanced Latin and ballroom dancer

D.   as I said I think the blokes are keener I think (2) so maybe there is more of a pride thing in there as well (.) particularly because it's a slightly off beat thing to do

C.   offbeat?

D.   yep

C.   what do you mean by offbeat?

D.   because its not huge numbers of blokes do it [right] and a lot wouldn't touch it with a barge pole [right] (1) um (2) so I think a lot of us kind of enjoy doing something that not everybody would dare do (1) having got over the initial would I do that kind of thing (2) I think so yeah (.) … and I think cos a lot of girls have always done it or have always done dancing in some sense (.) its something they have always done whereas for the guys we found it later on if you like [right] and so we're gonna be more committed to it because we've really chosen to do it (.) it wasn't something that we were taken to by our parents when we were five and just kept doing and dropped in and out of (.) so it has to be something we're really keen on [mm] (2) yeah so there's a pride thing in that (.) it's not just another activity like playing football again or something

In this extract Darren says that men are keener and more committed to Latin and ballroom dancing than women. He supports this position by noting that the women in class have typically tried various dances during their youth and thus starting Latin and ballroom is not a significant or troubling issue for them. In contrast, Darren suggests that because dance is positioned as an "offbeat" activity that boys do not typically participate in, for the young men who do take up dance at university, and for those that are able to get over the initial difficulties, being a Latin and ballroom dancer becomes an important part of their identity. As such, Darren talks about how he feels a certain

pride in undertaking Latin and ballroom dancing because it is an "offbeat" activity that most men would not do.

Interpreting this section of talk, I propose that Darren is able to assert the masculine credentials of participating in dance by deploying a discourse of 'being different' (Gill et al., 2005). As such, we see Darren assert his independence and autonomy by choosing to undertake an activity that he sees as challenging orthodox discourses of masculinity. This approach works as a useful alternative to the dancing to meet women discourse because Darren is still able to assert his masculinity by drawing upon an established neo-liberal discourse of masculinity that men need to demonstrate their individuality and independence and not blindly follow traditional gender discourses (Gill et al., 2005).

To further explore the conditions under which experienced male dancers shifted away from using the dancing to meet girls discourse, I will now switch to focus on the embodied process of learning the necessary body techniques to dance in closed ballroom hold with women. Learning these techniques opened male beginners up to new relational challenges and new embodied requirements that seemed to make the dancing to meet girls discourse less appropriate or no longer necessary.

6.2 Dancing with women in closed ballroom hold

At the first Latin and ballroom lesson of the year the dance-floor would be packed with at least one hundred beginners. The teachers would instruct the boys to stand on one side of the dance floor and girls on the other. The beginners would attentively watch the male and female dance teachers dancing together in the centre of the room. One of the first things the teachers would demonstrate was how to get into closed ballroom hold. The teachers would then tell the beginners to find a partner and give it a try. Watching from the sidelines I was always struck by how awkward and amusing these dance scenes were. I saw smiles and laugher mixed with calamitous movement and looks of unease as beginners made their first attempts at interlinking their body with another. With practice, the beginners would learn the embodied skills required to smoothly mesh their bodies together and produce a technically efficient and aesthetically pleasing ballroom hold. However, to reach this stage they first needed to overcome the fundamental embodied challenge of dancing close to their partner.

Ballroom dancing requires that dancers press the mid-section of their body, from the hips to abdomen, against their dance partner's body and maintain this contact throughout the dance. This form of body contact is illustrated in the photograph below where an intermediate couple - 'Benedict' and 'Natalia' - are dancing the Waltz at a university DanceSport competition.

The Waltz originated as an Austrian peasant dance and was subsequently introduced to the English court during the early 19th century. With its requirements for dancing in a close embrace, the Waltz was initially viewed as a vulgar and indecent dance fit only for tarts and prostitutes (Peters, 1992). Two centuries on, the Waltz is now typically viewed as a staid activity that old people perform at tea dances, and accordingly, Fisher & Shay (2009:11) assert that the "Waltz has lost its power to threaten". The data from my study seriously challenges this assumption, however, showing that the process of learning the body techniques for performing the Waltz still has a profound power to cause gender trouble. As such, from my experiences and observations in class, it was unmistakable that the close body-to-body contact that the Waltz requires posed significant challenges for many male and female beginners.

At the beginning of each year, the teachers would repeatedly demonstrate to the new beginners how they should get into the closed ballroom hold. A large proportion of beginners did not follow these instructions however and insisted on maintaining a gap between the mid-sections of their bodies. They thus only made contact with their

partners using their hands and arms. In absolute terms, the space left between the dancers' mid-sections was only small, no more than thirty or forty centimetres. Nevertheless, this space represented a significant embodied, relational and tactile barrier that male and female beginners needed to overcome if they were to improve and learn the correct technique for dancing the Waltz.

The teachers were well aware that dancing in closed hold ballroom hold was problematic for many beginners and they implemented a pedagogical strategy to explicitly help beginners overcome this problem. In the fifth or sixth week of class, the teachers would send a mysterious email to members of the dance club asking the beginners to bring a scarf to the next class. When the beginners turned up, scarves in hand, the teachers instructed them to find a partner and tie themselves together in closed ballroom hold. Every year this exercise was introduced it always caused laughter to erupt in class. There was now no escape. This exercise forced beginners to temporarily bridge the gap between their male and female dancing bodies. For many of the beginners this exercise provided their first embodied experience of dancing in closed hold with the mid-section of their body touching another. For many, this activity also seemed to provide the spark or the means of legitimating the continued practice of ballroom dance with their mid-sections close together. This response was not unanimous, however, and as an intermediate dancer, after four years of fieldwork, I still found a small number of intermediate female dancers who would not dance in closed hold with me with our mid-sections touching.

To draw out the complexities of this embodied and relational practice, I will now cite two extracts taken from interviews with a male and a female intermediate dancer. These extracts highlight some of the similarities and differences I have noted in gendered talk about dancing in closed ballroom hold. The extracts illustrate how male and female dancers both made sense of their experiences dancing in closed hold as a form of embodied transition. There were thus clear patterns of talk where these dancers described how as beginners they used to be physically uncomfortable and embarrassed when dancing in closed hold, but now with more experience they had become relaxed dancing close together and they viewed it as a normal everyday part of ballroom dancing:

'Flash' is a White British male intermediate Latin and ballroom dancer

F.   I remember at the very start um (1) finding it very difficult to (.) when you were waltzing round and you're kinda like that (D. indicates with his hands - dancing with a large gap between the dancer's bodies) it's all very nice but then suddenly you have to go like that (indicates with his hands dancing very close) [mmm] and the girl stands straight up at you and they don't stand to the side they are standing right in front of you and you're kinda like [hello] (both laugh) (.) yeah cos in normal dancing you're quite spread out really you've got you're own sort of space around you and it's quite nice and (.) but when you first do ballroom and they're here (indicates with his hand the closeness of dancing with a partner at the hips and face to face) it's very embarrassing but if they're offset it's ok but some of them don't they stand there (indicates direct face to face) and then you're kinda of looking there (indicates slightly to his left) and they're looking there (indicates slightly to his right) and you can just see their eye out of the corner of your eye and (.) I don't like it (D. laughs)

C.   (1) I think they're trying to do that now in class trying to encourage beginners to get closer and [yeah] Jonathan (the teacher) is like come on now you've got to get close for technique reasons or for [yeah yeah] (.) proper dance reasons=

F.   =yeah I often try and (.) if we're going round them I'll say um say like stop leaning back so much or just kinda help them out a little bit cos I probably learn most of my steps from the older members teaching me things… so I like to do it for other people as well (.) kinda pass it on and (.) yeah a lot of the girls find it very difficult to get close at first and you're like just dance closer to me (both laugh) and then they'll do it and then they'll just step away again (.) and you'll be like (D. indicates arm action to bring girl closer) (.) get closer it'll look a lot better (.) but I suppose cos they've never done it before and (.) maybe they don't like to get so close

In this extract Flash states that his initial embarrassment dancing close with women was most acute when his partner didn't place her body in an 'offset' position. Here Flash is referring to a more advanced technique performed in ballroom hold where the dancers move or 'offset' their bodies slightly to the left. This technique enables the dancers to press their body together right-hip-to-right-hip. The offset position also opens up space between the dancers' upper bodies as the female dancer is required to lean back slightly and both dancers are required to look in opposite directions, up and away to the left of their partner. The offset position is illustrated in the photograph below where Benedict and Natalia are dancing the Waltz.

From Flash's perspective, dancing in this closed offset position actually becomes more comfortable than dancing with a beginner who actively wants to maintain physical distance from their partner. On those occasions dancing with beginners, when "the girl stands straight up at you….standing right in front of you", Flash comments on how his physical and relational discomfort was most acute. Flash tries to makes sense of this problematic experience by positioning ballroom dancing as a strange 'other' to what he sees as 'normal dancing'. I assume here that Flash is referring to dancing in discos and night clubs which is the most common form of dancing currently undertaken by young men and women in England. Flash's description of these dance environments, as "spread out really you've got you're own sort of space around you and it's quite nice", describes the dominant practice of men and women dancing by themselves within a small group of friends. Placed in contrast to these relatively spacious dancing practices, Flash's problematic experiences of being thrust into dancing in closed hold with female dancers are now positioned as unsurprising and understandable embodied reactions.

In the extract above there is an explicit shift in Flash's talk where he takes up the position of a more experienced, proficient and knowledgeable dancer who is willing to offer advice to less experienced dancers. From this position, he talks about how he tries to encourage female beginners to dance close to him by reiterating the established discourse professed by the teachers, that dancing close is desirable for technical and aesthetic reasons. Flash also demonstrates how he combines this verbal strategy with the physical action of using his arm to draw the female dancer closer. In spite of this dual

approach, Flash notes that he is not always successful in getting female beginners to stay close. In turn, he constructs the reluctance and difficulty of dancing in closed hold as a problem located more in female dancers, due to their lack of experience or their general distaste for getting close. From interviewing four female dancers, I have found that this is not the only explanation or the only justification why female dancers may be apprehensive about dancing close to men.

Drawing upon data from my interviews with the female dancers, I will now provide an alternative way of making sense of why female beginners may have been reluctant to dance close to male dancers. This explanation focuses on how female dancers' talked about their need to feel comfortable with the male dancer in order to dance close:

'Qing' is a Chinese female intermediate Latin and ballroom dancer

C.   what do you like about Latin and ballroom dancing?

Q.   ….for waltz:: when you get really close to the man (.) if you have a really good feeling of this man when you dance it and hearing the really good music it actually gives you a special feeling > I don't know how to express that but< it does yeah (.) so I like waltz

C.   so to enjoy these dances do you have to have a nice person to dance with?

Q.   when I first started dancing Latin cos I used to dance alone in China [right] so when I first started dancing with a man I wasn't used to it … for ballroom I felt quite embarrassed when I got close to a man I always had quite a space for some time and I just remember one guy that he never turns out anymore (.) one dancer he always held me really tight and I was qui:::te embarrassed about that when I first started (both smirk) so maybe it depends whether you have some good feeling [ah ha] its doesn't mean you like him or something its just you have a good impression of him say he's a really good guy (.) so yeah when you dance with him you feel much more relaxed and if you get familiar with someone (.) like I get familiar with like Ben so when I dance with him I don't feel embarrassed about dancing very close to him and I like dancing with him because I think he's a good guy [ah ha] I treat him like my little brother

Qing initially describes how her enjoyment of the Waltz is in part linked to the feeling she has for the man she is dancing with. Moreover, she professes that an important factor in her shift from feeling uncomfortable and embarrassed dancing close to a man, to being relaxed and enjoying the dance, is dependent on whether she has a good feeling or good impression of the man she is dancing with. After this explanation, Qing then immediately disavows a possible interpretation that having a good impression of a male dancer means she is physically or sexually attracted to them. This is important because without this statement, it would imply that she is enacting an undesirable form of femininity by not being 'respectable'.

To make sense of this section of talk, it is important to note that from analysing male dancer's talk about dancing close, I found no equivalent requirement for first needing to have a good impression of the female dancer. There was, however, considerable talk among male dancers about how learning Latin and ballroom dancing had improved their relationships with women in a variety of ways. Nearly all of the intermediate and advanced male dancers I interviewed said they were now more confident around women. As such, four of the dancers stated that by being so physically close to female dancers for so long, they had become comfortable physically touching them in non sexual ways. This is significant as it reiterates Qing's previous comment where she dismissed that her good impression of a particular male dancer suggested signs of her being attracted to them. In this way, male and female dancers both suggested that, over time, dance class practices facilitated forms of embodied and relational transitions wherein dancers became increasingly comfortable dancing close and touching their partners' body in non-sexualised ways. In Qing's talk there was also the implication that this transition towards embodied comfort between dance partners was dependent upon the particular relationships between specific dance couples, with the female dancer exercising the choice whether to dance close or not.

To theorise the transitions outlined above, I assert that male dancers demonstrated a movement towards performing an inclusive style of masculinity. This was instigated through the requirement for them to demonstrate respect for their female dance partner and to be comfortable engaging in intimate forms of non-sexual touch. Acknowledging these requirements may also help to explain why there was an apparent decline in the verbal deployment of the dancing to meet girls discourse by more experienced dancers. As such, this orthodox discourse of masculinity locates female dancers as a source of conquest and therefore may not be appropriate when male dancers are required to explicitly demonstrate a form of embodied respect towards their female dance partners.

I also want to argue that the process of learning the appropriate body techniques to dance in closed hold acted as a technology of the self, providing the means for male dancers to enact more inclusive masculinities. As such, learning to ballroom dance enabled male dancers to cultivate new forms of embodied relationships with women that they perceived were relatively uncommon outside of class. The embodied relations were based upon non-romantic forms of male-female touch and provided the means for

the development of close friendships and more respectful relations with women. Indeed, a number of experienced male and female dancers noted that their close embodied interactions with other dancers were one of the most valued elements of participating in Latin and ballroom dancing. This is succinctly illustrated in the interview extract below where a female intermediate dancer highlights the benefits of dancing with male Latin and ballroom dancers as opposed to dancing with men in nightclubs:

'Carmen' is an White British female intermediate Latin and ballroom dancer

Ca.   I do like being close to yeah to be able to be close to other people without being I suppose without feeling threatened as a girl (.) sometimes you can feel like if you're that close to other guys they might want to do something or whatever (.) obviously nothing massive or major awful but you can feel a little bit threatened like dancing in clubs like getting up close with guys you don't really know what they're thinking but with Latin and ballroom dancing its like a way of getting up close with guys without feeling threatened at all without feeling like your personal space is being invaded [mm] (.) its nice.

In this extract, Carmen states that she values being able to be close to other male Latin and ballroom dancers without feeling threatened. Implicit in this statement is an assumption that male dancers perform a style of inclusive masculinity that is respectful to female dancers and thus gives Carmen the confidence to get physically close. The benefit of these relationships is further emphasized when Carmen contrasts male Latin and ballroom dancers to men dancing in nightclubs, who she positions as potentially threatening space invaders that may have ulterior motives, assumedly dancing to meet, touch or grope women.

To conclude this section, I have inserted three photos that depict male and female Latin and ballroom dancers physically interacting in dance environments. These photographs offer a visual perspective on the embodied practices detailed above. The three photographs provide examples of how experienced male dancers perform a form of masculinity that demonstrates a familiarity, ease and de-sexualisation of touch with female dancers' bodies. The photograph on the left shows 'Alexa' sitting on the lap of her dancer partner 'Adam'. At the time this photograph was taken, both dancers were visually nervous as they waited to hear whether they would be recalled to the next round of the competition. At the same time, I also saw these two dancers convey a physical comfort with one another through their body positioning. The photographs in the centre and on the right were taken during a free practice session. The photo in the centre shows 'Hayden' tightly hugging his friend 'Carly' and lifting her off the floor in a joyful and humorous embrace. The photograph on the right shows 'Anna' playfully hitting her

dance partner 'Hayden' over the head whilst practicing on the dance-floor. The staging of these photographs certainly involved an element of performing to the camera. This is indicated by the obvious smiles and at least one of the dancers directly gazing at the camera. Nevertheless, playful hugs and interactions of this sort abounded among more experienced male and female dancers and these photographs provide a beautiful visual snap shot of these embodied relationships.

6.3 The performance of gentlemanly masculinities at DanceSport competitions

The final section in this chapter focuses on a series of embodied and visual practices performed by advanced male ballroom dancers when dancing with women at university DanceSport competitions. These practices and performances provide an important focal point in the process of becoming a male Latin and ballroom dancer because they offer male dancers new opportunities and cultural resources in the performance of masculinities. Focusing specifically on the ballroom section of DanceSport competitions, I will demonstrate how advanced male dancers embrace a visual aesthetic and engage in performative rituals that draw upon an historic discourse of the traditional English gentleman. It is important to remember, however, this final opening up of the enactment of an historic form of orthodox masculinity is built upon the condition that the male dancers have already established a form of inclusive masculinity through the development of respectful embodied relations with their female dance partner.

6.4 DanceSport competitions

DanceSport competitions played an important role in the yearly cycle of the Latin and ballroom dance club. They offered a social space to meet dancers from other university

dance clubs, they helped foster a sense of team spirit and camaraderie, they gave dancers the chance to show off their skills in public, and they provided dancers with a new set of gender practices and performances they needed to embrace. Our club typically participated in five or six regional competitions every year. These competitions were usually held in university sports halls and were attended by five or six universities from the South West of England and Wales. The final competition of year, the university national finals, was a much grander affair. This was held at the world famous Empress Ballroom in Blackpool and all university Latin and ballroom teams in the UK would be in attendance. The competitions followed an identical format with the ballroom dances being performed first, the Latin dances second, and finally an inter-university match involving the performance of two ballroom and two Latin dances.

This section of analysis focuses specially on the ballroom dances. The reason for this focus is because, in the interviews with the Latin and ballroom dancers, the majority of respondents represented ballroom dancing as a taken for granted masculine practice, as compared to the potentially problematic performance of masculinity in the Latin dances (I will discuss the problematic nature of the Latin dances in the forthcoming chapter on 'stiff hips'). As such, a number of interviewees commented on what they saw as the grand, stately, traditional and fairytale-like image of ballroom dancing. These statements were sometimes illustrated with passing references to how male ballroom dancers looked masculine because they wore suits and ties and stood up straight. I found these comments intriguing and during the interviews I tried to prompt the dancers to elaborate on their brief descriptions. Unfortunately my prompts typically failed to encourage dancers to go into any real depth about this topic. Reflecting on this failure, one possible interpretation is that the dancers were reluctant or unable to talk at length because it was obvious to them that ballroom practices enabled men to enact acceptably masculine identities and thus required no further clarification. As a researcher, I nevertheless thought it important to explore these taken for granted masculine performances in more depth. And thus, in the following section, harnessing the benefits of using multiple methods, I will deploy a form of visual analysis to interrogate how and why these gender performances work.

For the male dancers who were willing to commit the necessary time and effort to learn the body techniques for the ballroom dances, this opened up new opportunities for them

to engage in the performance of a specific style of ballroom masculinity at DanceSport competitions. By introducing a series of photographs and undertaking a visual analysis, I will show how these performances referenced the historic archetype of the English gentleman and worked to make their performances on the dance floor look unquestionably masculine (see chapter one for details about the historical emergence of the English gentleman).

6.5 Looking like a gentleman

In order to analyse the performance of gentlemanly forms of masculinity on the dance floor, and to comment on how these performances work to establish male dancers' unquestionably masculine status, I will now undertake a visual analysis of how experienced male ballroom dancers look and act on the dance-floor. A crucial starting point in this analysis is to acknowledge that the performance of gender is a central element of ballroom dancing and is underpinned by what Foucault (1977) refers to as 'dividing practices'. In his examination of technologies of domination, Foucault described how sets of knowledge are employed to help create social and spatial divisions between individuals or between sections of the populations that simultaneously justify their confinement, separation and control (Markula & Pringle, 2006). For ballroom dancing, these dividing practices can be seen through powerfully gendered models and strict gender boundaries that run throughout its entire practice. For example, dividing practices are evidenced through ballroom dancing clothing styles, clothing colours, make-up, grooming, facial expressions, how dancers try to attract the audience gaze, dancers' body posture and position when in hold, the movements performed on the dance-floor, the rituals for initiating and finishing the dances, and the dynamics of leading and following. Focusing in detail on just a few of these dividing practices, I will now turn my attention to the fundamental role that clothing, grooming and posture play in visually establishing masculine identities in ballroom dance.

In DanceSport competitions, dancers' dress is loaded with significance and communicates ideas about their bodies, gender, class, sexuality, dance ability, and the subsequent meanings to be attached to the movements and performances on the dance floor (McMains, 2006; Marion, 2008). Looking at advanced ballroom dancers' clothing, there are obvious dividing practices in terms of gendered display. The image below provides a perfect illustration of this. The image is a copy of a photograph that was originally printed in a 'DanceScene' magazine which I cut up and added to my dance

wall collage. The image depicts a series of ballroom couples standing in a line at a professional DanceSport competition. This style of dress is representative of the clothing worn by intermediate and advanced ballroom dancers at university DanceSport competitions.

In this image the male ballroom dancers are wearing almost identical forms of clothing: black tail suits, trousers and shoes, and white shirts and bow-ties. In contrast, the female dancers are wearing ballroom dresses with different styles and different colours. From an initial analysis of these gendered patterns of dress I assert that they encourage orthodox patterns of gendered looking (Mulvey, 1975/1999). In other words, the female dancers' extravagant, colourful and diverse forms of ballroom dress make her look different from other female dancers and help her stand out from her male dance partner. And thus, she is more likely to draw the gaze of the audience. To support and explain this pattern of looking, I noted in interviews and in informal conversations that male dancers often deployed the phrase, 'the female dancer is the picture and the male dancer is the picture frame'. This phrase works to position the male dancer in a supporting role, manoeuvring, exhibiting and showing off his female partner who is seen as the main visual attraction. This phrase clearly works to support an orthodox pattern of gendered looking and helps explain or justify why the female dancers are wearing more eye-catching attire.

Whilst the female ballroom dancer's clothing may be more eye-catching, the male dancer's clothing is still vitally important to the couples' overall appearance on the dance floor and it is undoubtedly loaded with significance. To take a closer look at the appearance of male dancers, the photograph below shows the typical grooming practices and the typical style of dress worn by intermediate and advanced university male ballroom dancers.

This photograph shows an advanced male dancer standing by the side of the dance-floor having the couple's competition number pinned to the back of his suit by his female dance partner. In this pre-competition ritual the male dancer has enacted the position he will take when the couple dance together in ballroom hold. The dancer has performed this action because the tail-suit will hang differently when his arms are up and when his arms are down. When his arms are up in ballroom hold the tail-suit is designed to show a straight and smooth line across the top of his shoulders and down the centre of his back. When his arms are lowered the tail-suit will not fit his body as smoothly. Therefore, the couple want to attach the number to the male dancer's clothes in a way that would not cause any ruffles or creases when he dances in ballroom hold on the dance floor. The reason I am highlighting this small detail is to show the amount of attention that goes into ensuring male ballroom dancers look visually impeccable.

Visual display is paramount to a dance couples' success in DanceSport competitions (Marion, 2008). The attention paid to the male dancers' clothing is therefore matched by the attention paid to their grooming practices. In the photograph above the male dancer is clean shaven, has a tight hair cut and gelled back hair. He is also demonstrating good ballroom posture, standing up straight and tall, with his shoulders back and down, his head up and his neck straight. Learning to perform this body technique requires considerable bodily discipline and control that will have been ingrained into the dancer's historical body through hundreds of hours of training and practice. Ultimately, then, by bringing the clothing, the grooming practices and the posture together, the experienced male dancer is able to re-enact an historic style of gentlemanly masculinity through his smartly clothed body that looks visually cool, calm, proud, confident and in control.

By cultivating a visual aesthetic that is characteristic of the traditional English gentleman, male ballroom dancers are able to draw upon a prominent historic discourse of orthodox masculinity that has associations with a specific form of distinguished and respectable upper-class masculinity. As such, most university DanceSport participants are well-educated and likely to be middle class, yet the visual display of the smartly dressed ballroom dancer still works to reiterate the idealised performance of a privileged form of upper class gentlemanly masculinity.

6.6 Acting like a gentleman

In addition to the visual enactment of a gentlemanly style of masculinity, male ballroom dancers also engage in a range of performative rituals and gestures that re-enact the traditional gender roles performed by ladies and gentleman dancing together. To highlight but a few of these rituals and gestures, when a ballroom couple are on the dance floor and the music starts, experienced male ballroom dancers typically initiate the dance by raising their left arm and waiting for the female dancer to walk or daintily scurry toward them and then slowly place herself in the correct position on the man's body. The photograph below provides a snap shot of a novice couple in the process of performing this action.

In conversation with one of the dance teachers, he explained how the process of coming together served a specific technical function because getting into ballroom hold required precision. He explained how there was an specific order in which to connect the bodies together - left hand, middle body, right wrist - and thus by performing this sequence in a consistent manner dancers could get used to taking up a good hold. Alongside this technical explanation, I want to suggest that the process of coming together on the

dance floor can also be read as an example of the visual re-enactment of gentlemanly forms of masculinity. As such, this ritual co-performance reiterates the historical discourse that it is the gentleman's privilege, duty or responsibility to invite the lady to dance (Silvester, 2005). Interestingly, some dance researchers have critiqued this practice as a sign of male dominance (Lanyi, 2007) and a visual performance of the man being fully in charge (McMains, 2006). Others, however, have offered more favourable interpretations suggesting that the male ballroom dancer is treating his partner with gallantry and courtesy (Picart, 2006). And yet a further interpretation is that these are not contradictory arguments. Rather, gallantry has historically operated as a reflection of male upper class dominance, but now has come to be viewed as 'nice', in contrast to more 'macho' forms of masculinity.

Whichever interpretation is favoured, I have observed that this is a tightly scripted sequence of action for initiating ballroom dances at DanceSport competitions. I have attended ten competitions in total and have only noted a few variations on this sequence. At the university finals at Blackpool I saw an advanced male dancer bend down on one knee in front of his female partner and kiss her hand before they came together to dance. I also photographed another creative variation where an advanced male dancer calmly stood still with a smile on his face, and with both hands he gestured for his partner to dance with him.

I interpreted these short choreographed sequences as ritualised enactments of an idealized form of heterosexual courting that echoes the romantic fairy tales of white, European aristocratic society (McMains, 2006). Moreover, I assert that the choreographies produced a "performed fantasy" (Marion, 2008:158), with composed, proud and self-assured performances of gentlemanly masculinity that worked to seduce

both the audience and the female dance partner. From a critical perspective, these rituals work to naturalise orthodox gender roles and romanticized notions of heterosexual male-female relations (Peters, 1992; Lanyi, 2007).

Through an analysis of advanced male ballroom dancers clothing, grooming, posture and performative rituals, I have demonstrated how they work to construct a distinctive style of masculine performance that references the historic discourse of the English gentleman. In turn, I wish to argue that this style of performance makes ballroom dance seem safe for male dancers as it allows them to enact an historic form of orthodox masculinity that was based upon clear, straight-forward and distinct gender roles from a pre-gender equality era. Thus, with the narrow representations of masculinity, the clearly demarcated gender differences, and the naturalised heterosexual choreography, ballroom dancing works to erase the sexual ambiguity that has historically surrounded male participation in dance (Gard, 2006; Risner, 2007).

6.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to focus on the most taken for granted masculine practice in Latin and ballroom classes - *dancing with women* - and adopt a Foucauldian-inspired approach that actively problematized this practice. To engage in the process of problematization I outlined a process narrative that consisted of a common chain of actions that showed how male dancers engage with new embodied, visual and discursive challenges and opportunities in the performance of masculinities over time. Following this approach, I demonstrated how images of male-female couples dancing together were used as a pervasive marketing tool to construct an image of Latin and ballroom dancing as a clearly heterosexual practice. In addition, I showed how this discourse was reiterated in male beginners' talk about their conquests on the dance floor and through male dancers talk with their non-dancing male friends who they tried to lure to class. Both examples showed how the problematic relationship between masculinity and dance, which is typically caused by orthodox discourses of masculinity, can at the same time be strategically negotiated through the use of alternative orthodox discourses. In this way, the female dominated dance environment was re-presented as a privileged site for men where they would have their pick of the women. Crucially, though, more experienced dancers tended to shift away from deploying this discourses and instead opted to justify their participation through voicing their love of dance and asserting their pride in being different from non-dancing men.

Interlinking with this verbal shift in discourse, I examined how learning the body techniques for dancing in closed ballroom hold with female dancers functioned as a technology of the self by encouraging male dancers to cultivate new forms of respectful embodied relations with their female dancing partners. With this requirement to enact a more inclusive form of masculinity, it thus became less appropriate for male dancers' to publicly boast about their conquests on the dance floor as this orthodox discourse might undermine the inclusive relationships they had developed with female dancers.

In the final section, I detailed how advanced male dancers who were skilled in the techniques for ballroom dancing with women were then able to enact a form of gentlemanly masculinity at Dance Sport competitions. This style of performance referenced an historic discourse of masculinity that was based upon traditional gender roles and naturalised heterosexual choreography. This in turn worked to erase the sexual ambiguity that has historically surrounded male participation in dance. Crucially though, this performance of an orthodox style of masculinity was enabled by male dancers subsequent performances of inclusive masculinity, as they needed to first develop respectful embodied relationships with their female dance partners.

Ultimately, by outlining this series of stages in the process of dancing with women, I have been able to show how dancers' performance of their masculine identity is a changing, dynamic and multi-layered process that involves strategically drawing upon orthodox and inclusive discourses of masculinity at different times. Moreover, the specific shifts and transitions in the process of dancers' gender performances was explicitly linked to the length of time and the amount of experience they had accumulated within this culture, which in turn both enabled and required them to enact different kinds of masculine performances.

7

Performing Awesome Moves

In this chapter I focus on the most taken for granted masculine practice in capoeira classes – *performing 'awesome moves'*. I start by exploring how capoeira is represented in the mass media, at live demonstrations and through multi-media artefacts through focusing primarily on the visual spectacle of capoeirista performing 'awesome moves'. I argue that these representations legitimate capoeira as a masculine practice and work to attract men to class by producing a visual discourse that embraces numerous aspects of orthodox masculinity. However, once in class, in order to acquire the body techniques needed to perform 'awesome moves', male beginners must negotiate a series of capoeira practices that problematize their embodied masculinity. These problematic practices include showing off their aesthetic body movements in public and working to overcome the physical inflexibility so common with male beginners. By immersing themselves within the local culture of capoeira and through regular and repeated stretching of their body, male capoeirista are able to negotiate these gender troubles by developing new ways of training, looking, and talking about the performance of 'awesome moves'. Thus, by engaging with capoeira class technologies, male capoeirista experience a process of transition that includes undertaking practices of embodied and aesthetic self-stylization and learning new discursive strategies that transcend the confines of orthodox English masculinity. Finally, through the explicit pedagogical structuring of class activities, the Brazilian instructors construct an environment wherein capoeirista are actively encouraged to move beyond a sole focus on performing 'awesome moves' and cultivate a wider appreciation of the multifarious elements of capoeira and Brazilian culture.

7.1 Capo-what?

During four years of fieldwork, approximately half of the people I spoke to in everyday non-dance contexts had not seen or heard of capoeira before. When I explained that I was researching and learning capoeira, a common response would be *"Capo-what?"* These responses were not surprising given that capoeira is still very much an alternative and emerging physical and artistic practice in the UK (see historical discussion in chapter one).

From an analysis of the informal conversations and interviews I conducted during this project, I found clear evidence that the mass media has had a crucial role to play in the growth of capoeira in the UK. Capoeiristas and members of the general public frequently told me that their first exposure to capoeira was through television commercials, films and video games. I have pasted below a number of hyperlinks to YouTube videos that document the examples from the mass media that were most commonly referred to in these conversations.

Eddie Gordo - a character from the Tekken computer game series (1994):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsLJo2fd1xk&feature=related

Nokia mobile phone television advertisement (2000):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emtT8Q0T8hw

BBC advertisements featuring two capoeirista playing on a London rooftop (2002):
1) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT2x8WnpzNQ&NR=1
2) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sB6dZX4fE9Y&NR=1&feature=fvwp

A scene from the film Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_0L1RslsPI

A scene from the film The Protector (2005):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=661QOFuyUP4

Nike clothing advertisement (2006):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jlnUM-LiSA

Sony Ericsson Vivaz mobile phone television advertisement (2010):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9-r_XAssJg&feature=related

From my analysis of these media representations of capoeira, I want to highlight how they portray a stripped down form of *de-contextualised* capoeira. They are de-contextualised in the sense that many of the cultural references and everyday aspects of capoeira that I regularly observed and experienced in class are absent in these representations. For example, there are no *bateria* (the capoeira band made up of a range of traditional Brazilian instruments). As a result, there is no capoeira music and no audience clapping and singing capoeira songs in Brazilian Portuguese. There are also no capoeira *rodas* (the circle of people within which capoeira is typically played). A possible exception is the Sony Ericsson advert where there is a circle of people watching the action unfold. However, from the styles of clothing and embodied performances of the immediate audience, they are clearly positioned as tourists or passers by who are more concerned with videoing the spectacle rather than engaging in the event as knowledgeable co-performers. Moreover, the interaction between the two men in this advert depicts a sparing session or a playful fight between two different martial artists rather than a game of capoeira. In fact, only three out of the eight clips

above involve an interactive game between two capoeirista (the BBC and Nokia adverts). Finally, with the exception of the clothes worn by Eddie Gordo which are in the colour of the Brazilian flag, there are no explicit associations between these capoeira movements and Brazil, Brazilian culture or the history of slavery from which they emerged. I raise these issues to problematise the use and possible abuse of capoeira in commercial contexts, and to highlight how these representations focus predominantly, if not solely, upon the movement of capoeira bodies. I propose that the primary purpose for using these de-contextualised representations of capoeira movements is to provide entertainment in the form of an acrobatic spectacle based upon individualised athletic prowess.

The impact of these media representations came through in the interviews I conducted with male capoeirista. Six out of the eleven men I interviewed said their first contact with capoeira was through one of the representations cited above. A typical response was provided by 'Thomas':

'Thomas' is a White British male beginner capoeirista.

C.   what was the thing that attracted you to capoeira?

T.   I think my first contact with capoeira was probably those BBC1 adverts the guys in the red togs spinning around (.) I think I was like WOW what's that? that's AWESOME (C. chuckles) I never found out it was capoeira until like a year or two later

This extract is typical of many instances of conversation wherein male capoeirista commented upon how their first contact with capoeira left a strong impression. Despite not knowing what the performers were doing or why they were doing it, male interviewees talked about how they were instantly impressed by the visual display of capoeira bodies in motion. The power of this initial reaction was frequently communicated through excited verbal responses such as 'WOW!' and 'that's AWESOME!'

Whilst the interview data provides clear evidence of male beginners excitedly talking about their initial visual attraction to capoeira movements, I did not find a similar pattern when interviewing female capoeiristas. From the interviews with the four female capoeirista, two said they attended their first class with absolutely no knowledge about capoeira and one mistakenly turned up to the first class thinking it was Tai Chi. From further informal conversations with dozens of female capoeiristas I noted that a

significant proportion commented on how capoeira was just one of many activities they had tried out at the local community dance centre. I do not want to take these findings to preclude the suggestion that female beginners were also impressed and inspired by watching capoeira moves for the first time. Indeed, the female capoeirista performing in the Nike advert and the male-female couple playing capoeira on the beach in the Nokia advert could both be read as positive representations of female capoeirista and as potential inspirations for women to take up capoeira. Nevertheless, the findings from this study highlight that men and women typically talked about being attracted to capoeira for different reasons (men attracted to 'awesome moves', women through trying out different dance classes). Alongside these differences, there was also a glaring commonality in that the vast majority of beginners, whether male or female, knew very little about the history, culture and wider activities associated with capoeira.

In light of the lack of knowledge and understanding about capoeira exhibited by beginners and the wider public, I will now explore some of the ways in which capoeira was promoted at a local level by the groups in which I played. Live performances were a common method used by both groups to advertise and promote their specific group and capoeira more generally. The live performances took a range of forms. These included *street rodas*. These were similar to *rodas* played in class but were played in public view on the street or in a park. There were also live performances involving only masters and instructors. These were quite rare and typically only held during annual or bi-annual capoeira festivals when masters from other groups were invited by the leader of the group to attend the festival, teach workshops and engage in public performances. My first experience of capoeira was through a mediated representation of one of these performances. In the first week of fieldwork when I was scouring the local area for potential dance classes to use as sites for my research, I found the video pasted below on the internet. Watching this single mediated performance provided the spark for me to want to learn capoeira and choose it as a topic for my PhD research.

My first experience of capoeira (2006)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjzfjMY2BiU

When I viewed this video for the first time I had no knowledge or experience of capoeira whatsoever. This was the first time I had seen men interact and move their bodies in this way. I was instantly mesmerised by the athleticism, the acrobatic moves, the smoothness of movement and the playfulness exhibited by these men. After watching this video I knew straight away that this was something that I wanted to learn

and something I wanted to incorporate into my PhD. Analysing and writing about this video five and a half years on, I find it interesting to reflect on how this mediated live performance presented me with an initial view of capoeira as an unequivocally acceptable activity for men to partake in. Firstly, the video shows only men performing capoeira. Second, there are a number of elements in this capoeira performance that can be interpreted as obvious signs of orthodox masculinity, namely, the demonstration of physical strength, power, athleticism and the enactment of a fight-like sequence.

Alongside the street rodas, another common way of marketing capoeira was the monthly live performances at Brazilian-themed nights held in local nightclubs in McNulty and Bunk. I attended these Brazilian nightclub events on eight occasions, twice to actively perform with the McNulty group. In these settings an equal mix of male and female students performed with the teacher in front of the nightclub audience. The performances involved a mix between playing capoeira in pairs, performing solos, and occasional group performances of other Brazilian dances such as *machulele* and *samba de roda*. During these performances I noted that some of the male capoeirista from the Bunk group who had well defined muscles would remove their shirts and show off their chests. Interestingly, this practice was rarely repeated in a typical class. The nightclub audiences were thus treated to the explicit display of sleek, toned, and athletically fit male and female bodies performing "powerful acrobatic manoeuvres, fierce kicks, outstanding flexibility, and effective takedowns" (Joseph, 2008a:505). When I conducted the interviews for this research I was interested in exploring capoeiristas' experiences of the street rodas and nightclub performances, and I asked them to compare it to playing in everyday classes. An advanced male capoeirista provided a particularly interesting interpretation of his experience:

'Nathan' is a White British male advanced capoeirista.

C.   ok I was just wondering when you play capoeira (.) you're playing in (.) you might play in different places for example playing by yourself or in a demonstration or in class or at a festival (.) I was wondering whether there is any difference in your experience between these [yeah] different places of playing

N.   yeah um (2) the demonstrations you often feel that you are marketing it and you wanna make it look good and that perhaps the audience won't understand the subtleties of it so you find that in a demonstration there will be a lot of crowd pleasing moves more extravagant acrobatic movements… but we're not told by the teacher what you have to do [yeah] like perform some acrobatic moves (.) in fact he sometimes says the opposite he says you know keep it clean nice and simple capoeira without doing anything too exotic [yeah] but then he'll do lots of exotic stuff (C. chuckles)

C.   so just as an example what would an exotic move look like?

N.   well (.) what I think capoeira players consider exotic would DEFinitely be considered exotic by a non-capoeira audience [right] but then other things that we perhaps wouldn't consider to be particularly difficult like a cartwheel [mm] or just doing a handstand and stuff perhaps another audience might consider to be quite exotic so (.) anything outside of everyday movements of walking around and catching the bus and going bicycling is quite unusual (.) but for the capoeira players the exotic movements things like flips (1) things upside down like *peris de jamal* handspin (.) what we were training today [mm] *macaco* (.) *leque* where you go up on one hand and kick one leg over (.) so I suppose things that the capoeirista themselves would find difficult to learn they consider them to be exotic (.) they thought they were unusual when they first saw them when they first starting trying to learn capoeira so they assumed that everyone else think they look interesting and unusual as well

In this revealing extract Nathan says he feels that he is marketing capoeira when performing in demonstrations. This is made explicit through the performance of more extravagant and acrobatic crowd-pleasing movements. Nathan suggests that these crowd-pleasing movements become prominent because the audience would not understand the subtleties of capoeira. Interestingly, this is the first of a number of examples in this chapter where capoeirista actively seek to differentiate between knowledgeable audiences and non-capoeira audiences, and thus they construct an in-group out-group relationship. In this instance, Nathan suggests the difference can be seen when non-capoeira audiences are impressed by simple movements such as cartwheels and handstands, whereas knowledgeable capoeira audiences will likely only be impressed by more complex flips, spins and inverted movements. Nathan also represents these crowd-pleasing movements as 'exotic'. As such, Nathan positioned the exoticness of capoeira emerging primarily through the enactment of difficult movements that are unusual to Western audiences and "outside of everyday movement of walking around and catching the bus and going bicycling". The performance of Brazilian cultural identity also becomes an important element as the exotic crowd-pleasing capoeira movements were supported by a group of capoeirista playing a mix of 'unusual' capoeira instruments and singing capoeira songs in Brazilian Portuguese, both of which Western audiences would likely be unaccustomed to. Taken as a whole, the nightclub demonstrations certainly "appeal[ed] to consumer desires…for commodities that offer difference from the mainstream" (Joseph, 2008a:500), and most importantly the performance of exotic crowd-pleasing movements took centre stage.

7.2 Promoting cultured and contextualised capoeira

In addition to the live performances, the two capoeira groups also promoted and marketed capoeira through a range of multi-media artefacts that included clothing, instruments, flyers, posters, websites, documentary videos, Facebook pages and articles in magazines and national newspapers. Inserted below are two photos that depict examples of these multi-media artefacts. The first photo shows a flyer used to advertise and promote the McNulty capoeira group. The second photo shows a newspaper article printed in the Body and Soul supplement of The Times newspaper (16/03/2010). The article relays the experience of a female journalist who tried capoeira for the first time at a festival (which I attended) held by the Bunk group.

The purpose of analysing these two multi-media artefacts is two fold. First, I wish to highlight that these artefacts once again demonstrate the centrality of the visual display

of male bodies performing 'awesome moves'. This is clearly evident as the images of the two male capoeirista - the two instructors from the capoeira groups - take up the largest space in the centre of the compositions. I suggest the purpose for using the photographic images of male bodies performing 'awesome moves' was to create a visual hook and draw the viewer/reader in. Following on from the previous discussion, I also suggest that these representations reiterate the exotic appeal of capoeira with the two men performing movements far outside of everyday mundane action. As such, the first image shows the male capoeirista demonstrating incredible balance and control in an inverted singled handed pose, and the second set of images show the male capoeirista flying through the air in freeze-frame shots that suggest he is almost defying gravity. Crucially, these are just two examples out of a much wider selection of promotional images and artefacts that I have accumulated where capoeirista were depicted through a style of photography that echoes the renowned 'Airborne' work of dance photographer of Lois Greenfield (1992, 1998). Represented in this manner, the visual images of capoeirista in action thrive on the dramatization and glorification of elite athleticism and risk-oriented, gravity-defying aerial choreography. Furthermore, I suggest that this visual genre works to reproduce one of the most prevalent orthodox discourses for supporting men's involvement in dance, namely, positioning male dancers as virile, virtuoso, superman-like athletes (Gard, 2006).

The second issue I wish to highlight is how these two multi-media artefacts offer a more contextualised and culturally sensitive representation of capoeira that is grounded in history, culture and local experience. This is evident through the accompanying printed text on the capoeira flyer:

> "An expression of freedom – An urban ritual – A philosophy of life"
> "Music, self defence, acrobatics, dance and social interaction"
> "Brazilian-Portuguese language, Afro-Brazilian culture, traditional samba"
> "Capoeira incorporates dance, music, art, language, physical exercise, philosophy, and many other elements. Capoeira can improve your body expression, physical and mental strength, flexibility and self-empowerment"

Similarly, the title and subtitle of the newspaper article provides introductory information about the history and culture of capoeira:

> "The slave dance that leaves you fighting fit – A Brazilian martial art is spreading fast but you probably don't know its name. A high kicking Peta Bee tries her hand at capoeira"

The remainder of the article focuses on the journalist's reflections of attending a capoeira festival and playing capoeira for the first time. The article includes quotes from participants, the instructor and an academic researcher studying capoeira. It is also important to highlight that both male instructors depicted in these images are dressed in their white capoeira uniforms. Whilst this is not elaborated upon in either text, wearing these colours is part of the tradition for certain styles of capoeira. Thus, unlike the commercialised mass media representations of capoeira, these multi-media artefacts provide culturally relevant information about capoeira alongside the image of men performing 'awesome moves'. I suggest that this approach works to encourage non-capoeira audiences to use this information about the cultural discourses and practices of capoeira to help shape their interpretations of the visual representations of 'awesome moves'.

7.3 Problematizing 'awesome moves': isn't it just showing off?

Thus far I have asserted that male beginners were often enticed into trying capoeira classes through their attraction to the performance of 'awesome moves' in mass media representations, local demonstrations and multi-media artefacts. When male beginners entered the capoeira class, they were then faced with the practical reality that they would need to learn a series of challenging body techniques that are necessary to perform 'awesome moves'. In addition, beginners would start to engage in a process of learning the socio-cultural rituals, discourses and practices that were enacted in capoeira classes. Crucially, in this process of becoming a capoeirista, male beginners often experienced a number of gender troubles (Butler, 1999). The two most common troubles were, one, negotiating the complex discursive relationship between masculinity and showing off, and two, overcoming the relative inflexibility of their physical bodies. I will now explore these issues in turn, showing how male beginners negotiated these problematic practices and engaged in a series of embodied, visual and discursive transitions and transformations.

Turning first to the problem of showing off in public, a number of prominent issues were raised in my interview with Pedro:

'Pedro' is an English male intermediate capoeirista.

C.   you said you liked the way capoeira looks [yeah] in what sense?

P.   … I think one of the things that attracted me to it is when you see two people who are really good and they're *sheeewwuuu* (P. does sound effects & hand gestures to imitate actions of capoeirista) interacting with each other and … when you see two people who are really good it just gives you a feeling that like (.) that's something that you want to emulate (.) and when you first see it you assume it's all about showing off but it's not really I don't think that (.) the more you go to capoeira the more you realise it's not about that its about two people really liking it and just having a good time and interacting with each other at the same time as showing their skills (.) so I guess it's a cross between the two but it's not really showing off it just looks like it (C. chuckles) (3) I'm waiting to show off when I get some skills (both chuckle)

In this extract Pedro states he was initially attracted to capoeira by the visual spectacle of advanced capoeirista playing together, and in turn he wanted to emulate this. Pedro says that he first interpreted these capoeirista performances as a form of "showing off". However, he then goes to length to challenge this initial interpretation and assert that as a more experienced capoeirista he now re-interprets these performances as "two people really liking it and just having a good time and interacting with each other at the same time as showing their skills". Pedro then finishes by once again changing position, stating that capoeira performances are a combination of all these different aspects. He also states that he wants to be able to show off but first needs to acquire more skills. Evidently, from this short extract we can see that the process of becoming a male capoeirista involves negotiating a complex discursive relationship with the public performance of 'awesome moves'.

Although Pedro didn't explicitly raise the issue in the extract above, I suggest that orthodox discourses of English masculinity are fundamental to understanding why the performance of 'awesome moves' can become problematic and thus require complex negotiation. As such, Pedro initially positions capoeira performances as a form of showing off and he implicitly casts this in a negative light by then seeking to challenge and move away from this initial interpretation. It is important to ask, then, what is the problem with showing off? One answer would be that the enactment of orthodox English masculinities requires an aversion to the explicit display of the male body as an aesthetically pleasing object. As discussed in chapter two, traditional forms of gendered display have been based upon the unwritten rule that 'men look' and 'women appear' (Mulvey, 1975/1999). An additional problem might be that prominent discourses of national identity have constructed Englishness and English masculinity through forms of reserved, refined and restrained bodily performance (Collins, 2002; Fox, 2004). From

this perspective, the aesthetic display and exhibition of the male capoeirista invites audiences to gaze at and desire their male bodies, and thus these performances have the potential to disrupt discourses of orthodox masculinity and the traditional gendered relationship between looking and performing.

To highlight further complications in the relationship between orthodox masculinity and showing off the male body, Edwards (2006) suggests that, "from the boardroom to the bedroom and from the bar counter to the barbell masculinity would seem to be all about performing, showing off" (p.114). At first sight this quote might be seen as contradicting the argument that there is an antagonistic relationship between orthodox masculinity and bodily exhibitionism. This is not the case, however, as the examples Edwards deploys all point to the 'showing off' of masculinity through traditionally masculine activities within traditionally masculine spaces. In these examples, boasting about ones phallic prowess in the bedroom, displaying ones muscles in the gym and making a humorous spectacle of oneself in the pub can all be sanctioned because these performances demonstrate qualities that support orthodox masculinity in appropriate cultural contexts.

By highlighting these different relationships between orthodox masculinity and showing off the male body, I propose that male capoeirista were faced with the challenge of making sense of the performance of awesome moves within a discursive field that is complex, shifting and somewhat contradictory. Moreover, as male beginners grappled with these wider cultural discourses of masculinity, they were also increasingly influenced by the local discourses, rituals and practices of capoeira. By engaging with capoeira class technologies that included publicly playing musical instruments, singing songs, dancing, and engaging in theatrical and emotive co-performances, capoeirista were actively encouraged to explicitly display, exhibit and show off their bodily skills and emotions in a Brazilian way. In such a setting, with so many contradictory discourses of masculinity available, it is of little surprise that Pedro struggled to construct a stable and acceptably masculine pathway through this issue, and instead ended up shifting between multiple interpretations of whether capoeira is really about showing off or not.

Building upon the arguments above, I will now introduce a series of extracts taken from an interview with a male beginner that adds further complications to the enactment of

masculinity in the performance of 'awesome moves'. In the extracts below, Thomas engages in gender negotiations as he outlines what he perceives to be the requirements for an inclusive masculine performance of 'awesome moves'.

'Thomas' is a White British male beginner capoeirista

C.   is there anything that you don't like or anything that you find difficult?

T.   in general everyone is really helpful (.) everyone supports each other [yep] because everyone wants to make everyone better because ultimately it's an aesthetic (1) sport in a way (.) I don't now if sport is the right word [right] there is an emphasis on what it looks like so everyone is trying to achieve a beauty (.) in their own way (.) so I think that its great that everyone helps each other out but sometimes there are (.) obviously a few people who have a bit of ego or pretension and sometimes that (.) I mean capoeira generally doesn't attract those sort of people but they do exist and they (.) there are one or two in our class who I don't love but mostly I love everyone in our class but there are one or two people who I think you need to maybe tone it down a bit and be a little less egotistical or a bit more inclusive

Later …

T.   its very rare but (.) sometimes there are a few posers (1) that's the only thing (.) but then you get that in anything (.) that's part of it

C.   posers?

T.   yeah posers who are like yeah I'm awesome (2) look at my muscles and my spins I'm awesome [yeah] but that's alright because they probably are awesome fair enough (.) but its just I think that if you're genuinely awesome then you'd be sharing your awesomeness rather than just presenting it you'd be sharing it (.) kind of teaching as well (3) but that doesn't happen very often (5)

C   … what do think of this particular capoeira group?

T.   I think they've got a great leader (.) he is a very charismatic man and he's awesome and he does share his awesomeness rather than being ego about it (.) like if he does an awesome thing he'll do it with such a lovely smile on face that you can forgive him instantly and (.) you know he does it very playfully

At the outset Thomas talks about how he views capoeira as an aesthetic activity that involves participants supporting one another in the goal of trying to achieve a beauty in their own way. In this section of talk I suggest that Thomas is locating capoeira as a technology of the self, wherein capoeira provides the opportunity to engage in forms of embodied and aesthetic self-stylization through the shared cultivation and creative transformation of capoeiristas' historical bodies. In contrast to his description of this common capoeira practice, Thomas also identifies a small number of "posers" who demonstrate too much "ego" and "pretension". Thomas engages in a critique of the posers "who are like yeah I'm awesome look at my muscles and my spins I'm awesome". He contrasts these performances with what he views as a more desirable performance of awesomeness, namely, performing it within an inclusive pedagogical

culture where capoeirista are community minded and willing to nurture others, as Thomas asserts, "if you're genuinely awesome then you'd be sharing your awesomeness rather than just presenting".

To make sense of this section of talk, I propose that Thomas is critical of the performance of 'awesome moves' when enacted in the service of orthodox masculinity. This is evident through Thomas's critique of capoeirista he views as performing 'awesome moves' in an individualist and hyper-masculine manner that works to display their superiority and dominance over others. In contrast, Thomas praises the performance of 'awesome moves' within a pedagogical model that supports inclusive masculinities, with a focus on the importance of enjoyment and sharing skills within a supportive and inclusive pedagogical environment. To illustrate his point, Thomas describes how the capoeira instructor performs 'awesome moves' yet is able to share his awesomeness through his teaching practice and employing smiles and playfulness so that "you can forgive him instantly". This last comment raises an interesting question, why does Thomas posit that the instructor needs to be forgiven for performing 'awesome moves'? Perhaps an explanation can be found if we consider that in neo-liberal post-modern popular culture there is a prominent discourse that men should demonstrate a 'well balanced self' (Gill, Henwood & McLean, 2005). This means that to avoid being viewed as a poser, capoeirista would need to follow the "injunction not to take things too seriously, not to become obsessive", and thus the acceptable masculine performance of 'awesome moves' would include either being ironic, disinterested, self-depreciating or playful (Gill, et al., 2005:53). From this perspective, we can now make sense of how Thomas positions the instructor as being able to negotiate the intricate demands of neo-liberal discourses of inclusive masculinity by performing 'awesome moves' in a playful way.

From analysing the interview conversations with Pedro and Thomas, I have shown how male capoeirista needed to negotiate the complex relationships between orthodox, inclusive and Brazilian discourses of masculinity and the performance of 'awesome moves'. The examples demonstrate that whilst visual representations of capoeirista performing 'awesome moves' were successful in drawing male beginners into class, when male beginners started to engage with capoeira class technologies they faced complex discursive tensions surrounding orthodox masculinity and the showing off of the male body, and inclusive masculinity and the requirement to be supportive,

community minded and playful. To build on this discussion I will now explore how male beginners also needed to negotiate the gender troubles associated with the inflexibility of their historical bodies.

7.4 Problematizing 'awesome moves': masculinity and inflexible historical bodies

When watching experienced capoeirista play together they perform 'awesome moves' in such a fluent, smooth and controlled manner it almost looks effortless. This visual display is deceiving however as behind the performance of 'awesome moves' lay hundreds of hours spent learning the necessary body techniques. Reflecting upon my own and others progress in learning these capoeira body techniques, the most obvious and recurrent problem was the need to radically improve the flexibility of our bodies.

From observations throughout the four years of fieldwork, I noted there was an ascending scale of flexibility with beginners typically being the least flexible and advanced capoeirista being the most flexible. Amongst the beginners, I observed that more males than females started capoeira with poor flexibility. When I first spotted this emerging pattern I started to speak to every beginner with good flexibility to try to find out why they were different from the rest. From these informal conversations a clear pattern emerged that linked beginners' flexibility with their embodied biography and the types of physical activities they had previously undertaken. As such, a clear connection emerged wherein the small number of male beginners who were already flexible nearly always had previous training in martial arts such as Karate, Kung Fu, Taekwondo and Thai Boxing. In contrast, from conversations with the majority of male beginners who were relatively inflexible, most had a history of playing traditionally male sports such as football, basketball, rugby, climbing, canoeing and weight training. As already noted, I observed a larger proportion of female beginners (approximately a third to a half) who were already relatively flexible when starting capoeira. Through informal conversations I found that the flexible female beginners typically had previous dance or gymnastics experience. To help explain these findings, I will now draw valuable insights from Adams' (2005) work on the history of masculinity and male dancers in the UK and North America. Adams notes,

> "the notion that physical flexibility is a feminine characteristic has contributed to many men living with hamstrings tighter than they would be if flexibility were considered a desirable measure of manliness. These discursively produced tight muscles then confirm – visibly and physically – the commonsense 'fact' that it is not normal for men to be limber, and thus they make the limber male dancer seem unmanly and strange" (p.65).

Here Adams highlights the power effects of orthodox discourses of masculinity. These effects emerge from a cultural history where technologies of domination have delineated boys and girls into different gender appropriate physical activities that value and promote different physical qualities and cultivate gendered bodies in different ways. Moreover, since the 19th century, with the rise of the middle-class Victorian manly ideal, the Cult of Athleticism and Muscular Christianity, organized sport and its association with the production of manliness have become the dominant physical culture in England (Mangan, 1981; Adams, 2005, 2007). Within this culture, flexibility is rarely valorised. Instead, mass media coverage consistently glorifies sports' ability to cultivate more traditional masculine qualities such as strength, power, aggression, violence, determination, competition, discipline, self-sacrifice, stoicism and the muscular male body (Messner et al., 2000; Adams, 2007). As a result, English boys and men have traditionally been steered away from feminised activities such as dance, gymnastics, trampolining, Pilates and yoga where the cultivation of flexibility is explicitly valued and of paramount importance.

It is interesting to note that martial arts seem to provide an exception to this rule. On the one hand martial arts support aspects of orthodox masculinity, for example with the demonstration of strength, power and the ability to fight. Yet on the other hand, as evidenced through the flexibility of the male beginners in capoeira classes, martial arts typically encourages its practitioners to cultivate their flexibility. As an alternative physical culture in the UK, martial arts therefore pose an interesting challenge to the dominant masculine discourses of sport and the subsequent cultivation of the male body.

Bringing these arguments together, the patterns of flexibility exhibited by male and female beginners in capoeira class demonstrates clear signs of what Foucault (1977, 1980) refers to as 'the micro physics of power'. In other words, gender discourses have influenced capoeiristas' biographical history, directing them into gender appropriate physical training which has had the effect of structuring the male and female historical bodies beginners brought to class. For the majority of male beginners, the power of orthodox discourses of masculinity quite literally had the effect of producing their tight muscles.

To explore the relationship between masculinity and flexibility further, I planned to use a number of prompts to explore this issue when conducting the interviews. These prompts were not necessary however as nearly every male interviewee discussed their experiences of stretching and flexibility without me needing to actively introduce the topic. One such example is given below:

'Rusty' is a White British male beginner capoeirista

C.	is there anything that you don't like about capoeira or anything that you find difficult?

R.	(2) lots of things that I find difficult about capoeira in general capoeira is quite difficult

C.	(1) do you have some examples maybe?

R.	the whole stretching side of it [right] cos I'm completely inflexible it's a proper killer as we can see in your photos [right] (C. chuckles) my face it hasn't got a picture of pleasure on has it? (R. smirks) proper painful (.) also the acrobatics I've started going to gymnastics to try and help with the acrobatics but it's difficult man [yeah] definitely but I think a lot of that comes to back to flexibility my bridge is not the best (.) >it's probably one of the worst< (R. smirks) [right] and lots of the acrobatics if you've got a decent bridge and that's pretty much essential for a lot of the stuff (.) and also lots of the kicks as well because of the flexibility again [right] it's quite hard to keep your leg straight or to get it over a certain height (.) also balance as well (.) I never realised my balance was quite so bad (C. smirks) until I started doing capoeira [yeah?] yeah I find pretty much after every movement I'm off balance and I'm hoping that improves with [yeah with time]

Echoing the findings from Downey's (2005) ethnographic study of capoeira in the USA, Rusty's talk is exemplary of the majority of beginners I trained with who demonstrated a "profound sense of awkwardness and inadequacy when they started training" (p.183). Rusty provides specific examples of this struggle, highlighting how the painful battle with his inflexible body was evident in his struggle to perform 'the bridge'. Interestingly, the bridge was the most common move male capoeirista said they struggled with. In my interview with 'Sorriso' - an intermediate male capoeirista - he noted that despite having over three years of experience the bridge was still his biggest physical challenge in class. He succinctly conveyed this trouble through the words, "yeah and the bridge I HATE bridge (both chuckle) I really hate bridge". Reflecting on these common conversations, I propose that is was acceptable for male capoeirista to talk about their lack of flexibility because it demonstrated their connection with orthodox masculinity.

To gain a more multi-dimensional understanding of the bridge and its importance in the performance of 'awesome moves', I have inserted three photographs below that provide visual representations of capoeiristas training these moves. The first photograph shows an intermediate female capoeirista practicing a static bridge. This is a yoga posture. The second photo shows an intermediate male capoeirista practicing another yoga posture called the Cobra. The purpose of both these moves is to stretch and strengthen the back. The third photograph shows a short sequence of action where an intermediate female capoeirista is being supported by a male capoeirista as she practices a *macaco*. This is an 'awesome move' where the capoeirista jumps backwards over her head using one hand then the other. As evidenced in the second shot in the sequence, the embodied skills gleaned from practicing the bridge are invaluable in performing the *macaco*.

To learn the body techniques necessary for performing 'awesome moves', capoeirista needed to be committed to improving their flexibility. As illustrated in the photographs above, some capoeirista stayed behind after class to work on their flexibility and practice specific 'awesome moves' they particularly liked. For other capoeirista, such as Rusty, their acrobatic and flexibility training was supplemented by joining separate

gymnastics, yoga or tai chi classes. After sustaining an injury in the first year of fieldwork due to my lack of core strength and flexibility, I followed this pattern and started regularly attending yoga classes to improve my flexibility and help prevent further injuries.

To further explore male capoeiristas embodied struggle with flexibility and its impact upon their performance of masculinity, I will now examine an interview extract where Thomas describes his transition from initially being extremely excited about learning capoeira moves, to now being frustrated by the embodied reality that to achieve the awesomeness he desires he will need to engage in a prolonged process of learning the necessary body techniques and transforming his historical body.

'Thomas' is a White British male beginner capoeirista

C.   ok are there any differences between when you first started and now you've been playing capoeira for a while?

T.   (4) I've noticed more subtleties and I'm becoming more frustrated (.) it's still inspiring and I love it but at first it was like EVerything single moment was like >fucking hell this is awesome< (.) just to get a basic *mea lua* kick was like wo::w I've done it (.) now it's like FUCK this is gonna take me six months of exercising and stretching before I can get this move so now its more frustrating and challenging (.) so it feels different (.) I'm realising it >well I knew< it's a deep art [mm] there are a lot of aspects to it (.) now I'm more frustrated by it (.) I'm still inspired but there is an element of like urgh I can't just quickly be awesome at it

C.   is that cos your body is not like:: (2) flexible enough?

T.   no matter how naturally amazing you are at capoeira if you just switch off your flexibility you're FUCKED (C. laughs) you know? [yeah] no matter how good you are at memorising and positioning your body or whatever (.) if you're not flexible then you're not good at capoeira in a way >I mean that's quite crudely speaking< (.) and I'm not massively flexible (.) to a point I could probably go lower touching the floor than most men I know but its still not as good as people in capoeira (.) so yeah its frustrating at the moment but I'm still inspired by it

Being asked to reflect on the changes in his experiences of capoeira over time, Thomas identifies how at the outset every new capoeira move he learnt produced a feeling of "fucking hell this is awesome". However, Thomas notes that he has now become frustrated by the realisation he cannot quickly learn how to perform 'awesome moves' and instead will need to invest considerable time and energy into exercising and stretching his body. Thomas then eloquently asserts that flexibility is fundamental to being a good capoeirista, "if you just switch off your flexibility you're FUCKED", and this is problematic because he doesn't have particularly good flexibility. Thomas then clarifies this point, suggesting that compared to most men he is flexible, but compared

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to most capoeirista he is not. When I first heard Thomas say this, it instantly reminded me of my own experience visiting the physiotherapist who diagnosed the injury to my body in the first year of fieldwork. Like Thomas, the physiotherapist said that I was flexible for a male but not flexible for a dancer. In both instances, my self and Thomas were now considering how our bodies could be judged by a new set of physical standards and values. Moreover, by starting to compare ourselves and our bodies to other capoeirista and dancers (whatever their gender), our comparisons to other non-capoeirista and non-dancing men became less significant, except perhaps to assert our difference from them.

7.5 Performing 'awesome moves' as a technology of the self

Moving on from the discussion of how male beginners struggled to improve their flexibility, I will now examine the performances of advanced male capoeirista who had already spent considerable time cultivating their flexibility and learning the appropriate body techniques that enabled them to successfully perform a variety of 'awesome moves'. In the interview extract below, I ask an advanced male capoeirista - 'John' - to reflect on what it feels like to play capoeira. John provides revealing insights into how his experiences playing capoeira and performing 'awesome moves' has functioned as a technology of the self:

'John' is a British male advanced capoeirista

C.   what does it feel like when you're playing capoeira?

D.   I guess I feel more graceful than usual (.) unless I fall over like today (D. smirks)

C.   (2) in what way do you feel graceful?

D.   I guess just because they are beautiful movements quite expressive in a way (.) so I feel more alive doing it sometimes rather than just shuffling around high off tea and chocolate and not knowing what you are doing (.) and I think the connection between you and whoever you are playing makes you feel different as well (.) kind of >yeah more alive< (3) I don't know what the word is for it but (.) it makes you look at things (.) in a more open kind of way just because you're doing movements that (.) maybe aren't a normal part of life (.) you learn to lean back a different way to bend sideways a way you wouldn't normally (.) and yeah (2) it broadens your horizon a bit maybe (.) in terms of movement

C.   so is it (.) does it apply outside of class?

D.   yeah sometimes (.) it depends how you feel really [right] sometimes after a really good lesson you do walk around and feel a bit more (.) I don't know (.) in touch with the world and like flexible around things and other times >you don't< you just feel tired and your body hurts (C. chuckles)

In this section of talk John starts by reflecting on how capoeira has enabled him to engage in forms of creative and aesthetic self-stylization wherein he has been able to use his body to perform graceful, expressive and beautiful capoeira movements. From these descriptions I suggest that John reflects on his performance of capoeira movements as a form of technology of the self. Moreover, at no point does John attempt to justify or defend his cultivation and enjoyment of these aesthetic practices in terms of his masculinity, and thus he provides an example of how male capoeirista, "in pursuit of physical competence and pleasure, will develop and use the whole range of their physical capacities, including those deemed to be feminine" (Adams, 2005:65). John also presents the performance of capoeira movements as a technology of the self in terms of moving beyond the norms of everyday movement and being able to cultivate his body in a wider variety of different ways. He illustrates this by noting that he is able to share a connection with the other person he is playing capoeira with, and he repeatedly notes that he experiences his body in a "more alive" and "more open kind of way just because you're doing movements that maybe aren't a normal part of life". From this section of talk, John gives the indication that there are possibilities for profound transformations in the ways capoeirista use and take pleasure in their bodies. This is extended through John's assertion that performing capoeira movements has had a knock on effect, changing his sensual perceptions and the way he looks at and engages with the everyday material world.

From a critical perspective, one might be inclined to assert that this is no more than an idealised discourse that romanticises the embodied experience of performing awesome capoeira moves. However, if we take a look at the photograph below which shows John performing an *au ponte con uma mao*, we can start to gain a better appreciation of how by learning to perform 'awesome moves' such as this, John has literally been able to learn a new way of walking and interacting with the everyday material environment. In turn, it may then become more comprehensible that John's embodied experience of performing 'awesome moves' has incited him to assert that at times he is now able to "lean back a different way to bend sideways a way you wouldn't normally…and feel a bit more, I don't know, in touch with the world and like flexible around things".

To conclude the analysis of this extract, John finishes by stating that despite all the transformative and aesthetic possibilities of playing capoeira and performing 'awesome moves', sometimes after class "you just feel tired and your body hurts". This final addition to the conversation can be interpreted in a number of ways. It may be argued that John is guarding against an overly romantic presentation of 'awesome moves', and there is also the possibility that this statement functions as a form of self-depreciating self-presentation. In this light, John is reiterating one of the hallmarks of an inclusive masculine performance of 'awesome moves' which I outlined earlier. However, if I interpret his words at face value, I can also suggest that even for advanced capoeirista the performance of 'awesome moves' requires putting the body through a continuous process of "excruciating elegance" (Browning, 1995:87; Delamont & Stephens, 2007), wherein the beautiful, exotic and awesome capoeira moves can only be successfully performed through continued training and strenuous practice.

7.6 Performing more than just 'awesome moves'

In the process of learning to perform 'awesome moves', the final transition I wish to highlight is how capoeira instructors encouraged students to recognise that there was more to being a capoeirista than simply performing 'awesome moves'. To push capoeirista towards achieving this shift in perspective, the instructors in both groups introduced a diverse range of pedagogical technologies which encouraged students to learn about the multifarious aspects of capoeira and Brazilian culture. In my interview with the Bunk instructor these intentions were made explicit.

The 'Bunk' capoeira instructor is a mixed Brazilian male:

B.   capoeira it's not just about movements (.) as many people think you know (.) it's about the dance its about the Brazilian culture the samba the afoxe (.) it all comes together it's not just capoeira (.) capoeira is a <name> that represents the need to bring a good vibe but <behind it> there are many different activities (.) behind capoeira (.) and as you can see we teach capoeira but teach Maculele we teach Coco all kind of Brazilian activities that are related (.) like samba at the end of the class people dance people go out together (.) capoeira is not just one activity it's more than it you know it is like a mix of many different activities into one activity

Later….

C.   is there anything that you don't like about capoeira or anything you find difficult?

B.   basically what I don't like about capoeira is (.) the people who come to capoeira and think they are in the gym (.) like they're going for a gym activity [ok] (1) they don't:::: they don't get the:::: capoeira as a (1) they don't go to capoeira and think about the culture (.) they don't think about the ritual (.) they think about just (.) I'm going to do some exercise (.) they go to capoeira but they don't want to learn the berimbau (.) they don't want to learn the songs (.) they just go to capoeira because they love the::: (.) the movements (.) because in capoeira you cannot just sell one thing about capoeira (.) you can't go to capoeira and say I would like to learn just the movements (.) it doesn't work like that you know (.) you need to bring it all together (.) and that's the thing that I don't like about capoeira

C.   so with your experience here in Bunk or in England (.) have you seen some people just come for one part?

B.   yeah many times

C.   is it just the movement?

B.   yeah many times [right] yeah many times (2) and that's not good (.) but in the beginning that's normal people come from one side [yeah] but then when we introduce them [yeah] to capoeira and they start to understand

At numerous points throughout this extract the instructor voices his concern at the number of students who attended capoeira classes with the intention of solely wishing to learn the capoeira movements. I suggest that these comments reveal a crucial tension surrounding the effects of the current marketing strategies used to promote capoeira and attract students to class. As such, the instructor says

"in capoeira you cannot just sell one thing about capoeira (.) you can't go to capoeira and say I would like to learn just the movements (.) it doesn't work like that you know".

This is an interesting proposition that challenges my argument in the first section of this chapter where I demonstrated that capoeira is frequently marketed through a primary focus on the acrobatic and exotic spectacle of capoeirista performing 'awesome moves'. This therefore produces a fundamental tension whereby the marketing of capoeira movements acts as a double edged sword. One the one hand, my data suggests that this

practice has been relatively successful in attracting to class male audiences who know very little about capoeira. However, at the same time, the capoeira instructor asserts that these modes and motives for entering capoeira are normal but nevertheless not good. As a result, the instructor explains how his teaching pedagogy explicitly responds to this issue by constructing an environment in class that encourages students to cultivate a more multi-faceted engagement with capoeira and wider Brazilian culture.

The instructor goes to great lengths to detail how he constructs his classes as a multi-dimensional Brazilian space that embeds the teaching of capoeira within a wider Brazilian cultural context (de Campos Rosario, et al., 2010). He asserts that students not only learn how to perform capoeira movements but also learn a much wider range of body techniques that includes learning dances such as Samba, Afoxe, Maculele and Coco, learning to play musical instruments such as the *berimbau,* and learning to sing capoeira songs in Brazilian Portuguese. The instructor also asserts that he tries to familiarise students with Brazilian cultural values and discourses by encouraging them to learn about the history and rituals of capoeira, by socialising together at parties, and by bringing a good vibe to class. From my fieldwork experiences, the good vibe the instructor is talking about is cultivated and demonstrated through the energy or axé (pronounced 'a-shay') of capoeirista singing loudly and passionately and engaging in a dynamic, vibrant and theatrical roda. This Brazilian good vibe can also be seen through students' performances of a relaxed and expressive style of bodily interaction that involves everyday physical tactility and emotional display, for instance by hugging and kissing one another when greeting friends (Stephens & Delamont, 2006). Ultimately, for the students who demonstrate a commitment to learning the diverse range of body techniques on offer in capoeira classes, and for those who seek to embody the wider Brazilian cultural discourses, they are rewarded by moving up the capoeira hierarchy. This is marked by gaining higher level belts which are presented to the capoeirista in public view at annual or bi-annual capoeira graduation festivals.

7.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to focus on the most taken for granted masculine practice in capoeira classes and employ a Foucauldian approach that actively problematized this practice. Following this approach, I have demonstrated how the performance of 'awesome moves' was used as a marketing tool in the commercial mass media, in local demonstrations and in multi-media artefacts, functioning to make

capoeira an exotic and visually appealing spectacle that was 'safe' for men try. However, when male beginners entered class I detailed how they faced a number of gender troubles that emerged from their experiences of learning a series of challenging body techniques and from engaging with a new set of cultural discourses. As such, I explored how male beginners needed to negotiate the discursive tensions between wider discourses of orthodox and inclusive masculinity, local discourses of capoeira, and the practice of showing off the aesthetic male body when performing 'awesome moves'.

I also outlined how the majority of male beginners started capoeira with relatively inflexible bodies. I asserted that these historical bodies had been produced through their biographical engagement with orthodox discourses and practices of masculinity that had structured their prior engagement in male appropriate forms of physical activity that had not valued or cultivated their flexibility. With flexibility being an essential feature of performing 'awesome moves', male beginners therefore had to undertake a prolonged and often painful process of improving their flexibility. With the examples of Thomas and John, I showed that through the process of cultivating their bodies, male capoeirista were able to engage in a process of embodied and aesthetic self-stylization that could be viewed as a technology of the self.

Finally, I detailed how the capoeira instructors structure their classes in a way that encourages students to move beyond a sole focus on performing 'awesome moves', and facilitates their engagement with a wider range of capoeira body techniques and Brazilian cultural discourses and practices. From outlining the different stages and the different challenges in the process of performing 'awesome moves', I have been able to outline a common pathway and a structured process of transition that male beginners typically undertook. One of the overarching themes that emerged from analysing this process is that by attending capoeira classes male beginners were able to pursue new ways of using their bodies and were able to engage with a new set of discourses that provided alternative ways of making sense of their performance of embodied masculinities. For some, this process of embodied, visual and discursive transformation acted as a technology of the self, yet for many the process of transition was far from trouble free. As such, in the forthcoming chapters I will explore the tensions that emerged when male capoeirista were required to engage with a series of Brazilian dance practices they were unprepared for and unaccustomed to. Furthermore, I will explore how the introduction of new Brazilian discourses of gender evoked further points of

tension that challenged English male capoeiristas' existing views about the acceptable performance of embodied masculinities.

8

Stiff Hips

In this chapter I focus on the most problematic masculine practice in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes – male practitioners moving their '*stiff hips*'.

I will outline two process narratives (one for capoeira and one for Latin and ballroom) that chart common sequences of action that emerge over time in relation to male practitioners' 'stiff hips'. These narratives have similar starting points, with the vast majority of male beginners coming to class with little or no previous experience of purposefully moving their hips in any form of dance. Asked to reflect on their problematic experiences in class, male capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers made sense of their 'stiff hips' by negotiating contradictory discourses that detailed how their gendered historical bodies were an effect of 'culture' and/or 'nature'. From these common starting points, the subsequent narratives of the practitioners from the two groups took different paths.

Outlining the process narrative of the Latin and ballroom dancers, I will show how the pedagogical technologies employed in the teaching of the Latin dances enabled male dancers to learn the necessary body techniques to loosen their hips. This learning process instigated a form of embodied transition that started with group exercises and was followed by extensive lone mirror work. In addition, the discursive tensions that surrounded the movement of male dancers' 'stiff hips' were negotiated through group laughter and humorous critical reflection. Thus, for the male dancers who put in the time and effort to master the movement of their hips, they were able to perform heterosexual choreographies in the Latin dances with their female partners at DanceSport competitions. These virtuosic hetero-sexy performances worked to negotiate the problematic relationship between orthodox discourses of masculinity and men's hip movement and re-assert the dancers' masculine credentials.

In contrast, in the capoeira classes, male capoeirista were frequently unable to overcome the initial problematic relationship with their 'stiff hips'. Typically unaware that capoeira classes also involved dancing in the *samba de roda* (samba in a circle), the majority of male beginners would try a little wiggle then hide away at the back of the

samba circle. To make sense of the problematic relationship male capoeirista had with moving their hips, I will examine an explanation provided by one of the Brazilian male instructors. He asserts that there are national and cultural differences between the historical bodies of English male capoeirista, who he proposes have 'hard waists', and Brazilian male capoeirista, who have 'easy waists'. By examining this argument, I will draw attention to the importance of whether male capoeirista had been brought up in a society where dancing was a common practice for men and whether they had access to cultural discourses that legitimized men's movement of their hips as a form of heterosexual performance.

Responding to the requirements in the samba de roda for male dancers to move their hips, the capoeira classes enabled English male capoeirista to engage with Brazilian discourses of masculinity that positioned samba de roda as a way to 'get the girl'. Crucially, however, in capoeira classes there was rarely any explicit teaching of the body techniques needed to dance in the samba de roda. Male capoeirista therefore needed to pro-actively seek out how to dance in the samba by engaging in forms of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Stephens & Delamont, 2010). Tellingly, there were only a few male capoeirista who put in the extra effort to practice the necessary body techniques and as a result it was typical to find only a small number of proficient male dancers dancing in the centre of the samba de roda. For the few proficient male dancers who did engage in these performances, in a similar manner to the advanced male Latin dancers, they were able to enact highly sexualized forms of heterosexual interaction with their female dance partners and so enact an orthodox style of heterosexual Brazilian masculinity.

8.1 Problematizing 'Stiff Hips'

In the Latin and ballroom classes, male dancers' 'stiff hips' came to the fore in the Latin dances (short for 'Latin American'). The Latin dances consisted of the Jive, the Cha cha cha, the Rumba, the Samba and the Paso Doble. In these dances, male and female dancers were both required to enact body techniques that included various forms of hip movement. In capoeira class, the problematic movement of men's hips became evident when members of the class engaged in the Samba de Roda. This dance was often performed at the end of the capoeira class and had the effect of producing an exciting finale to the lesson. Capoeirista would huddle together in a tight circle and the teacher would play a samba rhythm on the big *atabaque* drum. The teacher would sing a samba

song in Brazilian Portuguese and the students would all dance to the music and respond to the call and response song. A male-female couple would then start to dance in the middle of the circle and dancers of either sex would shimmy into the middle, cut in on the couple and push the dancer of the same sex out of the way.

8.2 Explaining gender differences

In the thirty interviews I conducted with male and female capoeiristas and Latin and ballroom dancers, nearly all of the interviewees commented that they had observed a difference in ability between male and female beginners when they were dancing. Often this was illustrated through specific reference to females being better than males at moving their hips in the Latin dances and in the samba de roda. To tease out the complexities of this issue, I will present three excerpts, two from interviews with male capoeiristas and one from an interview with a male Latin and ballroom dancer. These excerpts demonstrate that despite participating in different classes, male practitioners made sense of the perceived abilities of male and female dancers in remarkably similar ways. Indeed, the most frequent discourse that was deployed to make sense of male beginners' 'stiff hips' was to locate this phenomenon as an effect of culture and socialization. Two examples where these discourses were deployed are shown below:

'Flash' is a White British male intermediate Latin and ballroom dancer

F. I think traditionally guys don't dance with their hips [right] they do all this kind of stuff (F. waves and pumps his arms repetitively) and girls do dance with their hips if you go to night clubs and stuff you see it all the time [right] (.) and when you ask guys to dance with their hips for the first time in Latin they can't do it because they can't coordinate their muscles properly because they've hardly ever used them before [right]

'Sorisso' is an Italian male intermediate capoeirista

C. do you think that men and women do samba differently?

S. ….the main difference is in the samba where the girls are more:::: (1) definitely the girls dance better (.) the average girl dance better than the average man because I think it's cultural that the men are not used to (.) dance or they don't know how to dance because no one told them (C. chuckles) and the girls they do so:: (.) and the girls are more gentle and elegant in the movements so for a girl its easier to dance better because just the way she moves is already a dance you know … the main difference in the samba where you can see where the girls just shake their ass [yeah yeah] and it's ok its ok (C. chuckles) it's fine (.) and the man tries to be a little bit in the dancing context but (.) I also see that lots of men are shy to dance in the samba de roda [yeah] more than girls (.) because it's definitely cultural this

In these two excerpts Flash and Sorriso both deploy a series of explanations that make sense of male dancers' ineptitude and female dancers' greater proficiency in moving their hips as an effect of culture and embodied socialization. As such, Sorriso claims that women generally dance better than men in the samba, and Sorriso and Flash both assert that women are better at moving their hips than men. To justify these claims both interviewees attend to the influence of culture and cite men's lack of previous dance experience. As such, Sorriso asserts that most men "don't know how to dance because no one told them" and as a result "lots of men are shy to dance in the samba de roda". Similarly, Flash asserts that in the more common dance environment of the nightclub, men do not traditionally dance with their hips whereas women do. Flash suggests that men tend to focus on moving other parts of their body such as waving and pumping their arms. As a result of these common social practices, according to Sorriso, we therefore have a situation where the women in class are able to dance better and are "more gentle and elegant in the movements" and they are able to "shake their ass" because they have previous experience moving like this. For the men, however, when asked to dance with their hips for the first time in Latin, Flash suggests that they are physically inept and cannot perform these movements because they cannot coordinate their muscles properly because they have hardly ever used them before.

From my own observations in class, I have noted that whilst there were a small number of exceptions (i.e. male beginners who had good hip movement and previous experience in other Latin dances), taking the male beginners and female beginners as two separate groups, they did generally demonstrate the gender differences that Flash and Sorriso outlined above. From these observations, I assert that male and female dancers typically had considerably different embodied starting points when entering class. In turn, this gendered difference was also represented in participants' talk, wherein they asserted that male and female beginners' bodies were heavily influenced by their gendered histories and their associated (lack of) experience moving their hips.

To theorize Flash and Sorrio's patterns of talk, I suggest that the representations of these two practitioners have much in common with academic understandings of the workings of the micro-physics of power (Foucault, 1980) and the process through which gendered historical bodies are cultivated (Nishida, 1998/1937). As experienced practitioners and adept at moving their hips, Flash and Sorriso demonstrated awareness that being able to move their hips required learning appropriate body techniques. In turn, by acquiring this

knowledge, I suggest that they were able to more easily reflect upon how their own and other male dancers' previous engagements with gender practices had inscribed their male bodies with dispositions that went down to the very coordination of the muscles around the hips.

Alongside the focus on culture and socialization, some capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers also drew upon the discourses of nature and biology to assert that women were 'naturally' better dancers than men and/or 'naturally' more gifted in moving their hips. Interestingly, when discourses about nature and biology were invoked they were almost always simultaneously contrasted, contradicted or combined with discourses of culture and socialization. This discursive interplay is illustrated below in the talk of a male capoeirista:

'Pedro' is an English male intermediate capoeirista

P.   when we have samba de roda they can always (.) they can always dance can't they? [yeah] I've never seen ANY woman in the samba in the samba de roda that can't dance (.) but personally it's not my kettle of fish but I try and (.) get myself involved in it [yeah] but it doesn't come naturally to me like it does to the women I guess men probably >I don't know< it's difficult to say

C.   … ok you said about the samba de roda (.) you said there was a difference there between men and women (.) do you think that might apply to Machulele or any of the other dances that we do (.) like in festivals?

P.   no I don't think so because Machulele is a bit more like (.) more like capoeira (.) more sort of (.) acrobatics (.) and like kicks and stuff (.) so for me no I don't think so [ok] it's just samba de roda (C. smirks) and dancing in general (C. smirks)

C.   so maybe it's more of the dancey elements when the difference comes out maybe?

P.   yeah yeah (1) I'm of the opinion that women are generally better dancers then men (3) I mean well in England (both chuckle) you know in South America it's a little bit different it just seems like everyone can dance so it's not really so much of an issue there

In this excerpt, Pedro claims that he had never seen a woman in the samba de roda that could not dance well. He therefore locates women as generally and naturally' better dancers than men. Pedro also talks about his problematic relationship dancing in the samba de roda, asserting that he is not a 'naturally' gifted dancer. These instances of talk provide typical examples of how capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers deployed discourses that naturalized gendered bodies and their subsequent dance ability. The way in which this discourse was deployed echoes the findings from other research into gender and dance, wherein researchers argue that bodily materiality, sensory

experiences and how bodies look can lend power to categories of bodily difference (Butler, 1999; Hensley, 2011).

At this point it is important to highlight that feminist research typically offers a critique of discourses that seek to naturalize gendered bodies, suggesting that these discourses work to conceal the cultural production of gender difference (Butler, 1999; Hensley, 2011). A fascinating part of Pedro's talk, then, is that it did not conceal or ignore the cultural production of bodily difference. Rather, Pedro continued to tack back and forth between understandings of male and female capoeiristas' dance ability as "both instinctive and learned…cultural and natural" (Hensley, 2011:195). This is evidenced when Pedro claims that women are "generally better dancers" than men but then immediately counters this statement by saying, "I mean well in England (both chuckle) you know in South America it's a little bit different it just seems like everyone can dance so it's not really so much of an issue there". To make sense of this statement, it is important to note that Pedro is a white English man in his mid-twenties and here he is drawing upon knowledge gained from his experience travelling around a number of countries in South America. Pedro is thus able to engage in a form of cross-cultural analysis of embodied masculinities in dance. By introducing the caveat that different relationships between masculinity and dance exist in South America, Pedro problematizes the explanatory power of the naturalness discourse that he had previously deployed. The introduction of this contradictory understanding of the perceived gender difference in dance causes Pedro to demonstrate signs of uncertainty and confusion. This is evident when he states that dancing comes naturally to women yet then queries this position stating, "I guess men probably >I don't know< it's difficult to say".

A final point I wish to highlight before concluding this section is that Pedro's talk demonstrates how English discourses of orthodox masculinity were sometimes challenged, negotiated or circumvented by drawing upon alternative discourses of masculinity that had roots in different cultures. In the context of the samba de roda and the Latin dances, alternative discourses of masculinity relating to Latin American and especially Brazilian culture provided a means of legitimating male dancers' movement of their hips on the dance-floor. I will explore this issue further in the forthcoming section when I analyze the talk of one of the male Brazilian capoeira instructors.

By examining the three interview extracts above, I have tried to show how practitioners pre-dominantly made sense of male dancers' 'stiff hips' by drawing upon discourses related to culture and socialization. To a lesser extent, discourses of nature were also introduced and almost always inter-meshed with discourses of culture. This resulted in complex and uncertain negotiations between the two sets of discourses. Taking this series of discursive interplay as a whole, male capoeirista and Latin dancers both demonstrated a resounding openness to talk with me about their troubles, their awkwardness and their lack of comprehension moving their hips. Whilst I would like to believe that their openness was in part a result of my skills in building trust, rapport and ethical relationships with the interviewees, perhaps a more likely interpretation is that male practitioners felt comfortable talking about their troubles performing hip movements because it allowed them to legitimate their heterosexual masculinity. As such, by openly discussing their problematic experiences engaging in a form of movement traditionally linked with the enactment of femininity and gay masculinity, the male interviewees were able to demonstrate how their historical bodies had been shaped by their prior engagement with orthodox practices and discourses of heterosexual masculinity.

8.3 Learning to walk with your hips in the Latin dances

Moving now to look at the subsequent trajectory of the process narrative of the male Latin dancers; as part of their wider training in the different Latin dances, all male beginners engaged in a process of learning to find and focus on their hips and mobilize them in new ways. To do this, dancers were required to learn a new set of body techniques. The teachers initially taught these techniques through a series of repetitive group exercises that encouraged students to become aware of how they could shape and change the capacities of their hips. To illustrate this process, I will re-tell a specific incident from a lesson I participated in as a novice dancer in my second year of fieldwork. In this class the dancers were being taught to extenuate their hip movement when walking in the Cha cha cha. The class consisted of between twenty to thirty beginner and novice dancers with an approximate ratio of 40:60 male to female. The dancers initially stood at one end of the room randomly mixed together. They faced towards the center of the room to watch and listen to the male teacher explain and demonstrate the correct technique for walking in the Cha and performing the Cuban Cross step. Some of the key points of technique the teacher made explicit are follows:

- *Your feet must always be connected to the floor and push with your toes first*

> *when walking forward*

- *Turn out your back foot as you walk forward* (this encourages more twist in the hips)

- *Keep your shoulders square on and level* (this encourages smooth upper body movement at the same level)

- *Think balls of feet and flat feet, then the footwork for the Cuban Cross step would be Ball Flat Ball* (by pushing down through the flat foot on the second step, this enables more weight to transfer through the hips, legs and feet which in turn enables more hip movement).

Whilst these main points of technique provide some insight into how to perform these actions, it will no doubt be difficult for readers who are unaccustomed to the Cha cha cha to picture these movements in their mind or imagine performing them with their body. To help build up a better understanding I suggest clicking on the YouTube video below. This short instructional video shows two professional dancers performing the Rumba Walk. The exercise we performed in class used similar techniques to those demonstrated in this video but performed to a faster tempo.

> Rumba Walk
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiNj-juu3pQ

As a group, walking forwards and backwards up and down the room, the students in class tried to copy these movements and adhere to the specific body techniques outlined above. During this group activity a series of improvised comments were spoken aloud by a series of male dancers. Throughout this verbal exchange there was a considerable amount of laughter from members of the class:

> Bryan: *"I feel like a right mincer doing this. Andy, we look sooo gay".*
> Teacher: *"You need to practice this walking down the street".*
> John: *"What! Like here come the fashion police"*
> Ted: *"I'm never gonna walk down the street like this"*
> Me: *"I always walk down the street like this".*

This snippet of talk provides an excellent example of how male dancers verbally negotiated the relationship between the movement of their hips in the Latin dances and the problematization of their gender and sexual identities. I suggest that the most revealing part of this particular exchange is the laughter that arose from the dancers in attendance. When Bryan first commented, "I feel like a right mincer doing this. Andy, we look sooo gay", laughter erupted in class. The laughter continued throughout the

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entire verbal exchange and was re-energized with every new comment spoken aloud. I suggest the reason why this was deemed funny was not because the dancers in class were implicit homophobes and supporting Bryan's potentially homophobic comment. Rather, I propose that the dancers were primarily laughing at the vulnerability and tensions the male speakers were voicing about their experience walking with their hips. As such, the male dancers publicly mocked themselves; they actively problematized their own emotional and visual response to these actions; they raised concerns about how it impacted on their sexual identity and how their performances would likely face a negative reception outside of class. As such, the male dancers implicitly reinforced the association between femininity and gay masculinity as separate from orthodox forms of embodied masculinity. Ultimately, then, the male dancers did not appear to be using homosexually themed language with the intent to dominate or abuse, but rather to turn personal tensions, pains and concerns about aspects of their masculine identities into a source of shared humor. Humor therefore took on a multi-faceted role as a coping mechanism, a technique of problematization and as a source of emotional therapy (Keily & Nayak, 1997; Hemmingson, 2008).

Building on this analysis, I want to suggest that the combination of the group training activities and the forms of humorous dialogue functioned as a technology of the self, enabling male dancers to problematize the confines of orthodox performances of masculinity. As such, by attending class it was expected that the students would try to copy the movements the teachers demonstrated, whether these were in line with an orthodox aesthetic of masculinity or not. And thus, in this context, all the male and female dancers in class were actively trying to copy the hip movement body techniques demonstrated by the teacher. Alongside this, the subsequent humorous dialogue that emerged during the group practice session worked to identify and negotiate the assumed link between male homosexuality and the male dancers' movement of their hips. The humorous dialogue highlighted that male dancers were aware of the cultural constraints orthodox discourses of masculinity posed, they were reflective about the forms of self-policing they were negotiating, and the male dancers demonstrated an awareness that they were pushing beyond the boundaries of orthodox masculinity. The self-depreciating humor therefore provided a form of support in working through these gender troubles. Ultimately, then, the group practice sessions and the humorous dialogue worked to train and legitimate a new way of moving the male body that resonated more with an inclusive and neo-liberal style of embodied masculinity. Indeed,

by engaging in humorous self-depreciation and playful performances of masculinity, the male dancers embraced the neo-liberal masculine requirement to demonstrate a 'well-balanced self' by following the "injunction not to take things too seriously" (Gill, Henwood & McLean, 2005:53).

8.3.1 Lone mirror work

Whilst the group practice sessions and shared public joking provided a safe and accessible way to 'break the ice' and overcome the initial physical and discursive challenges of male dancers moving their 'stiff hips', a lot more work was required for male beginners who wanted to improve and do well in DanceSport competitions. In conversation with advanced male dancers they explained how to become an accomplished Latin dancer they had needed to engage in extensive physical training to physically loosen their 'stiff hips'. For example, in an interview with an advanced male Latin and ballroom dancer - 'Grant' - he told me a story about how after graduating from university he wanted to progress from the university dance circuit to the amateur circuit and ultimately become the best dancer he possibly could. At the time of graduation he had no female dance partner and so his private dance teacher encouraged him to dance in front of a mirror by himself as often as he could for one year. The purpose of engaging in this prolonged lone activity was to strengthen his core muscles and learn how to connect all his dance movements to his core.

Whilst Grant's story of practicing alone might sound extreme, there were usually five or six highly dedicated intermediate and advanced male dancers in the club who would stay behind after class in order to practice their Latin body movement in front of the window (at night the reflection in the window acted as a mirror). These actions were conducted around the edges of the dance floor whilst other dance couples continued to practice together in the centre. To illustrate this activity, I have inserted a photograph below that provides a snapshot of 'Flash' demonstrating the kinds of body shapes dancers made whilst practicing by their self.

During these mirror work exercises, dancers would intensely focus on practicing one or more of the multi-dimensional body techniques required in the Latin dances. For example, the dancers might focus on the minute details of a particular Latin dance technique and try to sediment this technique into the movement of their core, hips, arms, shoulders, legs, fingers or feet. They might focus on connecting the movements of different parts of their body together so that their body could flow in a smooth and fluid manner. They might engage with the added challenge of listening to the music, feeling the rhythm in their bodies and harmonizing their movements with the music. And for advanced dancers who had mastered these complex techniques, they could also focus on getting into character by visually portraying the kinds of emotions that were appropriate for each dance.

Of particular interest for the current chapter is that one of the fundamental techniques male dancers practiced during these mirror work sessions involved creating sinuous and flowing waves of motion up, down and across their body. A fundamental necessity for performing this style of movement was for male dancers to have loosened their 'stiff hips'. This could only be achieved through investing hours of practice into developing a kinesthetic awareness of how to inhabit, move and coordinate their hips in new ways. The process of embedding the necessary techniques into their hips allowed male dancers' to work out the stiffness and gain greater control of their hips. At the same time, the social practice of dancing in front of the mirror also showed signs that it functioned as a technology of the self (Foucault, 1988). As such, on numerous occasions I observed how male dancers engaging in mirror work related to the movement of their body as a work of art and saw the transformation of their hips as a creative and aesthetic activity. For example, it was typical for on-looking experienced

male and female dancers to give support, advice and feedback to the male dancers who were practicing. Fellow dancers would comment on what parts of the dancers' movements they thought looked good and they would constructively critique the dancers' technique and offer suggestions for what needed to be tweaked in order to make their movements look better. Unlike the initial group practice exercises detailed previously, humorous dialogue was not a noticeable facet in these mirror work interactions. Evidently, then, humor was no longer needed to dispel tensions surrounding the movement of their hips as experienced male dancers had moved past these initial periods of gender trouble and were now more concerned with cultivating an aesthetic sensibility that was attentive and appreciative of the sinuous and sensuous body movements male dancers performed in the Latin dances.

8.3.2 Mastering the hips

Building on the arguments above, I want to show how the process of becoming more embedded within the local culture of dance and becoming more proficient in the embodied performance of Latin hip movement facilitated a shift in the meanings attributed to male dancers' hip movements. To illustrate this, I will now present two interview excerpts that provide insights into how male dancers charted a discursive and visual transformation from the troubled performances of male beginners' feminized hip movement, to the more masterful and masculine hips movements of advanced male dancers.

'Barry' is a British white male beginner Latin and ballroom dancer

C.   would you consider that there are certain aspects of Latin and ballroom that are feminine or masculine?

B.   um:: yeah (.) I'd say the hip movements are quite feminine [right] even when the guys are doing them [ok] I'd say they are they're quite feminine movement but then once you get really good you do see like (.) I suppose almost the masculinity behind it because they kinda make it (2) make it their own (.) sounds a bit weird

C.   I th::ink I understand

B.   the really good guys that just look so fluid so:: (.) they do look really good whereas I suppose the less skilled guys look a bit more like they're just trying to really shake their hips a bit like um:: (.) well like girls do when they are like out clubbing [mm]

In this section of talk Barry asserts that hip movements are "quite feminine even when guys are doing them" and this is particularly so among male beginners who Barry observes look like the girls who go clubbing in nightclubs and shake their hips.

Clearly, Barry's observations reiterate the views outlined in the first interview extract by Flash. In both instances, the male dancers position dancing in nightclubs as a 'normal' dancing practice and they position the gendered differentiated movements commonly associated with this style of dance as 'normal' too. Moreover, it is in these 'normal' contexts that Barry and Flash observe that women dance more with their hips. Thus, in Latin classes, when male beginners are required to dance with their hips, Barry perceives the visual appearance of male dancers performing this movement as feminine. It is also possible to argue that there is a hidden and unspoken sexualized dimension in Barry's talk with an association of gayness linked to this kind of dance movement.

Crucially however, Barry also states that he has observed a visual transition with male dancers moving their hips, wherein, "once you get really good you do see like (.) I suppose almost the masculinity behind it because they kinda make it (2) make it their own". This argument suggests that advances in male dancers' skill level leads to changes in the visual appearance of male dancers' hip movements, which in turn has potential to radically alter its gendered and sexualized symbolization and meaning. To make sense of Barry's explanation, I want to assert that he is drawing upon a historic dance discourse that works to legitimate male participation in dance through the demonstration of masterful and virtuous performance (Gard, 2001). As such, researchers of the history of dance have used this argument to make sense of the acceptance and celebration of the famous male ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky (Burt, 1995; Gard, 2001). Nijinsky came to prominence during a period of intense homophobia in late Victorian Western Europe, when male ballet dancers faced more prejudice than any other dancer. Located within this troubling context, Nijinsky was able to navigate and deflect prejudice due to his mastery of ballet and the execution of his legendary leap. In turn, I assert that this discursive strategy was re-used by a number of male dancers in the Latin and ballroom class. In this context, however, for beginners like Barry, the virtuous and masterful performances of men's hip movements were identified in the performances of advanced dancers from our club. Virtuous and masterful performances were therefore identified through relative comparison, and male beginner dancers did not necessary need to observe a professional Latin dancer in order to perceive movements to be masterful and therefore heterosexual and masculine.

Building on the arguments above, I will now examine an excerpt of talk taken from an interview with an advanced Latin and ballroom dancer where I directly asked him

whether he ever feels feminine when he dances. In response, he reflected on a similar discursive transition wherein he initially perceived his own dance performances as looking feminine and actively sought to correct this.

'Grant' is a white male advanced Latin and ballroom dancer

C.   ok (3) do you ever feel feminine when you're dancing Latin?

G.   (1) when I started dancing (1) I never fel::t feminine but when I would watch a video of myself I'd think >oh God< that looks feminine [right] (1) and then I'd strive to correct that and (.) dance like a man (.) as I pictured he should be (.) yeah (.) I never FELT feminine (1) no (2) no I don't know

C.   (1) like where did you get your (.) your (.) you said you wanted to correct it (.) to what standard (.) where did you get your view of what the way a man should dance=

G.   =ah watching videos that I'd downloaded or YouTube that kind of thing [right] you know the really good amateurs and pros doing it (.) yeah

C.   so you were like 'I wanna dance like that'

G.   yeah EXACTLY that guy doesn't look feminine (G. smirks) [mm] that guy could kick my ass (both chuckle) and then do two spins (both chuckle)

In this excerpt Grant attests that he never felt feminine when dancing. However, when watching a video recording of himself dancing, he interpreted the visual appearance of his movements as feminine and asserted that it was important to correct this. In order to look more masculine, Grant explains how he tried to model his dance style on male amateur and professional dancers whom he watched on YouTube videos. As Grant eloquently proclaims, "that guy doesn't look feminine (G. smirks) [mm] that guy could kick my ass (both chuckle) and then do two spins (both chuckle)".

It is important to note that Grant reiterates the problematic discourse, previously outlined by Barry, that male beginners who perform Latin dance moves are often perceived to look feminine and gay. By voicing an aversion to looking feminine, both male dancers reiterate a central aspect of orthodox masculinity, and thus they set about working to make their body movements look more masculine and heterosexual. For Grant, the process of looking more masculine was led by the performances of highly experienced male dancers who functioned as role models. Crucially, Grant attests that these dancers demonstrated orthodox masculine qualities such as looking strong, powerful and like they were good in a fight, yet at the same time they could also perform in more expressive and aesthetic ways (that one might have previously associated with femininity), and hence perform two spins. Ultimately, then, we can see that Grant physically trained his body to perform a new kind of 'Latin' masculinity he

hadn't been familiar with before. When reflecting on this new form of masculinity, his talk suggests that the distinction between orthodox and inclusive masculinities becomes a little blurred and also isn't so relevant. As such, this new form of masculinity does not come from British culture. Rather, it is an appropriation of a expressive from of heterosexual 'Latin' masculinity (that's not feminine) and works to legitimate manly forms of artistic expression and spinning.

8.3.3 Performing heterosexual hip movements in DanceSport competitions

After extensive hours of dedicated practice embedding new hip movement techniques into their bodies, male Latin dancers were able to expertly perform these dance techniques at DanceSport competitions. To provide a visual insight into what these techniques looked like when performed at competition, the two photographs below show an advanced Latin couple performing dance moves from the Rumba. In these photos the distinct curves down the side of the male dancer's body demonstrates that he has been able to loosen, strengthen and control his hips to such an extent that he can perform sinuous movements with his body.

When analyzing the visual appearance of the male dancer's body depicted above, it is important to note that he is wearing clothing that is specially designed to show off the shape of his body. The gabardine material of his Latin trousers fits snuggly around his hips and buttocks, and the tight but stretchy figure hugging Latin top shows off the shape of his upper body. The male dancer is also wearing two inch Cuban heels that push his weight further forward and assist with performing the techniques for moving his hips. When talking with male beginners, it was common to hear concerned comments about male Latin dancers wearing high heels and tight revealing clothing that

presented the male body as a sexual object to be looked at. However, when talking with intermediate and advanced male dancers, it was clear that wearing this style of clothing became a norm and a necessity. With the goal of winning the DanceSport competition, experienced dancers worked hard on their appearance, attempting to attract the attention of the judges. Male dancers therefore asserted that the tight clothing functioned to show off the highly valued body techniques they had spent hours practicing in class.

In support of male Latin dancers' performances of masculinity at DanceSport competitions, it is important to highlight how their clothing was positioned in contrast to their female Latin dance partner. This is illustrated in the photograph above where the female Latin dancer is wearing a sexy dress that reveals far more flesh than the male dancer's clothing. In addition, the construction of an explicitly male role worked to support the performance of masculinity, wherein experienced male Latin dancers confidently led their female partners into a series of highly choreographed heterosexual positions, poses and actions. Many of these actions required male dancers to perform sinuous hip movements, yet at all times these movements were positioned within a series of erotic, flirtatious, seductive, passionate or lustful heterosexual co-performances with their female partner.

To theorize the performance of experienced male dancers' hip movement at DanceSport competitions, I wish to argue that, on the one hand, male Latin dancers were able to move beyond the confines of historic discourses of orthodox English masculinity and through extensive periods of training, they were able to cultivate the necessary body techniques to masterfully perform sensual, aesthetic and more diverse embodied and visual performances of masculinity. However, at the same time, the performances of masculinity in the Latin section at DanceSport competitions were always underpinned by a fundamental principle of orthodox masculinity, namely, the compulsory enactment of choreographed heterosexuality. From this perspective, the process narrative of the male Latin dancers ultimately culminated in the production and celebration of hybrid performances of masculinity that combined elements of orthodox and inclusive English masculinities alongside 'Latin' heterosexual masculinities, with adept male Latin dancers' moving their hips in tandem with their female partner whilst being critically evaluated by on-looking judges, and excitedly cheered on and avidly photographed by the DanceSport audience.

8.4 The Samba de Roda - try a little bit of a wiggle then hide away

The trajectory of male capoeiristas' negotiation of the problem of stiff hips demonstrates similarities and differences to their Latin counterparts. On the one hand, the samba de roda provided a similar context where the movement of male dancers' hips were once again constructed and experienced as an extremely problematic practice. However, in this context, there were signs that far fewer male dancers were successful in loosening their 'stiff hips' over time. Attending first to the similarities between the two contexts, I have inserted three short interview extracts below that provide a starting point from which to explore why dancing in the samba de roda became a problematic practice for so many male capoeirista.

'Rusty' is a White British male beginner capoeirista

R.   samba yeah that is really quite uncomfortable (R. chuckles)

C.   in what way is it uncomfortable?

R.   just because (.) I'm not a natural dancer [mm] and so I felt myself edging towards the back (both chuckle) so it's got a really good sort of vibe but [mm] its just (.) so awkward for your legs because its meant to be all >hey hey hey < (R. lightly shakes his body) and yet it's like >go away go away go away< (R. smirks) but yeah I think by looking around I've seen lots of people (.) lots of the newer guys at least tend to move backwards as well (R. smirks) [yeah] yeah try a little bit of a wiggle then hide away

'Ben' is a white male advanced capoeirista

B.   blokes don't like doing the samba de roda you watch them and they're all standing at the back (.) there's a lot of blokes that stand at the back on that one

C.   and you?

B.   oh I stand wa:::y at the back (C. chuckles) I never go into the samba roda never ….but you notice a lot more girls go into that and blokes do tend to stand back on that one (.) or you get the same blokes (.) you get three or four blokes that just go in a lot (.) you notice the same guys going in whereas girls there's a lot more participation with different girls going in (1) I'm assuming you've noticed this as well (both chuckle)

In the extracts above, the two capoeirista relay similar personal experiences and similar observations of the actions of fellow male capoeirista when dancing in the samba de roda. Rusty states that he feels uncomfortable engaging in the samba because he is not "a natural dancer". And Ben claims that male capoeirista do not like doing the samba de roda and he personally never goes in. Alongside these specific instances of talk, I spoke with a large number of male beginners who initially attended capoeira classes unaware they would be asked to dance in the samba de roda. In turn, a common response to this

unexpected activity was highlighted in an interview with an advanced female capoeirista:

'Naomi' is a British White female advanced capoeirista

N.   maybe it'll make some of the guys feel uncomfortable (.) a few comments I've heard from guys like 'I've never danced when I've not been drunk so how am I supposed to dance in bright lights after a lesson doing samba' so yeah (1) it's definitely more hard for males

In this short extract, Naomi reiterates the view explicated by Rusty and Ben that dancing in the samba de roda is more problematic for males than females. Moreover, Naomi re-tells a common comment she had heard wherein male capoeirista located drunken dancing (assumedly in nightclubs) as the only form of dancing they had undertaken prior to attending capoeira classes. Interestingly, this statement is based upon the implicit assumption that male capoeirista did not perceive capoeira as a form of dance, and thus their sober performances in the samba de roda that take place outside of the 'normal' darkened environment of the nightclub are positioned as new, highly problematic and exposing dance experiences, which are at the same time seen as understandable. A specific account of the problematic nature of this practice is provided in Rusty's talk when he states "its meant to be all >hey hey hey < (R. lightly shakes his body) and yet it's like >go away go away go away< (R. smirks)". Here we see Rusty asserting that samba is supposed to be an enjoyable and vibrant dance involving the shaking of the body, yet for Rusty, and numerous other male beginners, it is the performance of this style of movement that causes such anxiety and gender trouble.

As a result of their problematic experiences with the samba de roda, Ben posits that he never goes in to the centre of the circle and Rusty states that his typical response is to "try a little bit of a wiggle then hide away". Crucially, Rusty and Ben both claim that they are not alone in reacting in this way and are thus positioning themselves as 'like other men' by representing this as a shared and normative male response. As such, they both posit that they have observed other male capoeirista who do not enter the centre of the circle and instead always move towards the back. From my experiences of embodied fieldwork I can confirm the observations made by these two capoeirista. However, I also want to add that, by verbally sharing these observations with me, Rusty and Ben were able to locate their own problematic responses to dancing in the samba as a 'normal', common and legitimate response that demonstrates how their historical bodies had been shaped through their prior engagement with orthodox practices and discourses of masculinity.

A final point to consider, and a crucial point of difference to the process narrative of the male Latin dancers, is that male capoeiristas' problematic experiences dancing in the samba de roda were not restricted to male beginners. Indeed, like Ben, a sizeable number of intermediate and advanced male capoeirista either talked about or physically demonstrated signs that they were also hesitant dancing in the centre of the samba de roda. However, in line with Ben's observation, I identified that there were nevertheless a small number of male capoeirista who did regularly dance in the centre of the samba de roda. This observation leads to the question: who were these men and what made them comfortable to dance? I will now examine a section of talk from my interview with one of the Brazilian male instructors who provided a possible answer to this question.

8.4.1 'Hard waist, Easy waist'

In my interview with the Bunk* capoeira instructor he offered an interesting account of why particular male capoeiristas had problematic responses to the samba de roda:

The Bunk capoeira instructor is a mixed Brazilian male

C.   is samba the same in Brazil?

B.   in Brazil we know what is samba we have more like a sarcastic way to look at samba more like a sexy way and <here> the guys they don't have this sexy way you know because we go to samba because the interaction between man and woman [yeah] we go to get a girl (.) to grab a girl and here people don't have this kind of culture to go somewhere to dance and through the dance you get the girl (.) here as you know the guys they don't like to dance (.) European guys have like a hard waist you know (.) but in Brazil they have an easy waist where they can move their waist you know [yeah] it's quite a different way cos Brazilian guys they grow up dancing natural

C.   is it part of the culture?

B.   it's part of the culture (.) we dance (.) we love to dance [right] so that comes out in capoeira as well (.) and that's the difference between Brazilian guys and British guys (.) but I think the British guys start to like to dance as well (B. chuckles)…. probably when they came to capoeira they had an idea that they were going to learn an art form with fighting with acrobatics but they had no idea about the dance way (.) but then they start to love the activity and they don't worry about the dance

In this extract the instructor offers an explanation for male capoeiristas' problematic relationships with samba de roda by proposing a number of cultural differences between Britain and Brazil that relate to the availability of everyday discourses and practices that legitimate male dance activities. The instructor asserts that in Brazil dance is "part of

the culture (.) we dance (.) we love to dance" and as a result "Brazilian guys they grow up dancing natural". In this statement we see another example of the intricate entanglement of discourses of culture and nature. As such, I interpret the statement that Brazilian men "grow up dancing naturally" as a comment on how the incorporation of dance into young boys embodied socialization enables them to be more at ease dancing and able to *look* like they are 'natural' dancers (Henley, 2011). Alongside this, the teacher also professes that there is an established discourse that enables and encourages men to dance in a "sexy way" so that they can "get the girl". By deploying this discourse, dancing in the samba de roda is legitimated because it is explicitly positioned as a heterosexual practice that allows male dancers to flirt with and try to sexually attract female dancers. Interestingly, this Brazilian discourse works in a similar way to orthodox English discourses of masculinity, dispelling 'accusations' of effeminacy and the possibility that male dancers might be gay. In addition, this Brazilian discourse also works to legitimate male dancing practices that go beyond traditional performances of orthodox English masculinity. As such, dancing in a sexy and sensual way with the swing, sway and twisting of the body is presented as fundamental to the performance and embodiment of Brazilian identity (Browning, 1995; Delamont, 2006; Joseph, 2008b; Rosa, 2012).

The teacher goes on to assert that the Brazilian discourse of dancing to 'get the girl' is not established or normalized in Britain, and thus British male capoeirista do not have an accepted or accessible discourse to legitimate dancing in a sexy way and moving their hips. This is an interesting proposition because in my first analysis chapter I explicitly documented how a discourse of 'dancing to meet women' was employed to recruit male beginners and legitimize their participation in the potentially feminized realm of Latin and ballroom dance classes. With this in mind, I argue that, on the one hand, the 'dancing to get a girl/dancing to meet women' discourse was clearly available and being employed in the specific local context of the Latin and ballroom dance classes. However, it manifested in a slightly different way than in the capoeira classes. In the Latin and ballroom class, the dancing to meet the girls discourse was more 'functional'. In other words, male beginners didn't necessarily have to like Latin dancing and moving their hips, they just had to be present in the context where the women were. In contrast, in the samba de roda, the Brazilian teacher represented the practice of dancing to get the girl as a much more pleasurable experience.

In this section of talk, the teacher also eloquently proclaims that British male capoeirista commonly suffer from "hard waists", whereas Brazilian male capoeirista benefit from "easy waists". In turn, he suggests that British male capoeirista need to work on overcoming the physical rigidity imposed by their 'hard waist', and for him, one way in which this is demonstrated is when British male capoeirista "start to love the activity and they don't worry about the dance". By positioning the bodies of British and Brazilian male capoeirista as distinctively different, the teacher's talk works to both normalise and problematise British male capoeirisitas' 'stiff hips' and 'hard waists'. As such, he proposes that British male capoeirista are able to transform their bodies by engaging with a set of Brazilian gender discourses and practices in capoeira class that allow these capoeirista to make sense of male dance in new ways and focus on enjoying the experience of dancing in the samba.

This perspective resonates with the discourse of inclusive masculinity professed by the experienced Latin and ballroom dancers Darren and Flash in the chapter on 'dancing with women'. As such, Darren and Flash represented more experienced dancers as likely to assert their love of dance and their pride in being different from other non-dancing men by not blindly following normative or orthodox discourse of masculinity. Here, then, the capoeira teacher introduces a similar way of encouraging and identifying changes in the performance of male dancers in the samba de roda. It is important to note, however, in the interviews I conducted with eleven male capoeirista, the majority did not present the loosening of their 'stiff hips' as simple process that was instigated by developing a love of dance. Rather, the loosening of their 'hard waist' and the cultivation of an 'easy waist' was represented a complex, highly problematic and often unsuccessful process.

8.4.2 Learning to samba through legitimate peripheral participation

When leading the samba de roda in class, the teachers would often explicitly encourage beginners who had little or no experience of dancing in the samba to participate in the centre of the roda. A small number would take up this opportunity and make up their own dance movements, free-styling to the music and improvising with their dance partners. However, a much larger majority would stay back and not move into the centre. In interviews with numerous male capoeirista who were openly apprehensive about actively participating in the centre of the roda, they often raised the issue of not knowing what to do or how to dance in the samba. At this point it is crucial to note that

in four years of fieldwork I did not attend a single class where the body techniques for dancing in the samba de roda were explicitly taught by the capoeira teachers. This, then, was one of the key differences between the pedagogical technologies employed for teaching the body techniques for moving the hips in the samba de roda and those taught for the Latin dances in Latin and ballroom classes. For the Latin dances, from the outset, there were group technique classes where the dance teachers demonstrated the different elements of the body techniques step-by-step and then introduced dedicated exercises where all the students were required to practice the movements. In the capoeira lessons similar pedagogical methods were used in the teaching of the capoeira movements. However, these methods were never extended to teach capoeirista how to dance in the samba de roda. Learning the body techniques necessary to perform in the samba de roda was thus typically achieved through a process of watching more experienced dancers and asking them for help on how to dance after the lesson had finished.

To help make sense of this method of informally learning the rituals and body techniques for dancing in the samba de roda, it is useful to draw upon Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation'. This concept was originally employed to explore how learning is a situated and multifarious activity that can be achieved in many ways, and thus learning does not have to be solely based upon a learner versus teacher oppositional relationship. Stephens & Delamont (2010) have already made use of this concept to shine a light on the process through which a number of capoeira skills are informally learned in the capoeira roda. They note that beginners start from a peripheral position when engaging in a roda, wherein they stand in the capoeira circle and watch and listen and clap, yet they rarely take lead parts in the *bateria* playing an instrument and they may not spend much time in the centre of the roda playing a game. Nevertheless, by initially taking up this peripheral position, they assert that students who pay close attention can learn about numerous aspects of the game that relate to etiquette, humour, trickery and how to produce good energy in the roda. From this perspective, beginners engage in a process of enculturation where they learn about local rituals and learn aspects of the required body techniques through engaging in cycles of watching, listening and learning.

I will now argue that the process of legitimate peripheral participation was also the central mechanism through which body techniques and local rituals were learned for

participating in the samba de roda. However, I will also explore how engaging in this process was particularly problematic for many British male capoeirista, yet not for Brazilian male capoeirista. The problematic nature of this process is highlighted in the interview extract below:

'Rusty' is a white British male beginner capoeirista

C.   so you've not done anything similar to samba [no] before?

R.   I keep going on I've mentioned to Jackie to April to Marie-Anne that they have to show me moves or something [yeah] but (.) just because we don't do it that often and then suddenly it's like <samba de roda> (R. chuckles) can I not just do some handstands in the corner (both laugh)

C.   it does have some specific foot movements you can learn [yeah] but I don't actually know what the foot movements are so when I go in I just (both chuckle) shake a bit shake my ass and do something

R.   the hands feel really awkward as well (.) what are you meant to be doing with your hands I find that really difficult (both chuckle) what's going on there it's just not right man >but then< you see some of the guys and they're sort of (.) some of them don't even dance they sort of like do a pose and the women dance around them and I think that is definitely the way forward (both laugh)

C.   yeah Derrick is good at that

R.   yeah very little movement from himself in that move (R. pulls a pose with his knee on the floor and arm in the air) that's pretty much it (R. chuckles)

C.   maybe just do that [yeah] but then you've got to get a good pose

R.   yeah you don't want to be sort of like (R. pulls a silly pose) (both chuckle)

C.   no stop stop

In this extract Rusty talks about the surprise and anxiety he feels having to engage in the samba de roda because it is only occasionally performed in class. Rusty also reflects on how he is unprepared for dancing in the samba and specifically feels awkward because he doesn't know what to do with his hands. To try to overcome these problems, Rusty follows the typical route of engaging in legitimate peripheral participation, asking more experienced samba dancers to teach him some of the basic samba steps. It is important to note that in this example and the forthcoming quote from my interview with Sorriso, both capoeirista said they consulted with advanced female dancers for advice on how to perform the basic samba steps. These acknowledgements can be interpreted in a number of ways. One interpretation might be that that these men sought help from female dancers simply because there were many more proficient female samba dancers in class than males. A more critical interpretation is that Rusty was almost demanding to be taught the necessary body techniques to perform the samba de roda as a way of reinforcing his orientation to orthodox masculinity. As such, needing to be taught these

techniques demonstrates that they do not come 'naturally' to him, and he can't 'just do it', as it assumed of the Brazilian male dancers. By adopting this approach it proves that the British male dancers can't be seen as gay or feminine.

Another interpretation of this section of talk is that there is also something problematic about asking a male capoeirista to teach you how to dance samba. As such, from observations in class, it was extremely rare to see two or more men dancing samba together without a woman present. In contrast, it was an everyday occurrence to see male capoeirista teaching each other the necessary body techniques to perform 'awesome moves'. In this context, then, there was an unspoken assumption that men should only dance in a sexually provocative way with women, and, as a result, it is likely that male capoeirista did not wish to explicitly ask other men to show them how to dance samba as this might have be seen as looking gay.

Another crucial point of interest in Rusty's talk is that to navigate the problematic practice of dancing the samba, Rusty twice refers to how he has looked for the safest or most orthodox way to maintain an assured performance of masculinity. First he states, "can I not just do some handstands in the corner (both laugh)". Voicing his preference to work on perfecting his handstands rather than dance in the samba, there is an obvious link here to the taken for granted performance of orthodox masculinity in capoeira through performing 'awesome moves'. Second, Rusty comments on how he proposes to learn to dance in the samba de roda by watching more experienced male dancers and trying to mimic their movements. Crucially, the technique Rusty suggests copying is one that requires the least movement of his body and one that puts him in a traditionally heterosexual masculine position with the woman being the object of desire and object of the gaze dancing around the man. These two strategic responses once again highlight the gender trouble resulting from English men's orientations to orthodox masculinity and dance. This trouble is partly due to the male capoeirista associating an 'easy waist' with effeminacy, as opposed to making sense of it through the use of the Brazilian discourses professed by the teachers. Gender troubles also emerge because the explicit (hetero)sexual nature of the close couple dancing in the samba seems almost 'too sexy' male beginners who are used to more restrained and refined forms of English masculinity. Ultimately then, there are two overlapping sources of discomfort, one focusing on the negotiations of gender and sexuality, and the other dealing with cultural variations.

8.4.3 Heterosexual performance in the samba de roda

For the Brazilian male capoeirista that came to class (who invariably had previous experience dancing samba), and for male capoeirista from Britain and other countries that put in effort to learn the samba steps and the techniques for moving their hips, they were able to fully engage in the samba de roda and perform a variety of improvised interactions with female dancers. To provide a visual insight into what these interactions looked like, I have inserted a series of photographs below that document a popular series of movements. Read from left to right, the photographic strip shows a sequence of five snapshots taken within the space of tens seconds. Looking at the strip of photographs from a critical perspective, I will now analyze how the specific body positions, movements and interactions link with wider symbolic performances of heterosexual masculine and feminine identities.

The strip of photographs beautifully illustrates the theatrical performance of sexual motion and heterosexuality in the samba de roda (Browning, 1995). This performance casts the female dancer in a role where she is required to be sexy and flirtatious. For example, we can see that the female dancer is arching her lower back and pushing her bottom backwards towards the male dancer. In this position she vigorously shakes her hips and back-side. The female dancer also has her back to the male dancer. In this position the couple are re-enacting the sexual motion of the man taking the woman from behind. This performance works to 'phallicise' the male dancer's groin area and the movement of his hips (Hensley, 2011). The male dancer is therefore able to successfully perform a heterosexual Brazilian style of masculinity, wherein by showing how well he can move his hips on the dance floor, these movements are suggestive of how well he can move his hips in the bedroom.

Building upon this critical visual analysis, I want to locate these photographs within an ethnographic context by exploring the backgrounds of two male capoeirista depicted in the images and examining how they were able to demonstrate assurance, confidence and enjoyment dancing in the samba de roda. Attending first to 'Derrick', the male dancer pictured initially dancing, it is crucial to note that he is Brazilian. Whilst I did not interview Derrick and I know little about his dance history, I can speculate that his prowess in the samba was enabled in part by engaging with the set of Brazilian discourses and practices proposed by the Brazilian male teacher, namely, growing up in a culture where dance is viewed as more of an everyday activity and where men have access to the widely accepted discourse that dancing in a sexy way in the samba will help them to 'get the girl'. This explanation, however, does not work for the second male dancer - an intermediate Italian capoeirista called 'Sorriso' - who is pictured confidently and excitedly ready to cut in on the action.

In my interview with Sorriso he told me that during his childhood growing up in Italy he remembered being influenced by his male friends, male members of his family and by a gender delineated school physical education system that all promoted orthodox discourses of masculinity, and hence constructed a problematic relationship between masculinity and dance. However, at the same time, Sorriso also talked about how he was strongly influenced as a child by dancing the Waltz with female members of his family, by watching dance movies such as *Dirty Dancing* and *Footloose*, and then as a teenager by gaining experience learning how to dance Salsa, Meringue and Tango. As a result, when Sorriso first came to capoeira and encountered the samba de roda, he already had considerable dance experience. In addition, in my interview with Sorriso, he demonstrated familiarity with the 'dancing to meet women/dancing to get a girl' discourse, deploying it on numerous occasions when telling stories about how he deflected accusations of homosexuality from other boys when he was young, and more casually interweaving this discourse into his reflections about his experiences dancing in the samba de roda. Finally, Sorriso also commented on how he had actively sort guidance from an ex-girlfriend and an experienced professional female samba dancer on how to perform some of the samba body techniques. Taking these different aspects together, it is clear that Sorrisso had engaged with all the relevant discourses and practices discussed in this chapter that support the loosening of male dancers 'stiff hips' in the samba de roda. Sorriso therefore provides a prime example how a non-Brazilian male capoeirista can successfully pass through a series of embodied and discursive

transitions and ultimately reap the rewards; confidently and passionately participating in vibrant and hetero-sexy male-female co-performances in the samba de roda. At the same time, however, Sorriso's personal dance narrative also demonstrates how difficult it is and how much time and energy non-Brazilian men need to invest to reach this point. As such, Sorrio had danced since adolescence and had proactively sought samba lessons, and this was quite a rarity not shared by many of the men in class.

8.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to focus on the most problematic masculine practice in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes, namely, male practitioners moving their '*stiff hips*' in the samba de roda and in the Latin dances. To explore the process through which practitioners responded to this problematic practice, I outlined two process narratives that consisted of common chains of action and transitions over time. Following this approach, I demonstrated that the two process narratives had a number of similarities but also crucial differences. The starting points for the majority of male beginners were the same in both groups, as they had no previous experience moving their hips in dance contexts. In turn, it was common for male practitioners to identify how their 'stiff hips' had been shaped by their previous engagement with orthodox discourses of masculinity and popular nightclub dancing practices in Britain that worked to position sensuous dancing as a feminine practice and the movement of men's hips as distinctly unmanly (Delamont, 2006; Marion, 2006).

The fundamental differences between the subsequent trajectories of the two process narratives were evident in the Latin dances where the problematic nature of male dancers moving their hips was explicitly highlighted in lessons, and detailed pedagogical technologies were employed to teach beginners how to move their hips. In capoeira classes, however, the problematic experiences of male capoeirista dancing in the samba de roda were not shared in public class discourse, and the requirement for male capoeirista to informally learn the body techniques from female Samba dancers meant that it was more challenging for them to overcome their 'stiff hips'. In response, male capoeirista typically followed one of three pathways, one, choosing to initially learn the 'safest' dance moves that fit with orthodox masculine visual aesthetics, two, seeking assistance from experienced dancers and learning to be adept at moving their hips, and three, finding the experience too troubling and thus remaining on the periphery of the samba de roda every time it was performed.

Reflecting on the instances where male practitioners did successfully engage in embodied practices that loosened their hips and verbal practices that allowed them to explore and justify their resulting gender trouble, a common element in these situations was the demonstration of laughter and humour. In the interviews with male dancers and capoeirista, laughter and humour played a crucial role allowing the interviewees to identify with the silliness or absurdity of the situations they were in. This was evident through their repeated laughter at orthodox discourses of masculinity that had constrained the ways they cultivated their bodies and had influenced the forms of self-policing they were now having to battle with. The humour that emerged in the Latin dance group practice sessions was also valuable for allowing male dancers to make their personal gender troubles public. This in turn allowed the dance group to engage in a form of group therapy and critical reflection, and it worked to offer support for males to continue to cultivate their bodies in sensual and aesthetic ways that went beyond the confines of orthodox masculinity.

I have noted that there were divergences in the two process narratives, and, taken as a whole, the male Latin dancers were more successful than the capoeirista/samba dancers in loosening their 'stiff hips'. Nevertheless, for the practitioners in both classes who were successful in making the transition, they ultimately ended up in similar situations moving their hips alongside female dance partners in ways that explicitly emphasized their heterosexual identity and sexual prowess. As such, at DanceSport competitions and in public performances of the samba de roda, the theatrical enactment of heterosexual flirtation, passion and sexual intercourse was one of the main attractions (McMains, 2006). Ultimately, then, this chapter shows that male dancers once again went through a problematic process of cultivating their bodies in more diverse, expressive and sensual ways and extending beyond the confines of orthodox discourses of English masculinity. However, at the same time, the dancers' new hybrid performances of masculinity were still located within structured dance performances that reproduced a fundamental aspect of orthodox masculinity, namely, the performance of compulsory heterosexuality.

9

Conclusion

In this final chapter I demonstrate how my work adds to the fields of masculinity studies, dance and qualitative research. I offer some concluding remarks in order to summarise my research findings and comment on how well they answer the research questions I posed at the beginning of the thesis. I outline the criteria for what I consider to be a 'good' ethnography and I show how this thesis has attempted to meet these criteria. I address the different ways in which I can disseminate the findings from this research. And finally, I highlight a number of additional topics of interest that arose in the data but could not be fully explored in this thesis and thus could be developed further in future work.

9.1 A summary of the main research findings

This PhD research has sought to answer the three research questions below:

1. *How are masculine identities enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes?*

2. *What role does language, visual practices, and embodied practices play in the enabling of masculine identities?*

3. *To what extent does Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity help explain how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes?*

Responding to these questions, I made sense of masculinities in terms of visual, verbal and embodied transitions. Analysing masculinities in this way, I showed how by engaging with dance class technologies, possibilities opened up for male dancers to change and adapt their historical bodies and move between different styles of masculinity. Crucially, the transitions that occurred in class did not involve a linear move from orthodox to inclusive masculinities. Indeed, orthodox masculinities were not constructed as old fashioned forms masculinity that needed to be made redundant in the drive to more inclusive, softer, flexible and desirable masculinities. Rather, two transitions emerged in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes that involved a shift from orthodox to inclusive masculinities, and then a subsequent arch back to orthodox masculinities.

9.1.1 The transitions from orthodox to inclusive masculinities

A central findings of this research is that the majority of male dancers demonstrated a critical awareness of the restrictions that had been imposed on their historical bodies from their prior engagement with pedagogical technologies that supported the performance of orthodox masculinities. At this point it is important to reiterate that these male dancers were young, white, English, predominantly university educated and/or middle class men. And so, this culturally specific group likely had the resources and privileges to talk about their desire to overcome these restrictions and explore new aspects of their body, identity and relationships with others. In the findings chapters, I focused on three prominent examples where this process of transition was evident: first, in the Latin and ballroom classes where male dancers developed more respectful embodied relationships with female dancers, second, in the Latin and ballroom classes where male dancers cultivated an aesthetic sensibility and an appreciation of the movement of Latin dancers' hips, and third, in the capoeira classes, where male capoeirista cultivated an aesthetic appreciation of the performance of awesome moves that moved beyond an initial reliance on orthodox discourses of masculinity. I will now reflect on each of these findings in turn.

9.1.2 Developing respectful embodied relationships with female dancers.

In chapter six I detailed how dancing in closed ballroom hold was problematic for many beginners because they felt physically uncomfortable and embarrassed. However, through engaging with dance class technologies that included teachers forcing male and female students to literally tie themselves together, beginners were able to learn the necessary body techniques required to dance in closed hold. I noted however, that even with this new embodied knowledge, not all couples would dance correctly in closed hold with their mid sections touching. In turn, I found that female dancers' talked about their need to feel comfortable with the male dancer in order to dance close. As a result, male dancers were required to demonstrate a form of inclusive masculinity that was enacted through respectful non-sexual body contact with female dancers. Acknowledging these requirements helped to explain why there was also an apparent decline in the verbal deployment of the dancing to meet girls discourse by more experienced male dancers. As such, this orthodox discourse of masculinity located female dancers as a source of conquest and therefore was not appropriate when male dancers were now required to explicitly demonstrate respect towards their female dance partners.

Reflecting on this fascinating phenomenon, I propose that the process of engaging with dance class technologies, learning the appropriate body techniques to dance in closed hold, and needing to demonstrate respect for female dancers, ultimately acted as a technology of the self and facilitated the performance of inclusive masculinities. In other words, learning to ballroom dance in closed hold provided a new movement experience that taught male beginners how to cooperate with female dancers and allowed them to cultivate new forms of embodied relationships with women that they perceived were relatively uncommon outside of class. Moreover, the benefits accrued from demonstrating this form of inclusive masculinity were professed by a number of experienced male and female dancers who posited that their close embodied interactions with other dancers was one of the most valued elements of participating in Latin and ballroom dancing.

The second and third examples of transitions from orthodox to inclusive masculinities were instigated by practitioners' engagements with the aesthetic dimensions of capoeira and Latin and ballroom dancing. As part of the process of learning to be capoeirista or a Latin and ballroom dancer, beginners learned to view body movement as a work of art, to take pleasure in beautiful movement, to acquire a theatrical sense, to judge how their interactions appeared to an audience, to use dramatic gestures, and to make performances entertaining by visually displaying their emotions (Downey, 2005; Gard, 2006). As demonstrated in the chapters on stiff hips and performing awesome moves, when beginners engaged with dance class technologies that fostered their aesthetic sensibilities, this had the effect of challenging dancers' orthodox understandings of masculinity and providing exciting and challenging new pathways for dancers to cultivate more inclusive forms of masculinity.

9.1.3 Developing an aesthetic appreciation of performing awesome moves

In chapter seven I detailed how a large proportion of male capoeirista were attracted to class by live performances and media representations of capoeira that drew heavily on elements of orthodox masculinity, positioning capoeira as an acrobatic, exotic, athletically demanding, risk-oriented and visually appealing spectacle. Once in class, however, beginners quickly learned that in order to perform the 'awesome moves' they had seen advertised, they would need to undertake regular strenuous physical training and repeated flexibility exercises. The issue of flexibility was particularly problematic

as the majority of male beginners started capoeira with relatively inflexible bodies. These inflexible bodies had been produced through their biographical engagement with orthodox discourses of masculinity that had directed them into gender-appropriate forms of physical activity which did not value or cultivate their flexibility. With flexibility being an essential feature of performing 'awesome moves', male beginners had to undertake a prolonged and often painful embodied process of regular stretching.

Interlinked with this embodied transition, male beginners also needed to negotiate a contradictory set of discourses consisting of orthodox and inclusive English masculinities and local Brazilian discourses and practices of masculinity associated with capoeira. Complex embodied, visual and discursive negotiations therefore ensued as male beginners sought to make sense of the practice of showing off the aesthetic male body through the performance of 'awesome moves'. As such, the aesthetic display and exhibition of the male capoeirista invited audiences to value them as potentially desirable male bodies. These performances had the potential to disrupt discourses of orthodox masculinity and the traditional gendered relationship between looking and performing. In response to these concerns, I showed how the male capoeirista Pedro and Thomas drew upon different discourses of masculinity to legitimate this aesthetic activity in ways that supported either the performance orthodox masculinities, inclusive masculinities, or a combination of both.

After examining the various responses to the initial problematization of orthodox discourses of masculinity, I also drew attention to the performances of advanced male English capoeirista who provided revealing insights into how their experiences of performing 'awesome moves' had functioned as a technology of the self, enabling profound transformations in the ways they used and took pleasure in their bodies. As an example, the advanced male capoeirista John talked about how capoeira had enabled him to engage in forms of creative and aesthetic self-stylization wherein he had been able to use his body to perform graceful, expressive and beautiful capoeira movements. Crucially, he made no attempt to justify or defend his cultivation and enjoyment of these aesthetic practices in terms of his masculinity. I interpreted this response as a demonstration of inclusive masculinity, where, in pursuit of physical competence and pleasure, experienced male capoeirista such as John were able develop a diverse range of body techniques, including some deemed to be feminine.

9.1.4 Transitions in the aesthetic appreciation of men's Latin hip movements

The third significant transition from orthodox to inclusive masculinities was evident in male beginners' relationship to the movement of their 'stiff hips' in the Latin dances. When interviewing the male dancers, many commented on their concerns when they first entered class about moving their hips. In these instances of talk they drew upon orthodox discourses of masculinity, locating the movement of the hips as a feminized practice that is 'normally' performed by women dancing in nightclubs. In turn, experienced male Latin dancers, who were now adept at moving their hips, demonstrated a critical awareness that their prior lack of embodied knowledge of how to coordinate their hips was a result of their engagement with orthodox practices of masculinity that inscribed their male bodies with dispositions that went down to the very coordination of the muscles around their hips.

In order to loosen the beginners' 'stiff hips', the dance teachers employed a series of repetitive group exercises where all the students copied the necessary dance techniques the teachers demonstrated. To highlight the significance of these group exercises, I re-counted a particular example where a number of male dancers engaged in humorous dialogue whilst practising the Cha cha cha walks. In this section of talk I identified how the dancers were aware of the cultural constraints orthodox discourses of masculinity posed, they were reflective about the forms of self-policing they were negotiating, and the male dancers demonstrated an awareness that they were challenging the boundaries of orthodox masculinity. The self-depreciating humour they employed therefore provided a form of support in working through these gender troubles. Ultimately, I argued that the group practice sessions and the humorous dialogue provided the first step in problematizing and legitimizing a new way of moving the male body. In turn, a potential pathway was then opened up for the developing male dancers who could start to attend to the aesthetic details in the movement of their hips. With considerable practice in mirror work sessions, more experienced Latin male dancers were then able to create sinuous and flowing waves of motion up, down and across their body. I proposed that this dance class activity functioned as a technology of the self, as experienced male dancers were able to relate to the movement of their body as a work of art and see the transformation of their hips as a creative and aesthetic activity.

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9.1.5 The arc back to orthodox masculinities

The second set of transitions that emerged in the data involved male dancers' subsequent arc back to orthodox masculinities. For example, in the dancing with women chapter I showed how the experienced male ballroom dancers who participated in DanceSport competitions performed a style of orthodox masculinity that arcs back to the historical traditions of the English gentleman. Similarly, in the stiff hips chapter I showed how the experienced Latin dancers and the experienced samba de roda dancers arced back to explicitly heterosexual and hetero-sexy frameworks of performance. I will now comment on each of these shifts to orthodox masculinities in turn.

In the dancing with women chapter I showed how male beginners were attracted to class through marketing practices that drew heavily on orthodox discourses of masculinity, locating Latin and ballroom dancing as an unequivocally heterosexual practice. I then showed how these dancers undertook a transition towards more inclusive masculinities as they were required to show respect to their female partners when dancing in closed ballroom hold. Interestingly, as the male ballroom dancers' skills progressed, I identified yet another shift wherein their performances at DanceSport competitions required them to arc back to orthodox performances of masculinity that took the form of the English gentleman.

Through my analysis of advanced male ballroom dancers' clothing, grooming, posture and performative rituals on the dance floor, I demonstrated how they worked to construct a distinctive style of masculine performance that references the historic discourse of the English gentleman. I proposed that this style of performance makes ballroom dancing seem safe for male dancers as it allows them to enact a historic form of orthodox masculinity that was based upon clear, straight-forward and distinct gender roles from a pre-gender equality era. Thus, with the narrow representations of masculinity, the clearly demarcated gender differences, and the naturalised heterosexual choreography, ballroom dancing works to erase the sexual ambiguity that has historically surrounded male participation in dance. Finally, it is fascinating to note that, to reach this advanced stage of dance performance and to consummately enact a style of orthodox masculinity that references the English gentleman, the male ballroom dancers first had to go through the process of demonstrating inclusive masculinities through the cultivation of respectful relationships with their female dance partners. In summary, then, the common pathway to becoming a male ballroom dancer involved shifting

engagements with gender discourses and practices, first harnessing orthodox masculinities, then working towards inclusive practices of masculinity, and then shifting back again to orthodox masculinities.

In the stiff hips chapter I identified two similar pathways. I showed that the male Latin and samba de roda dancers' problematic experiences moving their 'stiff hips' were initially informed by orthodox discourses and practices of masculinity that positioned this body movement as feminine. In turn, to overcome this challenge and cultivate their bodies in more expressive and sensual ways, dancers needed to engage in discursive, embodied and visual work. This involved publicly problematizing the link between femininity, homosexuality and hip movement, engaging in extensive physical training of their hips, and cultivating an aesthetic appreciation of male dancers' hip movements. It is fascinating to note that once the male dancers had overcome their 'stiff hips' and embraced more aspects of inclusive masculinity, the dancers' new performances of masculinity were still nevertheless located within dance choreography that reproduced a fundamental aspect of orthodox masculinity, namely, the performance of compulsory heterosexuality. As such, at formal dance events male dancers were required to dance alongside female dance partners, theatrically enacting forms of flirtation and passion that explicitly emphasized their heterosexual identity and sexual prowess. In this way, the process of successfully loosening of male dancers' 'stiff hips' ultimately provided the male dancers with a new means through which to re-validate their own relationships to women.

9.2 Evaluating inclusive masculinity theory

To explicitly address the third research question, I will now summarise what I found to be the strengths and weaknesses of using of inclusive masculinity theory to help explain how masculinities are enabled in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes.

9.2.1 The strengths of inclusive masculinity theory: Explaining cultural transitions

A strength of inclusive masculinity theory is that it identifies and offers an explanation for prominent cultural transitions in the enactment of masculinities in post-modern western societies over the last twenty to thirty years. As such, inclusive masculinity theorists argue that homophobia is becoming less significant in the enactment of masculinities. Through the demonstration of improved attitudes toward homosexuality in the media, in law and in youth cultures, they suggest that there is less need for boys

and men to act in opposition to practices deemed gay and by association feminine. They propose that this cultural shift has enabled some groups of boys and men to enact increasingly diverse styles of masculinity that demonstrate an apparent opening up of softer, more flexible, more feminine and egalitarian forms of masculinity, what Anderson calls 'inclusive masculinity'. Crucially, this general decline in the significance of homophobia in shaping masculinities was evident in the capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes. In four years of fieldwork I noted very few instances of explicit homophobic or sexist language or practices. Cultural values challenging overt prejudice and supporting gender and sexual equality were also largely taken for granted. However, heterosexuality remained the norm.

9.2.2 A critique of hegemonic masculinity

Inclusive masculinity theory provides a strong critique of hegemonic masculinity theory and its utility for explaining the complex relationships between multiple masculinities in post-modern societies. In Anderson's (2009) and McCormack's (2012) ethnographic studies of boys and young men in the UK and the US, they noted that there was no single, dominant or homogenized masculinity to which all men aspired; multiple masculinities often co-existed harmoniously with equal cultural value; boys who performed alternative masculinities were not subordinated by those performing orthodox masculinities; and when masculine hierarchies did emerge they were not necessarily based upon homophobia or an aversion to the feminine. Based upon these findings, they propose that in societies of decreasing homophobia a range of masculinities can co-exist on a more horizontal plane and jostle in ongoing relations of power.

In line with these findings, in this study, inclusive masculinity theory has provided a more suitable framework for analysis than hegemonic masculinity theory. For example, in the genealogical analysis in chapter two I showed that multiple styles of dancing masculinities are currently represented in the mainstream media, with no one style clearly holding a dominant position. Similarly, from my experiences in the field, I found little or no evidence that one style of masculinity was dominating or maintaining a hegemonic position on top of a gender hierarchy through the use of physical domination, homophobic policing or discursive marginalisation.

9.2.3 The concepts of 'orthodox masculinities' and 'inclusive masculinities'

In this thesis Anderson's concepts of orthodox masculinities and inclusive masculinities have provided valuable analytical tools for making sense of complex performances of masculinity in capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes. The concept of inclusive masculinities was useful when analysing how male dancers developed an appreciation of aesthetic male bodily performance and cultivated respectful embodied relationships with women. In these instances, the cultivation of inclusive masculinities acted as a form of liberation and a technology of the self, as dancers and capoeirista were able to take pleasure in their bodily relationships with their self and others, and develop a much wider range of their physical capabilities, including those some might deem to be feminine. The concept of orthodox masculinities also helped to explain that, whilst there were no overt signs of homophobia in the classes, hetero-normativity and hetero-sexism still persisted. As such, heterosexuality was privileged above other sexual orientations largely due to its central role in the institutionalised structure and choreography of the Latin and ballroom and samba de roda dances and in the advertising campaigns the groups used to attract beginners to class.

9.2.4 Augmenting inclusive masculinity theory with Foucauldian theory

In this thesis I demonstrated how inclusive masculinity theory can be supported and augmented by Foucaldian theory in order to better grapple with the local complexities, contradictions and shifts in the enactment of masculinities. As such, my use of a Foucauldian approach provided a valuable lens through which to interrogate how masculinities are constructed from a constantly mobile field of overlapping, intersecting and conflicting gender discourse that is subject to continuous adjustments, transformations and innovations. By attending to this complex network of discourses of masculinity, I was better able to make sense of the fluidity and contingency in men's ongoing constructions of masculinities. As such, the male dancers needed to engage with a messy field of gender discourse and were thus able to enact shifting and messy masculinities.

Responding to this understanding, I argue that the analytical concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinity should not be seen as completely separate or distinct from one another. Rather, they cover a diverse range of intersecting and interweaving discourses and performances that co-exist in interknit relationships and engage in dynamic dialogue. As such, in this thesis, I have shown that the performances of masculinities

have often simultaneously consisted of a mix of elements that could be defined as *both* orthodox *and* inclusive. Furthermore, when the male dancers dealt with the challenge of negotiating this mix of elements, I showed how some became disoriented by the multitude of contradictory discourses of masculinity available and struggled to construct stable and acceptably masculine pathways. In contrast, I also showed how other male dancers demonstrated a form of discursive artistry, tactically shifting back and forth between different orthodox and inclusive performances depending upon the demands of the local context.

9.3. Issues of concern with inclusive masculinity theory

Whilst I champion elements of inclusive masculinity theory, I have also highlighted issues of concern with Anderson's (2009) theory, namely, 1) a lack of attention to the shifts and transitions in male subject's performances of masculinity, 2) the problematic usage of contradictory theories of gender power, and 3) a need to pay greater attention to the social landscape in which inclusive masculinities are emerging.

9.3.1 Masculinities in transition

In applications of inclusive masculinity theory there has been a tendency to identify particular social groups as 'being' or occupying the category or archetype of orthodox masculinity or inclusive masculinity. In this current thesis, the fieldwork data has not fallen into such a neat structure and I have therefore become apprehensive about locating orthodox masculinity and inclusive masculinity as discrete, self contained categories or archetypes. Indeed, my research shows that male dancers and capoeirista are simultaneously juggling different forms of masculinity and moving between different forms of masculinity over time. Within the capoeira and Latin and ballroom dance classes, practitioners enacted hybrid performances of gender that included various aspects of orthodox and inclusive masculinity, and at some points also aspects of 'Latin' and 'Brazilian' masculinities. The dancers' performances were also dynamic and changed over time. As such, the dancers engaged with dance class technologies that enabled them to adapt their historical bodies by learning new body techniques, and to draw upon new local cultural discourses to make sense of and legitimate the use of their bodies and their performances of masculinity in new ways. Ultimately, then, I propose that applications of inclusive masculinity theory need to direct more attention to the biographical or temporal shifts and transitions in male subjects' hybrid performances of masculinities.

9.3.2 Masculinities and power relations

Whilst offering a strong critique of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity theorists remain open to incorporating more sophisticated theories of hegemony into their research (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2012). In line with this, Anderson (2009) advocates blending Foucauldian theories of power with Gramscian theories of hegemony. In response, I explored the possibility of combining inclusive masculinity theory with Demetriou's (2001) more sophisticated theorisation of the 'hegemonic bloc'. I also compared Foucauldian and Gramscian theories of power and noted that whilst they do have a number of similarities, they also have different philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. I therefore argued that is theoretically counterproductive and analytically problematic to use them together due to a series of underlying contradictions that are difficult to overcome (see section 3.4.4 for a detailed discussion). To respond to this critique, if inclusive masculinity theorists wish to continue to 'blend' these theories they need to explicitly detail their proposal for unpicking the complexities of drawing upon two potentially contradictory positions. As already summarised above, I found it more productive to take an alternative route and theorise the relations of power between orthodox and inclusive masculinities by drawing upon Michel Foucault's understandings of power and discourse.

9.3.3 Locating the emergence of inclusive masculinities within the wider social landscape

In this thesis I showed that inclusive masculinity theorists could do more to locate the emergence of inclusive masculinities within the wider social landscape in which they are emerging, namely, within the context of neo-liberal forms of governance and a post-feminist sentiment. Attending first to the context of neo-liberalism, I demonstrated that the male dancers who enacted inclusive masculinities still made sense of their gendered selves in ways that facilitated their self-management in the context of neo-liberal society. For example, numerous practitioners talked about the requirements to demonstrate their individuality, independence, to not blindly follow discourses of orthodox masculinity, to demonstrate a well balanced self and not to take their selves too seriously. No doubt, these discourses of neo-liberalism may be considered less domineering and more self-empowering than orthodox discourses of masculinity that are underpinned by homophobia, sexism and compulsory heterosexuality. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that they still form the workings of new disciplinary and

self-reflexive forms of gender power. By acknowledging this, I have been able to draw out the 'double-edged' nature of inclusive masculinities which has previously been underplayed in inclusive masculinity theory. As such, I demonstrated how the performance of inclusive masculinities took on multiple functions, not only working as a form of liberation and critique of orthodox masculinity, but also functioning as a form neo-liberal governmentality.

Attending now to the post-modern context of sexualised culture and post-feminist dynamics between men and women, I propose that inclusive masculinity research and theorizing also needs to pay greater attention to how the on-going changes in men's lives are intersecting with the changes in women's lives. The lack of attention paid to the relationship between men and women may possibly be due to the researchers' pre-occupation with studying relationships between men and the influence of homophobia. Responding to this concern, I actively shaped my methodology in a way that attended to the relationship between male and female dancers and capoeirista. I included eight women with different levels of experience in my interview sample, I directed equal attention to photographing male and female dancers, and I spent just as much time engaging in embodied fieldwork, dancing, playing and talking with men and women. This methodological approach had an obvious payoff, providing valuable data that helped shape my analysis in the Dancing with Women and Stiff Hips chapters. As such, by focusing on female dancers' experiences and performances of femininity, I was able to highlight the stark visual contrasts between male and female samba de roda and Latin and ballroom dancers' clothes, postures and movements. I also drew upon female dancers' constructions of their experiences dancing in closed ballroom hold in order to draw out the complexities and multiple explanations for the problematic negotiation of respectful relations and close embodied contact between male and female dancers.

9.3.4 The conceptual challenge of integrating Latin/Brazilian masculinities

Responding to a point of contestation in the analysis, a final question I wish to raise is, 'how should inclusive masculinity researchers proceed when local performances of masculinity do not easily fit with the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinity?' This question emerged in the stiff hips chapter where, in the final shift to the performance of orthodox masculinities, both the Latin dancers and the samba de roda dancers were able to appropriate forms of 'Latin' or 'Brazilian' heterosexual masculinity. More specifically, the dancers were able to cultivate a hybridized

masculinity that combined elements of Latin or Brazilian masculinities with elements of English orthodox and inclusive masculinities. Interestingly, the practices that were associated with the Latin/Brazilian masculinities contained elements that would be considered both masculine and feminine from the perspective of English embodied culture. For example, the male Latin dancers took on the role as the leader of the dance couple and were able to perform choreographed moves that emphasized their power and macho prowess on the dance floor. At the same time, they were also required to demonstrate an emotional tenderness and sensuality, and a kind of camp flamboyance. Similarly, in the samba de roda, the male capoeirista performed a competitive ritual, battling with other male dancers to impress the female dancers and assert their heterosexual prowess. At the same time, the samba de roda performances also provided room for public displays of emotion, singing, hugging, exhibitionism and exuberant dancing. Crucially, the experienced male practitioners who performed these dances were able to turn the combination of 'masculine' and 'feminine' elements into a strong masculine position.

When analysing these performance of masculinity on the dance floor, I found it challenging to apply the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinities as they are currently theorised. As such, Anderson's (2009) original theory emerged from a British/American context, and I too have adapted this framework to study English masculinities in post-modern society. At first sight, then, it was not obvious how I could analyse masculinities that have emerged from a different cultural and historical background.

In response to this challenge, I think it best to acknowledge the limitations of Anderson's and my own use of the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinities. As such, we have not tried to produce a universal theory of masculinity. Rather, Anderson's theory is knowingly based upon a Western Anglo-American history. And in chapter two, I conducted a historical genealogical analysis of the shifting representations and discourses of masculinity in England, with the intent to demonstrate that inclusive masculinity theory provided the best theoretical fit for this particular study. From this position, it is too large a theoretical jump to apply a Western theory of masculinity to the performance of Latin/Brazilian masculinities. Indeed, challenging questions have come to the fore, such as, is it appropriate to analyse the gender performances of the Brazilian capoeira teachers using the concepts of orthodox and

inclusive masculinities? For example, in class the capoeira teachers tried to promote their Brazilian cultural values by cultivating a context in which affectionate hugging, passionate singing, confident shaking of the hips, and hetero-sexy flirtation on the dance floor were the norm. Trying to make sense of these practices and performances, I am still unsure whether they can be understood as either orthodox, inclusive, a mix of both, or something completely different.

In the outline of my Foucauldian-inspired theory of orthodox and inclusive masculinities, which I presented in chapter three, I asserted that it was necessary to keep the definitions of 'orthodox' and 'inclusive' open for debate and to problematize these definitions when they do not fit with gender arrangements in different cultures with different gendered histories and traditions. Here, then, is an exemplary case in point. To respond to this problematization of conceptual applicability, I recognise the necessity of undertaking an historical examination of the relevant gender discourses in play. To illustrate, I undertook this approach in chapter two when I conducted a genealogy of the discourses of masculinity surrounding the media representation of male dancers in England. In the introduction I also provided a brief history of capoeira and its historical associations with Brazilian masculinities. However, as Brazilian masculinities were not my primary topic of interest, my examination of the history of masculine discourses in Brazil was not extensive enough to allow me to confidently comment on whether the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinities fit with the historical discursive shifts and the contemporary performances of Brazilian masculinities in England. As a result, I have decided to leave this question unanswered.

Critically reflecting upon this predicament, I propose that future applications of the concepts of orthodox and inclusive masculinities to cultures of masculinity from different cultures, requires that researchers undertake a historical analysis of the trajectories of gender discourses in that country. This will be a fundamental requirement for developing the study of masculinities and the theorisation of orthodox and inclusive masculinities in the future, particularly as the effects of globalisation enable the spread of online multi-media technologies and the continued mixing and hybridization of embodied cultures, gender discourses and inter-cultural constructions of masculinity.

9.4 My criteria for a 'good' ethnography

In this section I now propose the criteria for what I consider to be a 'good' ethnography in order to show how this thesis has attempted to meet these criteria. My thinking about research criteria and what make a 'good' ethnography has been influenced by the philosophy of methodological bricolage (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005). In keeping with this philosophy, I start by arguing that there are no fixed, permanent, standardised, universal or predetermined rules or criteria for what make a 'quality' piece of research or more specifically a 'good' ethnography. This makes sense as there are a multitude of different forms of qualitative research and various styles of ethnography. It is therefore inevitable that there will be alternative and competing claims as to what counts as good-quality work (Seale, 1999).

Building on these arguments, a number of qualitative researchers have proposed that specific criteria to judge ethnographic research should not be fixed in advance of the production of an ethnography (Sparkes, 2009b; Sparkes & Smith, 2009). This means that the specific purposes and starting points of a piece of research are important, but the criteria by which to judge the research should be left open and can be subject to change as the focus of the research develops and evolves over time (Sparkes, 2009b). In relation to the current research, the primary purpose of conducting the study was for me to gain a PhD. As is common with PhD research, I started by identifying a 'gap in the literature' and showed how this study would fill the gap, namely, by exploring men's experiences and performances of masculinity in a female dominated physical culture. Conducting this research within a Psychology department, I also need to tie the thesis to an existing body of psychological literature. In turn, when I started writing up the thesis I also needed to keep in mind the primary audience of the PhD, namely, the examiners who would read the final thesis and choose whether it should pass or fail. Importantly, I assumed that the examiners would be familiar with the genre of ethnography and would appreciate the central tenets of this methodology, and thus I would not need to be defensive or apologetic about my use of this method.

Now that I have acknowledged the initial purpose and starting points of the research, I will now discuss the four main criteria by which I judge what makes a good ethnography, these are: 1) flexibility, 2) a credible and evocative account, 3) readability, and 4) reflexivity.

9.4.1 Flexibility

I propose that a useful criteria that could be used to judge the quality of an ethnography is its 'flexibility'. By this I mean that the researcher should demonstrate how they have responded to the complexity of the social world under study and the ongoing pressures of the specific fieldwork site by adapting their methodology. The researcher can also try to make use of whatever tools and materials happen to be available. And the researcher can experiment with different methods to test their suitability.

Responding to these criteria, in the process of conducting the ethnography, I experimented with a range of qualitative methods (see section 5). I implemented each method as part of a cycle of action and reflection, repeatedly evaluating what was working and what needed further 'tinkering' (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). I have also detailed how I responded to chance opportunities for data collection, ethical uncertainties, diversions and failed experiments. Openly acknowledging these messy back stage realities made sense, as it was only through improvising and reflecting on this messy process that I was able to successfully respond to the changing contexts of the research, my growing understanding of the local capoeira and Latin and ballroom cultures, and my dynamic relationships with other dancers.

In order to be aware of the potential methods I could draw upon, I attended over twenty multi-media research method training workshops. I then became proficient in the specific methods which best suited the research agenda. As such, I paid particular attention to improving my skills in the use of digital SLR photography and the digital image editing software *Photoshop*. I also introduced a range of unplanned methods into the research. This included harnessing *YouTube* videos as a source of archive material and including exemplary videos in the final thesis document. In turn, I engaged with the rapidly expanding technologies on the social networking website *Facebook*, using this popular website to share research photos with the dance communities I researched.

9.4.2 A credible and evocative account

The second criteria by which I want my research judged is whether it provides a credible and evocative account of the people and the social and cultural settings under study. In order to engage with this criteria I will now identify three elements that I have attended to. First, I asked myself, as the researcher and author, have I done justice to the complexity and empirical reality of the actions in the field? Second, have my

representations of the field been validated by participants? And third, does my thesis engage the reader in ways that encourage them to critically reflect on the shaping of their own gendered body?

In order to reflect on the accuracy of my analysis, I often asked myself, am I doing justice to the complexity and empirical reality of the performances of masculinity and the actions of dancers in class? To help address this question, I wrote the first draft of the analysis chapters in a 'theory-less' style, or at least with the theory implicit. It was only when writing my second draft that I explicitly added theory and concepts to the analysis. In reflection, I think I took this approach because I wanted to prioritise the credibility of the narrative.

The second stage in producing a credible account of the performances of masculinity in the field was to have my process narratives validated by the dancers themselves. Returning data and findings to participants in order to obtain their 'validation' is a common approach in qualitative research (Horsburgh, 2003). As part of this process, it is important to remember that different research participants will have different experiences, agendas and perspectives. This is relevant to my research as the purpose of writing the process narratives was to document common transitions. In other words, the narratives were developed from a synthesis of the perspectives of a number of participants. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to expect that an individual dancer or capoeirista would have sufficient knowledge, ability and experience to validate every element of the process narratives (Horsburgh, 2003). Nevertheless, I still expected that dancers would see elements or segments of their experiences and performances represented in the process narratives. In practice, then, during the process of analysing and writing the analytic chapters, I frequently engaged in informal conversations with dancers and capoeirista, sharing my ideas about what I wanted to focus on and how I wanted to shape the narratives. The outline of my arguments always sparked further conversation and feedback, wherein dancers would provide useful examples, extensions or challenges. Ultimately this process extended my knowledge and understanding and provided me with the confidence that I was 'on the right track', shaping a series of credible and accurate accounts.

For me, the third stage in the process of producing a credible and evocative ethnographic account involves engaging the reader. In Sparkes' (2002) discussion of

possible criteria by which to judge ethnographic research, he raises the issue of engaging with the audience when asking, "does this account work for us,...do the we find it believable and evocative on the basis of our own experience?" (p.194). Reflecting on this question, it becomes clear that the reader of an ethnography has an important role to play in the transfer, reception and interpretation of ethnographic knowledge. The reader will bring their own experiences, thoughts and personal baggage to bear when engaging with the research. Crucially, this is something that I want to actively promote, to encourage readers to compare and contrast their own experiences with those of the dancers represented in the process narratives, and to then think critically about their own physical training and the shaping of their gendered body. My interest in actively cultivating forms of audience engagement links with Stake's (1978) championing of 'naturalistic generalisation'. This refers to the process through which readers engage with research and recognise essential elements in the representations of embodied activities and then apply these elements to other contexts and cases. A challenge with trying to encourage readers to engage in naturalistic generalisation is that, as the researcher, "one cannot know the situations in which readers are likely to consider applying study findings" (Firestone, 1993:17). Despite this, Stake (1978) argues that it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide a rich description of actions in the field and provide sufficient contextual detail about the environment in which they occurred. By doing so, the research stories and representations have the potential to resonate with the reader's previous experiences and allow them to see common features with their "empirically different but conceptually equivalent human experiences" (Robinson & Norris, 2001:307).

To illustrate the significance and utility of engaging in naturalistic generalisation, I offer two examples that emerged in the process of conducting this research. The first instance occurred when I read Thomas McLaughlin's (2004) journal article 'Man to Man': Basketball, Movement and the Practice of Masculinity. In this article the author reflects on his own experiences of playing basketball, providing a vivid, intimate and powerful account of the movements, feelings, relationships and identities that are evoked when playing basketball with other men. As an avid basketball player during my teenage years, the detailed and, at times, poetic descriptions of the author's experiences resonated with my own previous experiences as a male basketball player. Crucially, though, my connection with the article went a stage further. When reading the article, I found myself repeatedly writing notes in the margin that read, "similar to Latin and

ballroom", "same as break dancing", and most frequently, "same as capoeira".

> "Complex movement in contested space....every moment making movement decisions that alter the others' movements....players rely on imagination, anticipation and adjustment....players fight for space....the movement of basketball is produced by the shared energies of players in the game. My move makes your move possible and necessary....a causal observer can notice the beautiful player, the one with extension, lift, balance, balletic grace....as skill increases, the beauty of the movement increases"
> (McLaughlin, 2004:170,179,181,182)

For me, these intimate descriptions of playing basketball resonated as much with my experiences of playing capoeira as they did with my experiences of playing basketball. Reflecting on this, it became clear to me that the author's use of rich descriptive language and my own embodied experiences of basketball and capoeira worked together to enable me to make this connection and construct a naturalistic generalisation.

The second example of naturalistic generalisation emerged in a conversation I had with an intermediate female Latin and ballroom dancer - 'Natalia'. This conversation occurred during the forth year of fieldwork, at which time I was writing my first draft of the Dancing with Women chapter, and I was sharing the initial findings with Natalia. During this conversation Natalia identified a fascinating connection between my description and analysis of the experiences of male ballroom dancers leading their female dance partners around the dance floor, and her experience of riding horses at equestrian events. At first we laughed about the suggestion that female ballroom dancers could be viewed as something akin to a horse. We then discussed the similarities in technique that are needed to subtly, efficiently and confidently lead both female dancers and horses in the direction you want them to go. After this we then started to think critically about the role of women in ballroom dance and what it means to always be directed and led around like a horse. In reflection, then, it is these embodied and analytical connections and critical thinking of this sort that I hope readers of my thesis will continue to make.

9.4.3 Readability

The third criteria I advocate for judging the quality of an ethnography is its 'readability'. By this I mean, is the ethnographic text accessible and engaging to read? These are important issues, particularly in the current climate where increasing numbers of social scientists are voicing concerns that post-graduate students are being taught to

write poorly (Becker, 2007a; Billig, 2013). As such, Billig, (2013) argues that social scientists often "write in highly unpopulated ways, creating fictional worlds in which their theoretical things, rather than actual people, appear as major actors" (p.7). In turn, Ahmed (2010) suggests that social scientists too often demonstrate a lack of consideration for how their writing comes across to readers who are not familiar with their specific academic culture or language. In this way, the big technical words so common in traditional scholarship can work to restrict readers' understanding rather than aid it (Billig, 2013). These concerns have been eloquently summed up by Bochner (1997) who comments that,

> "our work is under read, undergraduates find many of our publications boring, graduate students say our scholarship is dry and inaccessible, seasoned scholars confess they don't finish half of what they start reading, and the public hardly knows we exist" (p.433).

In response to these concerns and criticisms, I have tried to write an accessible ethnography. My rationale behind this was, first, that a clear and accessible style of writing would make my arguments (some of which are quite complex) easier to understand. And second, a more accessible style would enable me to broaden my audience beyond the confines of expert academics, to include dance practitioners and intelligent lay readers. To do this, I tried to write in a clear and simple manner. This included writing in the first person, being wary not to write overly long sentences, not overloading the readers with unnecessary academic jargon, and where possible, translating complex terminology into simpler words.

To make my thesis more readable I also wanted it to grab the attention of the reader. To do this I have tried to engage the reader on different levels through the use of different media. My desire to follow this path has been encouraged by the work of Paul Stoller (1989), who advocates the cultivation of 'tasteful writing'. By this he means mixing together an assortment of ingredients that might include descriptions of the rich, sensory smells, sights, sounds, interactions and dialogues in the field. According to Stoller, one of the fundamental benefits of adopting this approach is that it opens the reader up to a world of multi-sensory exploration. To follow this seductive call to write more tastefully, I drew upon the techniques of multi-media presentation and storytelling in order to represent the sensual and multi-layered complexity of performing embodied masculinities.

Adopting a multi-method ethnographic approach, I was well set to combine multiple

forms of media in the final text. As such, I have tried to smoothly weave together data produced from photographs, field notes, personal reflections, interviews, *YouTube* videos, websites, flyers, posters and newspaper articles. Whilst the practical process of weaving this together was extremely challenging and time consuming, my hope is that it has paid off by making my work more exciting and dynamic, and bringing the reader a little closer to the actions of the dancers and helping them empathise more with the dancers' perspectives.

In this thesis I included numerous short stories form the field. I used this approach because story-telling is an accessible, emotive and everyday representational technique that readers will be familiar with (Carless & Sparkes, 2008; Douglas & Carless, 2009). Moreover, the stories helped present important events from the field in a contextualised and logical way by providing a series of steps and a chain of ongoing actions. To highlight a few examples: I told a story about entering a bar and seeing dance couples dancing sexily together in order to reveal some of my personal desires for undertaking this research. In order to highlight my engagement in reflexivity, I told a story about being called 'camp' and then aggressively responding by performing a capoeira kick that flew inches past a dancers' nose. I also told a short story about laughing and joking with a friend about the types of clothes male Latin dancers wear. This story functioned to highlight the challenges of using tape recorders and negotiating ones different identities within an interview context.

9.4.4 Reflexivity

Following the lead of numerous esteemed qualitative researchers, I also want to advocate reflexivity as an important criteria for which to judge ethnographic research (Bouchner, 2000; Richardson, 2000). Being reflexive means that the researcher critically reflects on how their subjectivity and personal biography has influenced the research process and products. This approach can be analytically valuable as it can help the researcher to "consciously and actively identify the lenses through which they are seeing" (Kennedy, 2009:72). As demonstrated above, I have explicitly engaged in the process of reflexivity by following the Feminist tradition of writing myself into the research stories. This has involved reflecting upon how my own body, sexuality, emotions and history has impacted on the research relationships and research findings. Building on this, I also explicitly positioned my own embodied performances within the wider collective patterns and transitions of embodied identities that emerged in capoeira

and Latin and ballroom dance classes.

9.5 Dissemination

Engaging with the issue of how best to disseminate the research findings, I will build upon the analytical approach I've deployed in this thesis and continue to draw upon Foucault's method of problematization and the method of multi-media storytelling. As such, I used the method of problematization to identify specific practices that were being experienced and constructed as problematic, highlighting the opposing sets of discourses and power relations that rendered these practices problematic and visible, and exploring how male dancers creatively negotiated these practices over time. Alongside this, I also sought to actively problematize masculine validating practices that were taken for granted, highlighting contradictions in the discourses of masculinity in play and exposing points of vulnerability in male dancers' engagement with the dance practices. Building on this approach, the purpose for disseminating this research is threefold, one, to facilitate readers greater understanding of the social practice of male dance in the UK, two, to encourage people to compare and contrast their own experiences with those of the male dancers in the research stories, and three, to provoke readers to critically reflect on how their own bodies and identities have been constructed through their engagements with gender discourses and technologies. In this way, I am following Foucault's (1984a) advice to encourage the questioning of existing social situations and to demonstrate that there are a wider range of resources and options available for future action and activity.

Storytelling works well with the process of problematization because it's an everyday means through which people give meaning to their experiences and build up their identities. The stories presented in this research can therefore be used to stimulate critical thinking about what might be problematic for other male dancers. The stories can also provide new narrative resources that people can use to support the transformation of their own embodied identities and to provoke readers into sharing their own stories.

At present I have identified three methods through which I want to disseminate the research findings: in person, in peer-reviewed journal articles and/or a full length monograph, and through a website and/or online forum. Examining these three approaches in turn, I have already engaged in extensive face-to-face sharing of the

research findings, openly discussing issues with many of the dancers who participated in this research. I have also been actively involved in presenting my work at sixteen academic conferences and giving lectures and seminars to Masters students undertaking qualitative methods modules at the University of Bath. When giving these presentations I have experimented with innovative forms of experiential teaching and learning. Of particular note, when discussing the issue of male dancers' 'stiff hips', I have encouraged audiences to sensuously and reflexively engage with this problematic practice as I taught them how to move their hips to the rhythm of the Cha cha cha. The profound responses I've received from the audiences have encouraged me to continue to develop experiential, empathic and entertaining methods of teaching and presenting. Excited by the potential for using drama, games and embodied methods in my work, I organised a two day postgraduate workshop - Using Theatre in Qualitative Research - at the University of Bath in 2011. After I complete this PhD I will continue to develop my career in this direction.

The second method through which I will disseminate my research is peer reviewed academic journal articles and possibly a full length monograph. I am much more passionate and excited, however, about the prospect of disseminating my research findings through the means of a website and/or online forum. As such, I recognise the necessity to go beyond formal publications in academic journals, because disseminating my research in an accessible and engaging way on the internet will offer greater opportunities for engaging with a wider audience, in particular with dance practitioners of different ages who do not typically read academic texts. The benefits of using the internet as a creative medium for dissemination becomes even more pertinent when recognising that the everyday relationships I cultivated with other capoeirista and Latin and ballroom dancers' had a strong on-line component, notably with Facebook playing a central role. In this light, with the never ending emergence of new digital technologies and with the global spread of body cultures and discourses, the internet offers exciting possibilities for sharing and accessing new ideas about the changing nature of embodied gender identities.

Once I have completed the PhD, I will explore the possibilities for using the internet to disseminate my research to wider audiences both inside and outside of academia. I propose to integrate parts of my completed PhD into an open-access, interactive and educational website. This website could include snippets of visual, linguistic and

embodied data that could take the form of short stories and thus provide an accessible vocabulary of everyday discourse. I foresee the website user taking on the role of 'data analyst' or 'storyteller', wherein they are encouraged to make links between different bits of data in order to make sense of or tell a story about young men's experiences of dance. I envisage this website to be an empowering place where boys and young men can engage with and share stories and resources that critique and support male participation in dance.

9.6 Critically reflecting on this research

Before I conclude this thesis, I need to critically reflect on the limitations of this research, the things I would do differently if I were to do it again, and I need to highlight two important areas of interest that got left out of the final thesis document. Even with the substantial size of this thesis, I still had to leave large chunks of interesting theory, fieldwork activity, data and research findings out of the final written thesis. For example, I spent four to five months reading around the work of Judith Butler and performativity theory, and about the same again reading about multi-modal theory. In turn, for nearly three years, these two theories informed my ongoing research. However, towards the end of the research I found more appropriate theories and thus the vast majority of my theoretical work on performativity and multi-modal theory was discarded.

A similar situation arose in my fieldwork. In the second year of fieldwork, myself and my supervisor had concerns that I may not be able to produce enough data with my current approach at the time, and so I set up more ethnographic fieldwork with a group of teenage b-boys (break-dancers) at a youth centre in a nearby town. I attended the group once a fortnight for approximately nine months. During this time I also attended three national breakin' events and four local breakin' competitions, I produced four folders of breakin' photographs and I conducted four interviews with male b-boys. Unfortunately, the fieldwork did not develop as well as with the capoeira and Latin and ballroom groups, and when the break dancing group broke up I decided to stop this line of research. When it came to analysing the data and writing the thesis, this entire line of research got left out. In retrospect, I now know that this extra fieldwork was not needed in the first place. Moreover, in the process of analysing the data from capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes I have ended up with enough material to write two PhD theses. On a positive note, I like to think that the time I spent engaging in these theoretical and

fieldwork detours were a productive part of my personal process of becoming an independent researcher, and moreover can be seen as expected part of engaging in methodological and theoretical Bricolage.

With the challenge of narrowing down my final analysis, it was both unnecessary and impossible for me to incorporate every interesting and relevant performance of masculinity into the final thesis. Despite this, I still want to briefly discuss two fascinating areas of interest that did get left out. I highlight these issues with the intention to pre-empt any possible criticisms that I have ignored important actions and performances in class, and also to outline possible areas I can explore in the future. Both issues focus on how gender roles were negotiated, transgressed and subverted in capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes.

Looking first at the Latin and ballroom dance class, the influence of gender roles played a fundamental role in structuring men's and women's experiences of learning to dance. Responding to this rigid structuring process, there were times when male dancers engaged in fascinating practices that allowed them to step out of the leader role and take up the role of the follower. One such instance occurred when the dance teachers conducted explicit exercises requiring the male and female dancers to swap lead and follow roles. The teachers' justification for this activity was to help dancers appreciate their partner's role. Other instances of changing roles arose when male dancers partnered other male dancers. These male-male couplings occurred in a number of situations, including, male friends dancing together in the free practice sessions after class, and student led male-male competitions held at friendly DanceSport events and at university balls. The after class dancing was typically a causal activity performed by close friends. Interestingly, I overheard concerned comments from a number of on-looking male dancers and teachers who struggled to comprehend why men would want to dance together when a host of women were waiting for partners. At student led university balls and friendly DanceSport competitions, male-male dance competitions were included in the event and typically involved the provocative performance of the rumba or the paso doble. These performances where done for comedic value and typically involved spoofed feminine movement and intense audience laughter.

Whilst there is little space to do justice to the complexity and significance of these events, I do quickly want to draw attention to the insightful arguments made by the

Latin and ballroom dance ethnographer Julliet McMains (2006). She argues that the most generative elements of Latin and ballroom dancing are when male dancers are taken out of formal contexts and can dance without female partners, and thus "released from their role as supporter and displayer of female beauty, they are able to unleash new directions for the representation of masculinity" (2006:181). From my experiences and informal analyses in class, I would agree with McMains' argument and I'm eager to explore the problematic and liberating aspects of this form of dance in my future work.

The second issue I want to briefly draw attention to is the amazing performances of female capoeirista. As such, in the introduction I briefly outlined the history of capoeira in Brazil and I identified how it only provided a space for men to play. However, when transported to the UK and other European major cities, there is clear evidence that there is much more space for women to play capoeira. As such, in four years of fieldwork, the classes I attended usually had equal numbers of men and women. It is also important to note that male and female capoeirista are not divided into gender appropriate lead and follow roles. In response to this situation, a large number of English male interviewees talked about the pleasure they derived from playing capoeira with women on what they perceived to be a level playing field. Moreover, numerous male capoeirista talked about the respect they have for female capoeirista who they assert can be just as awesome as the male capoeirista. To briefly illustrate the impressive performances of female capoeirista, I recommend returning to the Nike and Nokia adverts that I presented in chapter seven. Ultimately, I believe that female capoeirista have the potential to offer a radical challenge to the limited definitions of physicality and femininity that exist in British society. To conclude my discussion of this issue, I am interested in continuing to explore how changes in the performance of capoeira femininities can impact upon the performance of masculinities. I am also interested in the performances of female capoeirista in their own right, and I want to explore the fascinating negotiations capoeira women are involved in as they cultivate embodied identities that are at the same time fierce, strong, powerful, beautiful and elegant.

9.7 Final conclusions

This thesis has made a number of valuable contributions to understandings in the field of masculinities in dance and more broadly to the fields of masculinity studies, embodiment and qualitative research. Looking first at the field of masculinities in dance, this research has provided a genealogical analysis that demonstrates how young

English male dancers are required to make sense of the performance of masculinities within a discursive field that consists of a dynamic interplay between shifting, interweaving and conflicting old and new discourses of masculinity. In turn, by employing an in-depth multi-media ethnographic approach, the research has also been able to examine this wider discursive interplay within the daily actions of two specific groups of dancers. From analysing the dancers' actions, over the course of four years of fieldwork, I have provided insights into how dancers' performance of masculinities consisted of a dynamic mix of orthodox and inclusive styles of masculinity. The hybrid and shifting nature of these masculinities was clearly illustrated in this thesis through the identification of two fundamental transitions that emerged in both capoeira and Latin and ballroom classes. These transitions consisted of a shift from orthodox to inclusive masculinities, and a subsequent arch back to orthodox masculinities. As such, the analytic chapters show how the dynamic nature of discursive relations interacted differently with male dancers changing bodies. In other words, the ongoing embodied process of learning to dance went hand in hand with the transitions and transformations in dancers' performance of masculinities.

When considering the wider impact of this research, I propose that it has important implications that reach beyond the lives of the specific people involved in the dance classes I studied. As such, this research adds to wider understandings about the nature of discourse, embodiment, masculinities and qualitative research. In terms of qualitative research, this study has demonstrated the value of building an ethnographic methodology in an open, flexible and responsive way, where the researcher is willing to explore, experiment, improvise and cultivate an eclectic mix of methods that respond to the specific challenges and opportunities they face in the field. This research has also demonstrated the analytic benefit of locating the body as a centre point for the study of masculinities as this enables the exploration of the interactive relationship between the body and discourse. This study has also shown that men's performances of masculinity cannot simply be understood by locating them as examples of one stable category of masculinity or another. Rather, it is more prudent to attend to how men in contemporary society are grappling with multiple discourses of masculinity and are performing hybridized forms of masculinity that are made up of blends of different styles of masculinity. And finally, through conducting a processual analysis of young males dancers engagements with dance class technologies, I have shown the analytic benefit of viewing masculinities as identities in transition.

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Appendix 1

Interviewee Information

Name or pseudonym	Age	Group	Experience	Self-described ethnic identity	Gender
Saphire	28	Capoeria	3 years	White	Female
Thomas	26	Capoeria	1 year 3 months	White British	Male
John	22	Capoeria	3 years	British	Male
Bunk Teacher	35	Capoeria	19 years	Mix Brazilian	Male
Bobbi	22	Capoeria	1 year	Mixed British, Caribbean	Female
Sorriso	32	Capoeria	2 years 6 months	Italian	Male
Nathan	34	Capoeria	6 years	White British	Male
McNulty Teacher	25	Capoeria	13 years	Mix Brazilian	Male
Pedro	30	Capoeria	2 years	English	Male
Naomi	23	Capoeria	5 years 6 months	British White	Female
Sam	26	Capoeria	3 years	British	Male
Rusty	28	Capoeria	9 months	White British	Male
Tassie	28	Capoeria	2 years 6 months	White British	Female
Ben	28	Capoeria	7 years	White	Male
Chris	21	Capoeria	1 year	English	Male
Steffan	24	Latin and ballroom	3 months	Mixed Race Irish/Dominican	Male
Flash	22	Latin and ballroom	2 years 6 months	White British	Male
Fred	19	Latin and ballroom	1 year 3 months	-	Male
Darren	25	Latin and ballroom	3 years 3 months	White British	Male
Grant	26	Latin and ballroom	6 years	White	Male
Gary	23	Latin and ballroom	5 years	White British	Male
Alice	26	Latin and ballroom	3 years	White UK	Female
Slavic	21	Latin and ballroom	1 year 3 months	White British	Male
Teacher	31	Latin and ballroom	13 years	White British	Male
Aton	18	Latin and ballroom	7 months	British	Male
Jossie	19	Latin and ballroom	10 months	Dutch	Female
Barry	19	Latin and ballroom	5 months	British White	Male

Carmen	20	Latin and ballroom	1 year 6 months	White British	Female
Qing	24	Latin and ballroom	2 years 6 months	Chinese	Female
Bryan	19	Latin and ballroom	1 year 3 months	White British	Male

Appendix 2

Consent form for interview

Men's Experiences of Dance Project

About this interview

This interview is part of a project about men's experiences of dancing. I am interested in finding out how men's and women's experiences of dance differ in different dance classes. I am interviewing male and female dancers from a Latin and ballroom and capoeira class and will be comparing what dancers do and say in each of these settings.

This sheet is for you to keep and tells you more about the study and what it involves

- I am going to interview around 30 dancers from the 2 different classes.

- I am a research student based at the University of Bath

- All the interviews will last about 60 minutes

- All the interviews will be digitally recorded, and then written out so that I have a record of what people have said in the interviews.

- I will provide the interviewee with a copy of the written out interview so that any relevant corrections or amendments can be made.

- Nothing you say in these interviews will be heard by anyone else in the University. I will store the interview data in a word document on my personal PC.

- If you agree to take part in this interview, but feel at any stage that you would like to stop, you are free to do so at any time.

If you have any questions about this study feel free to contact me:

Craig Owen
Department of Psychology
University of Bath
Claverton Down
Bath BA2 7AY

Email: cro20@bath.ac.uk
Telephone: 07707753475

(Participant keeps this section)

Consent form for Interview

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Men's Experiences of Dance Project

(Researcher keeps this section)

I agree to take part in the interview under the conditions described above:

Signed:…………………………….   Date:………………………

Are you :   Male: …………   Age: …………………….
(Please tick one)   Female: ……....

How would you describe your ethnic identity?
(Please state)

………………………………………………

Would you be happy for me to interview you again   Yes: ………….
                                                                                              No: …………..

Contact details:

Mobile _____

Email _____

Appendix 3

Capoeira interview schedule

Name:
Pseudonym:
Age:
Date:
Time:

Remind/inform the participants about:
The background of the research.
Structure of interview: Interest in dance develop over time and then about present participation
Can stop interview at any point.
Any questions before we begin?
Would you mind if I tape record the discussion?

Could you provide some information on your family background and whether this might have influenced your participation in physical activities sport, dance, martial arts or music?
Background – Careers/hobbies/residence
Activities/relationships with family members
Did you dance as a child? Why/why not?
Family opinion of you doing Capoeira

What kind of experiences did you have in Sport and Physical Education at School? Did you have any opportunities to dance at school?
Remember any *differentiation between boys girls* participation in sport/dance
Standard achieved in sport/dance and general physical activity background
Help in performance of Capoeira

Did you have any other significant experiences or people that influenced your views on dancing?
Youth groups/activities
Media, films, role models.

Were there any key experiences that influenced you to undertake capoeira?
Something they have always wanted to do? What was the attraction?
Join other clubs at same

<u>Current Participation in Dance</u>

What do you like about Capoeira?
Why? Example

Is there anything that you do not like about Capoeira?
Apprehensions/difficulties
Examples. *Why*?

Where do you do Capoeira? How long?
Play in different places. e.g festivals, by yourself, street roda, demo, in class.
Different groups/countries. How does it compare?

What do you think of this particular class/group?
Views on the teacher/instructor, lessons.
View on other participants and group relationships.
Social events.

Do you think men and women do Capoeira differently?
Example or personal experience. Why?
Angola - Regional
Different dances e.g. samba de roda, machulele.

Would you consider that certain aspects of Capoeira are feminine or masculine?
How do you dance? Can you do both styles?

What does it feel like when you are playing capoeira?
Body. Movements. Interaction with partner.
First experiences of participating in capoeira
Difference between - beginner/advanced – different dances -
Public, private, demonstrations, street rodas, festivals.
Training vs. game

Do you participate in other dances/martial arts? How do they compare?

Has learning capoeira changed you in any way?
Continue to dance in the future.

Have you ever come across the idea that dance is associated as more of a woman's activity? --- What do you think about think about this? **--- What do you think of the idea that men who dance are stereotyped as typically gay?**
Have these views influenced your participation in dance?

Anything missed or anything other significant experiences of dance like to talk about?

Latin and ballroom interview schedule

Name:
Pseudonym:
Age:
Date:
Time:

Remind/inform the participants about:
The background of the research.
Structure of interview: Interest in dance develop over time and then about present participation
Can stop interview at any point.
Any questions before we begin?
Would you mind if I tape record the discussion?

Could you provide some information on your family background and whether this might have influenced your participation in physical activities, sport, dance, music?
Background – Careers/hobbies/residence
Activities/relationships with family members
Did you dance as a child? Why/why not?
Family opinion of you doing Latin and ballroom

What kind of experiences did you have in Sport and Physical Education at School? Did you have any opportunities to dance at school?
Remember any *differentiation between boys girls* participation in sport/dance
Standard achieved in sport/dance and general physical activity background
Help in performance of Latin and ballroom

Did you have any other significant experiences or people that influenced your views on dancing?
Youth groups/activities
Media, films, role models.

Were there any key experiences that influenced you to undertake Latin and ballroom?
Join other university clubs
Something they have always wanted to do? What was the attraction?

Current Participation in Dance

What do you like about Latin and ballroom?
Why? Example

Is there anything that you do not like about Latin and ballroom?
Apprehensions/difficulties
Examples. *Why*?

Where do you do Latin and ballroom? How long?
Dance in different places. e.g competitions, at home, demonstrations to public, in class.
Christmas/masquerade ball. How does it compare?

What do you think of this particular dance class?
Views on the teacher/instructor, lessons.
View on other participants and group relationships.
Social events.

Do you think men and women do Latin and ballroom differently?
Example or personal experience.
Why?

Would you consider that certain aspects of Latin and ballroom are feminine or masculine?
How do you dance? Do you do both?
Role as teacher – lead and follow.
Photography and video

What does it feel like when you are dancing?
Body. Movements. Interaction with partner.
Difference between - beginner/advanced – different dances -
Public, private, competition.
Dance with regular partner. Alone/together.
Leading or following? Done both?
First experiences of participating in Latin and ballroom.

Do you participate in other dances? How do they compare?

Has learning Latin and ballroom changed you in any way?
Continue to dance in the future.

Have you ever come across the idea that dance is associated as more of a woman's activity? --- What do you think about think about this? **--- What do you think of the idea that men who dance are stereotyped as typically gay?**
Have these views influenced your participation in dance?

Anything missed or anything other significant experiences of dance like to talk about?

Appendix 4

Transcription conventions - adapted from Speer (2005)

(.)   a short pause

(2)   the length of a pause or gap, in seconds

[overlap]   square brackets indicate the onset and end of overlapping speech

rea:::lly   colons mark elongation of the prior sound

<u>underline</u>   underlining marks speaker emphasis

>faster<   'more than' and 'less than' signs enclose speeded up talk

=   equals sign indicates immediate latching of successive talk

(laughs)   brackets enclose actions performed in the interview

?   a question mark indicates a rising inflection

LOUD   capitals mark talk that is noticeably louder than the surrounding speech

°quiet°   degree signs enclose speech that is noticeably quieter than the
surrounding talk

↑   an upward arrow marks rising intonation

↓   a downward arrow marks falling intonation