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Emergent Movements: The Role of Embodiment and Somatics in British Contemporary Dance

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Emergent Movements: The Role of Embodiment and Somatics in British Contemporary Dance

By

Georgia Giotaki, MA

PhD

June, 2015



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Abstract

This thesis explores somatic practices as a social movement by focusing on the relationship between embodiment, somatics and contemporary dance practices. It looks specifically to Body-Mind Centering® (BMC®) and traces an ethnographic history of the practice examining it as a post-modern western somatic method forming part of an international social movement. The research is grounded on post-structuralist dance anthropology and analyses BMC® as a “socially constructed movement system” (Grau 1993).

Through experimentation, the somatic movement cultivates bodily awareness and an embodied sense of self. The thesis points to the ways in which the emphasis on embodiment may form a key component in this social movement and its relation to British somatic-informed dance. While providing the conceptual and historic context for experimentation in contemporary dance in Britain since the 70s, the thesis illustrates that New, and later, Independent Dance artists drew from BMC® as well as other somatic practices. It argues that the exploration of embodiment as a human attribute and lived phenomenon from a somatic perspective gave rise to a culturally distinct discourse of practice, known today as somatic-informed dance. It works to illustrate the nature of the new pedagogical approach that emerged and, specifically, the way this aspect of contemporary dance evolved as a result of the emphasis on embodiment and the somatic influence. To do so, the thesis identifies and analyses distinct principles and pedagogic tools employed through an anthropological perspective and ethnographic, historical and practice-led research methods. Further illustrating the way the concept of embodiment is understood in somatic informed dance pedagogy, it critically examines the claim that embodiment processes may re-educate dualist perceptions. It, thereby, argues that it is only in the experience of *integration* in the lived moment that the problem of dualism might be challenged.

Through an investigation of lineage, the thesis situates BMC® and somatic-informed contemporary dance practice within the socio-cultural, artistic, conceptual and philosophical context in which they developed. Pointing to the parallel expansion of scholarly and artistic interest in embodiment over the past five decades, it demonstrates a permeability of bodies, places, ideas and culturally constructed movement systems.

Overall, the thesis is underpinned by a critical engagement with the position that embodiment and experience form the existential ground for culture and self (distilled in Csordas’ 1994a), offering an analysis of BMC® informed dance practice as another source of data shedding new light to this insight. Capturing a moment in dance history with a synchronic investigation (Sahlins 1998), this research works to further contribute towards an understanding of a diachronic property of the formation of cultures. In line with Csordas’ position, it suggests that given their distinct approach to experientially gained corporeal knowledge and awareness, the emergence of ‘culturally constructed movement systems’ such as BMC® and somatic informed contemporary

dance form a potential illustration of the way culture is existentially grounded on embodiment and experience.

Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted as part of a degree or published elsewhere.

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Abbreviations

BMC®: Body-Mind Centering®

SBMC: School for Body-Mind Centering®

ISMETA: International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy
Association

BMCA: Body-Mind Centering Association

SME: Somatic Movement Education

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1. Aims and Thesis Structure.....	12
1.1.1. <i>Introduction to the Methodological Approach</i>	15
1.1.2. <i>Thesis Structure</i>	17
1.2. Introducing Somatics and Body-Mind Centering® as a Social Movement	20
1.3. A Story of Practice	35
1.4. Rationale.....	39
2. Methodological and Conceptual Framework.....	43
2.1. Introduction	43
2.2. Dance Anthropology vs Dance Ethnography: Clarifying the Conceptual Outlook	50
2.3. Exploring the Space Between Representation and Being-in-the-world: The Embodiment Paradigm as a Conceptual Lens	51
2.4. Embodiment and Dance Anthropology.....	63
2.4.1. <i>Language as Mediator of Experience</i>	67
2.4.2. <i>Constructing the Field and Methods of Documentation</i>	69
2.4.3. <i>Tensions Between Being an ‘Insider’ and ‘Outsider’ in Ethnography</i>	76
2.4.4. <i>Reflexive Anthropology and Personal Politics</i>	81
2.5. Merging the Historic with the Ethnographic: Some Methodological Considerations.....	87
2.5.1. <i>BeeDocs Timeline – 3D as a Thinking Tool</i>	92
2.6. Practice-led Research: A Reflexive Outline.....	97
2.7. Introducing a Vocabulary of Embodiment as Encountered in the Field.....	104
2.8. Conclusion.....	114
3. Introduction to Body-Mind Centering®: Outlining Practice, Theory, Method and Philosophy	117
3.1. Introduction	117
3.2. The Practice.....	121
3.3. The Anatomic Systems Through the Lens of BMC® and The Evolution of the BMC® Material	130
3.3.1. <i>The Skeletal system</i>	134
3.3.2. <i>The Muscular System</i>	136
3.3.3. <i>Developmental Movement</i>	136
3.3.4. <i>The Organ System</i>	139
3.3.5. <i>Endocrine System</i>	140
3.3.6. <i>The Nervous System</i>	142
3.3.7. <i>The Fluids System</i>	143
3.3.8. <i>The Ligamentous system</i>	146
3.3.9. <i>Senses and Perception</i>	150
3.3.10. <i>Ontogenetics leading to Embryology</i>	152
3.4. Embodying the Cell	153
3.5. Tools of Practice and Qualities of Attention in BMC®	155
3.6. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen: The Journey, Development of the Method and Influences	163
3.7. Conclusion.....	172
4. The Somatic Movement and New and Independent Dance in Britain from 1970s and Beyond: Situating Practices and Unveiling Shared Themes	179

4.1. Introduction	179
4.2. Exploring Boundaries Between Terms and Eras: Tracing Primary Conceptual and Aesthetic Shifts	184
4.3. Setting the Scene: Meetings of Dance With the Somatic World	192
4.4. Conclusion	210
5. Exploring Permeable Boundaries: The Influence of Somatics on Aspects of Contemporary Dance in Britain from a Historical Perspective	215
5.1. Introduction	215
5.1.1. <i>A Practitioner-researcher Perspective: Identification of Values and Principles as Distillations of Practice</i>	221
5.2. Somatic-informed Contemporary Dance: A View Into a Discourse of Practice	223
5.3. Partner Work and Touch: Cultivating Embodiment and 'Interconnectedness'	255
5.4. Conclusion	259
6. On Dualism: Perspectives from Somatic Informed Dance Pedagogy	265
6.1. Introduction	265
6.2. Re-examining Critiques of Cartesian Dualism	267
6.3. Questioning Dualism? Perspectives from Dance Education	270
6.4. The Experience and Analysis of Embodiment: The Somatic Approach through the Lens of Phenomenology	277
6.5. Conclusion	283
7. Conclusion	287
8. List of References	305
APPENDICES.....	321
Appendix 1. Scanned Ethics Approval Form	323
Appendix 2. BMC® Programme Development Chronology	337
Appendix 3. Draft Interview Plan.....	341
Appendix 4. A reflection on my role as 'insider' and 'outsider' practitioner- researcher	343
Appendix 5. Introducing the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu and Situating it in Context	347
Appendix 6. SBMC Certification Programmes and Courses	349
Appendix 7. BMC® Programme Content	355
Appendix 8. Documenting and Mapping Connections, Legacies and Reference Points: Photographs from Tasks at Dance and Somatics Conference, Coventry University 2013	357
Appendix 9. Announcement of Event The Big 30: X6 and Friends – Now and Then, A Round Table Discussion	365
Appendix 10. An Extract from an Interview with Sue McLennan	367

Appendix 11. An Extract from an Interview with Sarah Whatley.....	373
Appendix 12. Excerpt from Miranda Tufnell’s Biographical Note	383
Appendix 13. Introduction to the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA)	385
Appendix 14. ISMETA Registered Professional Member Requirements As Available From the Official Website of the Association	389

1. Introduction

This thesis explores the growing field of somatic practices as a social movement. It does so through tracing an ethnographic history of Body-Mind Centering® (BMC®) exploring it as part of the somatic movement.

It works to capture a critical moment in the history of contemporary dance in Britain, spanning from the latter half of the 20th century until early 21st century, and explores the means through which BMC® might have influenced the development and practice of contemporary dance. Since the early 70s, the growth and multiplication of somatic approaches to movement, particularly in the western world, and the shift of interest of experimental dance artists towards notions of “lived experience” (Merleau Ponty 1962) and body-based knowledge gradually brought embodiment to the centre of dance creative practice and pedagogy. During the same period, a growth of theoretical fields that focused on embodiment further nurtured this interest. This thesis unravels notions of embodiment examining the concept as both a lived phenomenon and a research paradigm. It converses with Csordas (1994a) edited collection in which authors argue that embodiment and experience form the existential ground for culture and self.

The phrase “emergent movements” in the title of this thesis refers to the two main themes analysed that include both social and bodily movements.

Examining the development of somatics as a social movement offers the ground on which to investigate the emergence of “socially constructed movement systems” (Grau 1993). The practice of BMC® offers a particular outlook through which to observe and analyse the emergence of human movement.

During the twentieth century, the growth of existentialism, phenomenology and developments in education and psychology led to a “gradual shift towards theoretical support for experiential learning” (Eddy 2006: 6). Amongst others,

the theories of Martin Heidegger (1962), John Dewey (1997, also see Hickman and Alexander 1998), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), and Alfred North Whitehead (1967) were instrumental in this shift. Somatic inquiry, as we encounter it today, evolved through these theories as well as through dance, the performing arts and expressionism. Direction to new trajectories was complemented by the work of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich in psychology and was informed by diverse theoretical and conceptual ventures referred to in this thesis. The unique explorations of individuals in different parts of the world spawned fresh approaches “to bodily care and education” (Eddy 2009:6) shaped into distinct methods practiced by thousands of people around the world in multiple settings and with numerous applications.

Many methods that evolved during the twentieth century placed an emphasis on corporeality and the phenomenon of what it feels to have or to experience a body. With a distinct approach to working with the body, some of these methods have formed a field in movement education known as somatics. This may be understood as an inclusive term. Fortin (2002: 128) suggests that the word ‘somatic’ may be viewed as an “...an umbrella term used to assemble experiential bodily practices that privilege subjective experience”. The growing number of people participating, the growth of a shared discourse and the principles underpinning methods such as BMC® lead to a view of this field as a social movement.

More recently, there appears to be an expansion of scholarly interest in the field and a rapid multiplication of practitioners¹ who seek a professional

¹ Certification programmes of some somatic methods are increasingly becoming globally available. Between 1980 and 2003, the BMC® practitioner training programme was only offered in the USA. Since 2003, the School for Body-Mind Centering® (SMBC) has licensed organisations in different parts of the world to run its programmes. (Please see Appendix 2 for the development of the programmes around the world in chronological order). In Britain, there appears to be a growing interest and initiatives from the field of dance aiming to increase the provision of certification programmes in methods that seem to have been more openly acknowledged as influences in the creative or pedagogic practices in contemporary dance. This is true, for example, for the Introductory Teacher Certification Program in Skinner Releasing Technique held at Coventry University in the Summer of 2010, and the Ongoing Teacher Certification Program offered following interest from lecturers in dance of the same institution and collaborators, in July 2011. (Titles as advertised in the official Skinner

position and language to share or promote their work. This growth is accompanied by a rhetoric of *embodiment* or *embodied awareness* that somatic practices claim to cultivate. The use of these terms differs between individual practitioners and practices, but there are aspects of the meaning of the terms that are common and which I begin to illustrate through this thesis. The *embodied* person or performer, as often understood in some fields of current contemporary dance practice, refers to a “thinking², feeling, sensate” (Popat, 2011) self functioning with a level of movement and sensory intelligence able at once to both attend to and act from that quality of being. Dance practitioners without a somatic focus, some of who might even criticize some of the principles and methods of practice with regards to focus, rigour and challenge in dance training, tend now to embrace such terms as “embodied performer” or “thinking dancer” to refer to valued qualities of presence and performance in contemporary dance as well as in other performing arts. The exchange between artists from different artistic communities has inevitably influenced a conceptual basis of contemporary dance evident in the language and meanings shared. Publicity material and the language encountered in the field often imply that there is an active fostering of embodiment as a lived phenomenon as opposed to one which is by nature present and does not require some form of intervention in order to be acknowledged or sensed. Michael Huxley (2011) has problematized statements encountered in some contemporary dance communities characterising performances or dancers as ‘embodied’ arguing that it connotes an obvious dimension of being human. However, the meaning of the term as used by somatic informed dance practitioners refers to a quality of being or presence which encompasses a distinct level of awareness of one’s body in time and space illustrated through this thesis. The meaning and, importantly, the experience of being embodied are therefore not static concepts.

Releasing Technique webpage.) Certification programmes in practices such as the Feldenkrais method and Alexander Technique have had a longer presence in Britain.

² A phrase often used in the field of contemporary dance by both somatically informed and more traditional or non-somatic based practitioners which bears reference to Mabel Elseworth Todd’s 1937 book titled *The Thinking Body: A Study of the Balancing Forces of Dynamic Man*. A pioneer in the field of somatics, Todd wrote one of the first publications exploring movement and the body from this perspective.

I argue that perhaps in practices such as BMC® the differentiated meaning of the term *embodiment* occurs as a different sense of the body and self is experienced following conscious somatic explorations. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (2001: page not available), the inventor of the method, defines embodiment as follows:

Embodiment is the awareness of the cells of themselves. It is direct experience. There are no intermediary steps or translations. There is no guide. There is no witness. There is the fully known consciousness of the experienced moment initiated from the cells themselves. In this instance, the brain is the last to know. There is complete knowing. There is peaceful comprehension. Out of this embodiment process emerges feeling, thinking, witnessing, understanding. The source of this process is love.

Qualitative data collected as part of this study suggest that the shift of attention towards an experiential approach to the body develops a heightened somatic awareness, an amplified sense of the body parts participants may ground their explorations on.

The parallel expansion of scholarly and artistic interest and investigation into embodiment over the past five decades demonstrates a philosophical shift that emerged in the western world particularly in the latter half of the 20th century (see Csordas 1994a, Farnell 2011 and Sheets-Johnstone 2009 for different analyses of this period). It may be argued that this also points to inadequacies of the positivist paradigm and rationalism in providing a ground on which to understand the existential realm of “bodiliness” in a manner other than mechanistic. Csordas (1994a) offers a useful formulation of the term “bodiliness” that is further unpacked in section 2.3 of this thesis. The growth of discourses on embodiment also points to the long-lasting dispute between rationalism and empiricism that developed in multiple frontiers during the 20th century. A social, cultural, intellectual and perhaps existential need appears to have developed in the western world for growth in knowledge about embodiment as a human attribute and about the significance of bodiliness to our sense of self, subjectivity, our perception of reality and understanding of

lived experience. Somatic practices and the embodiment paradigm (Csordas 1994 a & b) in anthropological research appear, to some extent at least, to be driven by an interest in empiricism with emphasis placed on sense experience (Markie 2013³).

On a theoretical level, over the past three decades, an extended body of work within critical theory and dance studies has been examining aspects of embodiment, corporeality or else, bodiliness, and its position, significance or lack of presence in scholarly writing. Situated within a broader context of cultural and feminist theory, dance scholarly writing with an ethnographic or anthropological orientation and accounts on dance education have engaged with debates about the value of an embodiment paradigm as a methodological standpoint in their own fields and, in certain cases, in practice as research. Works upholding this orientation may be found in dance anthropology and ethnography (Novack 1990, Sklar 2001a & b, 2000, 1999, Ness 2004, 1996a & b, 1992, Browning 1995, Thomas 2003, Geurts 2003), medical anthropology (Csordas 1994a & b, 1990, Turner 1994) and dance education (Fortin, Long and Lord 2002, Smith 2002).

Particular emphasis to the significance of embodiment in dancers' training or creative processes is also placed within western contemporary dance practice informed by a somatic approach. Following Garrett-Brown's (2007: 1) thought process for coining the term "somatic-informed dance", the phrases "somatic-informed dance" and "somatically informed dance practice" are used in this thesis to refer to contemporary dance practice that is informed by a somatic method or the somatic approach to movement education. In Britain, a strand of contemporary dance that this may be considered to be evident is New and more recently Independent Dance, where this research is located. This is not to say that influences were necessarily conscious or intentional. Rather, hoping to complement earlier scholarly research on the developments of dance in Britain in the past 50 years such as Stephanie Jordan's (1992) and Judith Mackrell's (1992), this thesis will work to contribute towards illustrating

³ Markie (2013) summarises the main reasons for the binary opposition between rationalism and empiricism and fundamental premises each system of thought upholds.

the way experimentations that took place in contemporary dance in Britain since the late 60s - early 70s led to a redefinition of the art form. To do so, it will look particularly to identify some of the new ways of working with movement creatively or pedagogically that increasingly infuse the way dance is practiced and experienced today. I argue that seeking for what Sue McLennan (2012) calls “what dance could be”, in the early stages of experimentation, was grounded on a shift of interest into the subjective experience of movement. The interest to develop the relationship between dance and its kinesthetic nature, as Kirsty Alexander notes in Chapter 4, and the methods artists drew from to achieve this shows a philosophical shift in dance pedagogy that is grounded on notions of embodiment. This thesis will work to illustrate how developments in New and Independent dance have led to a new pedagogic approach and demonstrate what this approach involves.

A growing body of work in somatic practices and their application to dance raises the issue of embodiment as of significance in performers’ training. This, partly, justifies the growing presence of different approaches of somatic education becoming increasingly embedded in higher education dance training. Scholarly interest in this area is evident in a number of events taking place internationally. These have increased in number in the last few years as the impact of somatic practices is becoming more and more present in Higher Education and in other fields⁴.

In the past few years, the publication of the “Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices” significantly contributes in outlining, defining and shaping the field.

⁴ Indicative of the growing and global reach of the somatic approaches are the following examples. With a lasting application of somatics in its dance programme, Ohio State University organised its first Annual Somatics Conference in 1990. Additionally, associations of different somatic methods have been running their own annual conferences. The annual USA Conference of the Body-Mind Centering® Association (BMCA) has been established since 1986. Given the growth of the European BMC® training programmes and community, the BMCA has also organised a series of European Conferences including one in Zurich (Switzerland 2009), in Amsterdam (Holland 2013), Estonia (2014) and Ghent (Belgium 2015). Similarly, the annual Feldenkrais Method conference was first convened in 1978 in North America. The first Alexander Technique Congress took place in New York and has since moved to different parts of the world. The upcoming 10th congress is planned for July 2015.

A series of Palatine events⁵, as well as the biannual International Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices at Coventry University (July 2011 and July 2013) papers of which are also included in the Journal also play a role in advancing debates and further shaping the field. These events took place in England over the past five years examining educational and other issues around the application of somatics in dancers' training in HE and beyond. Earlier than this, in 19th July 2003, Laban Centre, currently Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, hosted a research conference titled "New Connectivities: Somatic and Creative Practices in Dance Education". The growing international interest in the application of somatics as an approach to creative practice and to educating the 21st century performer is shown by events taking place in different parts of the world. In September 2012, the first conference to focus on the impact and potentiality of the Alexander Technique in the performing arts took place at Melbourne University in Australia and was titled "Alexander Technique and the Performing Arts Conference". In 2013, the Palladino School of Dance at Dean College in Franklin (Massachusetts) organised its First International Conference on Somatics-based Dance Education. Its second conference is upcoming in 2015.

As it begins to be shown, the term embodiment is widely and variably used in the field. It has multiple uses, but it is only rarely that attempts are offered for defining or confining what might be signified (see, for example, the generic use of the term in Schiphorst 2009). As a practitioner and researcher in this emerging field, I consider a careful examination of notions of embodiment, through dialogue between the anthropological, philosophical and the somatic lenses, pertinent and timely. The process of this dialogue hopes to illuminate both this fundamental existential reality and offer a ground on which to examine aspects of practice and claims made. To my knowledge, there has not been an attempt to clarify the varied understandings of the meaning and uses of 'embodiment' in somatic-informed dance to date. Additionally, a

⁵ Two palatine conferences took place at Liverpool John Moores University over the past 10 years. "Dancing in the Now" took place at I.M. Marsh campus on 25th October 2006. The second conference was titled "Somatic and Creative Practices: Learning and Teaching in Higher Education" and took place on 9th Feb 2008. In 1999, an invitational conference also took place in Esalen, USA titled: "Transformative Practices: Somatics and Transformation".

clarification of what the emphasis placed on this concept offers to dance education has not been undertaken yet in this frame in dance scholarly research. Arguably, amongst other values, principles and focus, the fundamental ground that different somatic approaches to movement have in common is embodiment. Neither has the way it responds to western systems of thought and approaches to the body. Placing perspectives of embodiment in dialogue with each other forms an attempt to clear the conceptual ground underpinning practice and to initiate professional and scholarly exchange. I consider this task essential at this stage of growth of the somatic movement, particularly as it is being increasingly applied in domains as influential as Higher Education in the UK, some parts of Europe and the USA.

1.1. Aims and Thesis Structure

This thesis explores somatic practices as a social movement by focusing specifically on the relationship between embodiment, somatics and contemporary dance practices. It will ask a number of questions including: What are the conditions that gave rise to somatics as a social movement? How do developments in dance pedagogy support the recognition of somatics as a social movement? What role might an ethnographic history play in determining the current impact of somatics in dance education? If examined through an anthropological perspective, what might be the principles and tools borrowed from the somatic approach that constitute the nature of somatic-informed dance? How does viewing somatics as a social movement reveal new insights about notions of 'embodiment' as a core component in the practices and theoretical structures that underpin somatics in dance? How might contextualisation of practice and the emerging understanding of embodiment inform us about the genesis of a social movement or about the way a socially constructed movement system emerges?

To my knowledge these questions have not been addressed in relation to each other and in the constellation or perspective offered in this thesis. Dance educators, somatic practitioners and scholars such as Rouhiainen 2010, Green 2007, 2002, Ginot 2010, Fortin 2002 and 2001 have demonstrated the

lack of theorizing around the values, beliefs or principles that are fundamental to somatics. It is in part to this gap of knowledge that this thesis speaks. Additionally, although somatic methods such as BMC® are finding a place in pedagogic contexts such as Higher Education, there is still little scholarly documentation and discussion focusing on their reference points and the implications these might bear for the current application of an emphasis on embodiment in practice. In employing a combination of ethnographic and historical methods to explore somatics as a social movement and the conditions that gave rise to the movement, this thesis hopes to also begin to address this need.

In order to explore the relationship between embodiment, somatics and contemporary dance practices, the aims and objectives of this thesis may be summarized as follows. The formulation of aims and objectives offered here work to further specify the topics of inquiry that derive from the questions outlined above.

Aim 1. To explore somatics as a social movement and its relationship with New and Independent Dance in Britain.

Objective 1.1 To trace an ethnographic history of BMC® examined as part of the somatic movement.

Objective 1.2 To situate BMC® and somatic-informed dance practice through identification of legacies and lineage.

Objective 1.3 To identify the contextual as well as the existential basis for the growth of the somatic movement.

Aim 2. To examine the way the somatic approach to embodiment has impacted on the nature of New and the Independent Dance practice in Britain.

Objective 2.1 To illustrate the way embodiment is understood and practiced in a somatic practice such as BMC®.

Objective 2.2 To identify principles and pedagogic tools that illustrate the shifts of interest towards embodiment in New and Independent Dance practice and the cross-pollination between dance and somatics.

Objective 2.3 To critically examine the claim that the somatic approach to dance pedagogy offers transformative experiences, with particular reference to its potential for challenging dualist perceptions.

Situating practice and examining somatics as a social movement, and specifically BMC® as a “socially constructed movement system” (Grau 1993), provides evidence of the way socially constructed movement systems or social movements may emerge through – and as a result of – wider social, cultural and historic context. In other words, the thesis points to the seeds (conceptual, cultural, political, practical, existential) that brought the genesis of the somatic movement.

The examination of somatics as a social movement is grounded on the understanding and observation that somatics form a cultural discourse that frames new experiences of the lived body / embodiment (see Csordas 1994a 16). This is achieved through distinct and identifiable ways (principles & tools) that invite analysis. This thesis proposes to undertake this analysis by focusing on the impact the somatic approach to movement pedagogy had on New and Independent Dance practice, as distilled in the second set of objective listed below. This focus will critically examine the claim that the somatic approach offers transformative experiences, with particular reference to its potential for negating dualist perceptions, a claim often encountered in the field of somatic-informed dance education. I will explore how a focus on somatic-informed dance practice, supported by an introduction to the theoretical frames that underpin practice and conceptualisations of embodiment, might verify or trouble this claim.

Through tracing an ethnographic history of somatics with particular reference to BMC® and its relation to British contemporary dance, I show how somatics may be viewed as a social movement and I work to capture an aspect of British contemporary dance practice and its history. Through this process, I hope to interrogate how embodiment as a concept has influenced or changed dance pedagogy. The way it has influenced practice is illustrated through examples of principles and tools used to foster embodiment for performance.

To summarise, on my exploration of New and Independent Dance practice, I focus specifically on a pedagogical approach that emerged as a result of the ethos and influences of the movement that I look to capture.

Arguments raised in this thesis and the responses to the aims and objectives given in the following chapters are interwoven. Each of the questions raised, aims and objectives set feeds into understanding the other.

1.1.1. Introduction to the Methodological Approach

Due to the multifaceted nature of somatic work, its emphasis on the lived body and embodiment reaches for answers to all perspectives and lenses of analysis and understanding of human nature. To address the complexity of this theme, an interdisciplinary approach, as outlined in Chapter 2, has been endorsed for this thesis. To respond to these questions, this research employs an ethno-historic (Novack 1990) and practice-led (Protopapa 2011) methodological approach. The ethnographic aspects of the methodology are grounded on a methodological framework drawn from dance anthropology (Ness 1992, 1996a, 2004; Sklar 1994, 1999, 2000, 2001a and 2001b; Novack 1990) and the embodiment paradigm as theorized by Csordas (1990, 1994a and 1994b) in medical anthropology. The relationship between ethnography and anthropology as employed in this research is discussed in section 2.2. The notion and experience of embodiment is at the core of this investigation and findings or reflections on ontological questions, such as the examination of the problem of dualism, are grounded on practice-led research introduced in section 1.3 and further outlined in the next chapter. Following the emphasis on an experiential acquisition of knowledge pertaining to somatic practices, participant-observation has been followed throughout this project.

The engagement with a breadth of theoretical approaches has taken place to foster a deeper analysis of the subject of embodiment. Responding to the call for interdisciplinarity (see Csordas 1994a, Gallagher 2005), the breadth of disciplines employed is seen to illuminate depth of understanding of a topic as complex as embodiment and its potential implications to epistemology and our

understanding and experience of being-in-the-world. The methodological and conceptual ground of this study is sketched in a manner that hopes to offer further evidence, thereby stressing the need for an interdisciplinary perspective. It aims to perhaps even point to the need of a post-paradigmatic understanding, particularly in attempts to explore the way a person 'functions' and the unity or connection between body and mind.

A critical engagement with research methods underpins this research. Through their application in the particular ethnographic investigation specific conceptual perspectives were inevitably required. This project indicates the benefits and limitations of conceptual frames such as anthropology in responding to questions around what might be the relation between the body, self and culture.

Impact and potentiality of BMC® informed dance pedagogy is explored through a multi-perspective that includes my role as both a trained Somatic Movement Educator and a researcher engaging critically with the tools of this approach in education. The selection of examples offered throughout the thesis is based on observations from my own practice-based research, from reflections on embodied experiences as a learner and from reflections on the work of other practitioners who I have witnessed as learner, reader and ethnographer.

With a particular interest in capturing a moment in the history of contemporary dance in Britain, observations I made around the shifts in my practice and on the nature of the work of others informed the identification of principles and tools and the choice of sources I have drawn in the following chapters. It is often the case that I draw from scholarly or practice focused books and articles from artist led magazines (New Dance Magazine, Contact Quarterly) or journals as data. As I will explain further in Chapter 2, this happens for three reasons: a. They are viewed as primary sources, b. I hope to illustrate that the shifts in practice and the interplay between somatics and dance are not topical but wide reaching both in the field of contemporary dance in Britain and globally. c. I draw from sources available in public to ensure I hold

confidences and an ethical research practice in my role as both practitioner and anthropologist, as insider and outsider.

1.1.2. Thesis Structure

Following an outline of the methodological and conceptual framework (Chapter 2), Chapter 3 introduces to BMC® as one of the influential to dance education somatic practices. The chapter positions BMC® in historical and cultural context and outlines principles, philosophy and lineage of the practice whilst offering a brief narrative of Bainbridge Cohen's journey and the process of developing this form. Introducing the distinct approach BMC® takes to the anatomy and physiology of the body allows a) to illustrate the way embodiment is understood in BMC® and b) to offer a narrative of the development of the method thereby situating it in context. Programmes offered by the SBMC and their development chronologically are also outlined in this chapter. Positioning BMC® in context and identifying some of its influences helped identify the theoretical ground from which to draw upon in order to ground reflections on the practice and resolve tensions encountered. As a practice-led study, the dialogue between influences of practice and the conceptual framework chosen for this thesis has been ongoing throughout the research process.

Chapter 4 begins to examine developments in New Dance and, subsequently, Independent Dance in Britain through an investigation of the exchange between somatic practitioners and dance artists. It focuses particularly in sketching the conceptual ground on which shifts in practice were made possible, thereby setting the scene for the chapter that follows. It continues on the theme of identifying influences and cross-pollination between practices and works to place developments encountered in dance in cultural and historical context. The chapter discusses some methodological issues that emerge from labelling of historic periods as relevant to the task of an ethno-historical positioning of aspects of somatic informed contemporary dance practice. The potency of the analytic prism of anthropology is seen to illuminate and complement a historical interest.

Chapter 5 continues on exploring the relation between BMC®, somatics as a social movement and the development of contemporary dance in Britain since the early 70s. It identifies pedagogical tools and principles introduced in the creative process and in the facilitation of studio practice that shifted the nature of dance pedagogy and, by extension, of performance training. I specifically focus on the shifts in the way movement was approached in the studio.

Therefore, I explore dance pedagogy that has emerged from New and ID dance movement in Britain. Having practiced multiple forms of dance for over thirty years and having taught dance at various settings for fifteen years, I have become a witness and bearer of this shift. An examination of the changes in our approach to dance and performance training, through the influence of somatic work, from an analytic perspective aims to contribute to a number of questions. Unpicking some of the principles and methods form an evidence of the shift in the nature of dance education and contributes towards discussions around the potentiality of this approach whilst capturing a moment in dance history. Methods and principles identified and discussed are those employed and applied in dance pedagogy with an emphasis on embodiment as a virtue or skill of the performer. Thereby, the potentiality and impact of the somatic approach to dance pedagogy is partly ascribed to its emphasis on embodiment and is examined with regards to this fundamental human attribute.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 illustrate the way embodiment as a lived condition may be illuminated through BMC® and somatic informed contemporary dance practice. The conclusion examines the way this understanding converses with embodiment as a research paradigm (Csordas 1990). It offers a summary of the four main layers of arguments that interweave in this thesis, each informing the other outlined as follows. An exploration of practices and their lineage offers the descriptive basis for anthropological discussions and raises issues in practice. Analysing practice through the anthropological lens unravels the nature of somatics as a social movement and a culturally structured movement system. The discussion on the nature of principles and methods employed by the dance world offered in Chapter 5 leads to an

exploration of the factor that makes impact possible in somatic informed dance pedagogy. Throughout these discussions embodiment as a lived phenomenon emerges as of fundamental existential significance thereby raising methodological and ontological questions. An exploration of embodiment in light of cultural theory, the embodied explorations and exchange between somatic practitioners and dance artists and the approach taken from the somatic world on embodiment begin to develop an understanding of the way somatics as a culturally structured movement system emerged out of embodiment and experience. Following the meaning attributed to the term embodiment in the somatic movement and findings from practice, I argue that understanding notions of embodiment as a lived phenomenon and research paradigm illuminates further Csordas' (1994a) position that embodiment and experience form the existential ground for culture and self.

Chapter 6 examines the problem of dualism as a means to begin clarifying notions of embodiment, as identified in BMC® and somatic-informed dance. It examines the way embodiment as a lived condition may be illuminated through BMC® and the way this understanding converses with embodiment as a research paradigm (Csordas 1990). The prism of BMC®, as a method cultivating embodiment and informing contemporary dance practice is used in order to highlight examples where dance practice draws from, informs or challenges theory. The chapter identifies the nuances the BMC® approach may offer for the phenomenological tradition that require further investigation. It also critically examines the BMC® approach and argues that as a practice that emerged out of discourses founded in both positivist and post-positivist paradigms it presents a dualist paradox in the way it differentiates between and connects mind and body. In identifying the locus of potentiality of the BMC® approach on its work with embodiment, the chapter alludes to concerns that might emerge. It finally refers to the relevance the sense of *integration* or *centering* might have in developing a 'sense of self' and argues for the need for further research in this area.

The thesis serves as an example of the role a study of dance and movement might play in understanding human behaviour, manifestations generally omitted in cultural and/or medical anthropology. Capturing a moment in the history of the development both of BMC® and of contemporary dance aims to contribute towards a deeper understanding of both approaches to the human body and movement. This synchronic analysis of practices works to develop an understanding of a diachronic phenomenon such as the way with which structured movement systems *organically* evolve over time through non-linear processes.

1.2. Introducing Somatics and Body-Mind Centering® as a Social Movement

This section introduces to the field of somatic practices and provides some historic data around its relation to dance. It thereby, offers some background information that led to the formulation of the interest in examining the field as a social movement. “Somatics” is a term coined by Feldenkrais practitioner and philosopher Thomas Hanna in the 70s. In his explorations into a number of educational fields, Hanna highlighted the importance of the lived experience in movement education and rehabilitation. He focused on balancing 1st and 3rd person, the subjective and objective view of the self in order to facilitate an enhanced sense of wellbeing. The term was invented retrospectively to his explorations. Scholarly accounts tend to adopt Thomas Hanna’s definition of somatics as a field of study that deals “...with somatic phenomena, i.e., the human being as experienced by himself (or herself) from the inside.” (Hanna in Somatics Educational Resources, 2014). To refer to the existential locus where mind/body integration is experienced, Hanna used the Greek word *soma*⁶ as the body experienced from within. As indicated above,

⁶ The word σῶμα (*soma*) is initially found in the archaic period in Homer’s “Iliad” and “Odyssey” and, at the time, meant the dead body, the corpus (Carrick 2001: 66). The word δέμας (*demas*) was used in the same texts to signify the living body. It was between 650 and 600 b.c. that the word σῶμα (*soma*) begins to signify the lived body. Carrick offers a useful clarification on the way existential dimensions of being were distinguished in the archaic period and explains that in Homer θῦμός (*thymos*) referred to consciousness, at the time considered to involve thoughts and feelings, and ψυχή (*psyche*), often translated as soul, signified life and movement. (Carrick 2001: 66) It is of interest to note the gradual shift of the meaning of the word *soma* and the conceptualisation of dimensions of existence over time. It would require further research to explore potential overlaps between what the concepts ψυχή

still emerging as a field and concept, the term 'somatics' is used today by dance practitioners to often refer to the growing field in dance education that aims to heighten a kinesthetic awareness of the lived body, the "soma". The term is also currently widely used in dance scholarly work. As a study situated in this body of work, the term is therefore adopted in this thesis.

Building on from Fortin's (2002) clarification on the term 'somatic' offered earlier, it is worth clarifying that my reference to it does not imply a uniform or homogeneous approach to movement pedagogy. As Emslie (2009a: 54) after Green (2002a) explains, "the term is not a monolith". Somatic inquiry or body-based practices are not newly discovered systems of the last two centuries. Schiphorst locates the earliest origins of somatics in "ancient cultural forms of movement practice including those of the Hellenistic era, eastern forms of movement, theatre, yoga, martial arts and primitive ritual practices involving body and transformation of body-state: including shamanism and tribal practices that have existed across almost all cultural forms" (2009: 71). Affinities between somatic practices such as BMC® and ritualistic forms may be found until today in some practitioners' approach. The approaches developed throughout the 20th century, examined in this thesis as a social movement, have had different applications and connections to the dance world. Discussions still take place to define somatics or outline which methods relate to or form part of this way of working.

Numerous terms are used by practitioners to refer to the multiple approaches to the body and human movement developed since the early 20th century as an attempt to differentiate practice through labeling. Terms such as *bodywork* (Juhan 2003), *somatic education*, *movement awareness*, *structural integration* as well as *emotional integration* have been used by practitioners aiming to distinguish their work from other approaches (Knaster 1996). Pluralism in the terms used and the definitions offered for a range of disciplines is reflective of the field itself. To refer to the field of *somatic studies*, Batson (2009b) uses the term *body-mind practices*. Mirka Knaster (1996) uses the term *bodyways* to

(psyche) and consciousness might involve, a topic, however that falls beyond the parameters of this study.

refer to different body practices not excluding approaches such as Acupressure or Zero Balancing®. Approaches that developed during the 20th century until today have been also referred to as *somatic studies*, *body therapies*, *body-mind integration*, *movement re-patterning*, and *movement re-education* (Batson 2009b). Both of these authors and Martha Eddy (2009) offer useful introductions and overviews of the field. Additionally, Don Hanlon Johnson (1992, 1995) has devoted a large part of his career in documenting representative examples of these disciplines through numerous works.

Dancers' involvement with 'somatic studies', or 'somatics', has been present since early pioneers in this field began their explorations. In the early part of the 20th century, somatic practitioners developed their approaches through a detailed observation of their movement behaviour and of sensory 'information' arising from the body. First examples of movement educators who took this approach (placed here in chronological order) include: F. Matthias Alexander (1869–1955) with the *Alexander Technique*, Mabel Elsworth Todd (1874–1956) with *Ideokinesis* (with contribution from Barbara Clark and Lulu Sweigard in the early years of development of the approach), Elsa Gindler in Germany (1885–1961) with body psychotherapy, Ida Rolf (1896–1979) with *Rolfing*, Irmgard Bartenieff (1900–1981) *Bartenieff Fundamentals*, Charlotte Selver (1901–2003) with *Sensory Awareness*, Moshe Feldenkrais (1904–1984) who developed *The Feldenkrais Method*, Gerda Alexander (1908–1994) with *Eutony* and Milton Trager (1908–1997)⁷. All these practitioners developed their approaches from the early 20th century onwards and are broadly considered as the first generation of somatic pioneers. Practitioners' and artists' explorations and discoveries aimed to heighten the psycho-physical nature of the body and the self⁸ and began to develop a discourse of bodily wisdom (Tarr 2004) and inherent corporeal knowledge. These developments took place in an increasingly fluid world and in diverse cultural

⁷ This is an indicative and not an exhaustive list. I include here methods that fieldwork has shown that they are either widely known or used today or some that significantly influenced the growth of a second generation of pioneers.

⁸ Huxley (2012) in analysis of proximities and common ground between the work of Todd and Alexander.

contexts shaped by cultural exchange and mobility, transmigrations and individuals' journeys.

Beyond well-established ancient eastern forms such as yoga, tai chi and chi kung which became largely popular in the west during the latter half of the 20th century and still growing in popularity, over 100 somatic practices were developed and are being practiced today. As a result, the International Movement Therapy Association (IMTA) was founded in 1988 by Jim Spira and a small group of people who aimed to form a professional association for somatic practitioners that viewed movement as a fundamental force and active method for working with the soma (ISMETA, 2014). According to Bainbridge Cohen (2015), Spira requested for her input in founding the organization. Her contribution led to adding the notion of 'quality of life' in its mission statement and to the change of the name of the association with the aim to ensure that there would be no conflict with the Dance Therapy Association. This led to renaming it into 'The International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA)'. (For an introduction to the Association, please see Appendix 13).

Although as I have described, somatics have been defined since the 70s, and besides some exceptions indicatively mentioned here, it is broadly since the beginning of the 21st century that it has attracted burgeoning attention and acknowledgement from the wider dance academic community. Moreover, some parts of the dance community are still unclear as to its premises and breadth. For example, the inquiry of what constitutes or defines somatic practices was addressed in a discussion group as part of the Somatic Gathering in Lancaster in October 2008 with a number of somatic and/or dance practitioners, therapists, artists, and educators from around the UK participating including Miranda Tufnell who initiated the dialogue and set the question. This form of debate, however, appears to be largely resolved in more scholarly accounts or exchanges referred to in this thesis and, therefore, the definition of 'somatics' was considered as a given in somatic community gatherings such as the international conferences at Coventry University or the Palatine events at Liverpool John Moores University mentioned earlier.

‘Somatics’ is a term still debated over and as such has not been given a definitive definition.

In this thesis, somatics are examined as a growing social movement on the basis that numerous individuals since the early twentieth century, mainly in the western world took an interest in discovering or experiencing something about their nature in a way which other forms and, as often argued in the field, the western culture did not allow them to delve into. As I have begun to argue earlier, one of the fundamental areas of particular interest arguably shared amongst somatic practices, and by extension, shared amongst aspects of contemporary dance (including New Dance, parts of post-modern, independent and some experimental dance work) is the notion of embodiment. The flourishing of somatic forms was fuelled by a need for resistance to the dominant dualistic view towards the self and the body, and to a capitalist arrangement of society. It was fuelled by the need for alternative means for acquiring a sense of well-being re-granted ownership of the body to the person and opposing to a medicalised and mechanistic view pertaining the dominant classic medicine approach. Another factor that influenced the growth of the field was the increasing references to ‘the orient’ (Said 2003). These were influences from eastern perspectives to being-in-the-world that became available to the west as an effect of both remnants of the west’s colonialist past and a consequence of the spread of globalisation⁹. The notion of individualism as enhanced by a capitalist system also informed this development, particularly at the earlier stages of the somatic forms in the early twentieth century.

As a field of study of what it is to be human, somatics have also emerged out of an epistemological outlook. Schiphorst supports that what she calls ‘first-person methodologies’ as derived from the emerging ‘body-based disciplines’

⁹ Schiphorst (2009) and Eddy (2009) speak to the role eastern influences played on the development of the field of somatic. I argue that, the ‘orientalist’ drive as well as the role the spread of globalisation has played the evolution of somatics as an international social movement bears strong political undertones, but, as a topic, it is only briefly mentioned here as it falls beyond the confines of this thesis. However, examples of the effects of globalisation and of a fluctuation of concepts, principles, philosophies and methods between the east and the west will be evident throughout the thesis.

(somatics) are offsprings of an 'epistemology of practice' that developed in parallel with rationalism. She argues that both first and third-person methodologies are trajectories in epistemology that

represent a direction in which the body began to be 'loosened from the grips of Victorianism and are identified by a set of parallel histories. First, the history of constructing knowledge through the first-person subject (the domain that defines body-based disciplines and includes somatics) and second, the history of constructing knowledge through third-person scientific data that describes the body in action (the domain of medicine and the sciences)...

(Schiphorst 2009: 66-67)

I would add to this that this parallel development of what Schiphorst calls 'first-person methodologies' was strong but was less dominant to the way it shaped western culture and thinking about the person and the body. She implicitly justifies this claim quoting Don Hanlon Johnson introducing inventors of somatic methods who states:

Although muffled by the din of the dominant voices, there has been a steady resistance building among innovators who have devoted their lives to developing strategies for recovering the wisdom and creativity present in breathing, sensing, moving and touching. They worked quietly, wrote very little. Typically, they spent their lives outside the vociferous worlds of university and research clinic.

(Johnson 1995 : xi)

However, somatic practitioners' work and approaches were disseminated through practice and experiential exchange. Gradually, thousands of people around the world have explored and experimented with these forms. Ultimately, it may be argued that the somatic experience shaped the way they perceived of their bodies and self.

The seeds for the genesis of the somatic movement, I argue, were conceptual, cultural, political and practical. Evidence of this will be offered in diverse forms throughout this thesis. Conceptual references included theorists from diverse but related fields such as Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich in psychotherapy, Merleau-Ponty in philosophy, and Rudolf Steiner. Influences from diverse cultural contexts outside the western world included chi kung,

aikido, Sufism, Buddhism, Butoh, Judo, meditation practices and yoga. From the western world, early pioneers further developed concepts explored in modern dance which shifted attention to developing a more autonomous and democratic way of moving, including the work of Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Mary Wigman and Rudolf Laban. Additionally, in Europe, the work of Emile-Jaques Dalcroze, Francois Delsarte, Zoltán Kodály and Carl Orff, developed in the 19th and early 20th century, heightened the importance of sensory-motor development and the impact of this approach to music and to a lesser extent¹⁰ movement education. All of them, as well as Bess Mensendieck, a German medical doctor who developed a therapeutic movement system to relieve pain, emphasized the importance of a more ‘natural’ approach to physical training grounded on bodily cues arising from breath, movement and touch and, to an extent, departed from the intense and rigorous training methods prevailing at the time with the Gymnastik¹¹ system.

Identifying lineage from a historical perspective requires a certain amount of engagement with labeling which may not always be accurate. This issue is addressed in chapter 4. I argue that the ethnographic perspective may assist in clarifying trends and reference points. For example, Eddy (2009) categorises Dalcroze, Laban and Delsarte’s work under a rather broad interpretation of the term ‘cultural studies’ in which she includes “art, architecture, crystallography, dance and music” (Eddy, 2009: 6). However, she usefully links the development of the somatic movement with Heinrich Jacoby and John Dewey in education, and Edmond Jacobson in medical research. Batson (2009b: 1), on the other hand, refers to Delsarte and Dalcroze as ‘somatic practitioners’, a term or characteristic that is not espoused or acknowledged by the wider music education scholars’

¹⁰ Although in some parts of Europe, including Greece, aspects of some of these methods are traditionally included as approaches to movement and dance education in professional dance training courses, there does not appear to be extensive reference to these approaches in HE dance programmes in Britain. Music education appears to have shown more interest in some of these principles.

¹¹ See Rouhiainen (2010) for a more analytic overview of this movement. Moreover, it is worth noting that the author mainly uses the term German Body Culture instead of the above mentioned Gymnastic movement, also found in literature spelled as ‘Gymnastik’.

community who traditionally employ these approaches as fundamental systems and methods for creative music and movement education¹².

In her search for origins of the somatic approach, Schiphorst argues that somatic forms began to develop as *secular* practice after the industrial revolution in the western world and originate in the work of Francois Delsarte (1811-1871) in the mid-nineteenth century. She supports this claim following Hede Kallmeyer, an early forerunner of the field, who characterizes Delsarte's work as the "the dawn of consciousness" in her book titled *Heilkraft durch Bewegung*, (translated as: "Healing Through Movement" 2009: 66). Schiphorst (2009: 66) states that:

[Kallmeyer's] reference identifies a historical moment when the subjective experience of the body could be reclaimed in what would become a growing secular development of 'body-based-disciplines'...Hede Kallmeyer's statement addresses a historical juncture in western European culture when the body's *own experience* was re-appropriated or reclaimed to a wholly 'secular self'. This marked a growing understanding of the body as less singularly defined by the religious mores that had dominated Europe. In this re-appropriation, the body was freed to become not only its own first-person subject, but also an object of third person empirical study.

Batson (2009b) and Eddy (2002, 2009) find lineage between the development of somatic methods and the Gymnastik system as applied in Germany. For example, Eddy (2009) clarifies that Elsa Gindler adapted exercises from the Gymnastic method, particularly Jahn's work, and added a fresh approach to it which attended more to mental concentration, whilst exploring breath, touch and tension. *Deep internal reflection* was a concept that both Gindler and

¹² This observation is drawn from my own education in a Music Education Training Programme in 2004, offered by the Music Studies Department, Ionian University and the Ionian Conservatory in Corfu. The lack of acknowledgement of Delsarte and Dalcroze's system as pertaining a somatic approach, particularly in the music studies area, is perhaps due to a limited understanding of somatics as a distinct field of study or approach to pedagogy. With a growth of literature into this area and dialogue between music and dance practitioners, the music studies field is naturally beginning to explore this connection between music education and the somatic approach. Dalcroze's approach was examined as 'somatic' by Karin Greenhead and John Habron in the Dance and Somatics Conference in July 2013. To show how some practitioners' collaboration might develop such an interest, following discussions with a music education and a music therapy professor at Ionian University and acknowledging affinities in focus and practice, I have been invited to teach somatic informed movement courses at the music studies department in Corfu in 2011 and 2012.

Mensendieck used. However, lineage between the development of the somatic movement and Gymnastik does not appear to have been present in the development of other influential methods. For example, the developmental education work of people such as Dalcroze and Delsartes moved away from the intensity of Gymnastik as a method of movement and rhythm training.

The work of Joseph Pilates shares roots and employs some of the concepts explored by the somatic movement. Through an investigation of Pilates' own history and the evolution of his method, Rouhiainen (2010) situates his early work as belonging to the German Body Culture movement of the turn of the 20th century, which she elaborately sketches. She shows that it is a method that emerged out of the crossroads where the traditional and the reform gymnasts of the Body Culture movement met. In doing so, she recognises an inherent tension of this approach to movement education. As she explains:

The more traditional gymnasts worked with apparatus and movements were executed according to the teachers' commands with physiotherapeutic and orthopedic goals. The reform gymnasts aimed at developing an awareness of idiosyncratic embodied experiences, thus enhancing the well-being of individuals.

(Rouhiainen 2010: 66)

I argue that this tension is expressed in the way the work is perceived today by parts of the somatic community –some considering it as somatic and some as not. This is due perhaps to its instructive nature, the use of prescribed exercises and an emphasis on developing muscular tone often achieved by some form of holding coming in opposition with concepts such as releasing of holding and muscular tension cultivated through a somatic approach. To the extent that the application of Pilates invites a level of *mindfulness* and cultivates sensory, kinesthetic and somatic awareness, it may be arguably considered a somatic method¹³. I would also argue that as with many forms

¹³ Caldwell et al. (2013) also explore Pilates as a method of somatic education potentially cultivating mindfulness. My views expressed here are grounded on my experience of the past two years in offering daily sessions to people of all ages and movement abilities which combine elements of Pilates, BMC® and other somatic principles as a means to offer safe conditioning classes. These were often offered with a rehabilitation focus in many cases in collaboration with orthopedist surgeons and physiotherapists in Corfu, Greece. More about my recent role and practice is outlined in Chapter 2.

and applications, the level to which Pilates might be considered a somatic practice might be found dependent upon the individual practitioner, her application and references.

In the dance world, approaches such as that of Anna Halprin and Rudolf Laban also offered new trajectories in the creative practice of dance and dance education. Anna Halprin's explorations since the 1950s, with roots in Margaret H'Doubler's work, amongst others, significantly influenced a vast number of renowned post-modern dance artists including Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Robert Morris, Ruth Emerson, Sally Gross, June Ekman who were her students and some of who later, during the Judson era, played a key role in shaping the way we perceive dance today. Since the 1970s, post-modern experimentations coincided with the establishment of a second generation of somatic approaches into distinct training programmes that dance artists increasingly endorsed.

Sylvie Fortin (in Greene 2009) has named the earlier stages of somatic forms as 'ego-somatics' referring to their self referential, introspective nature (at times refuted as self indulgent). The introspective and sensory emphasis as opposed to rigorous movement and action has been a criticism that once made somatics to be considered as far remote from a daily class regime of the dancer. Today an increasing number of University dance degree programmes include somatic studies in their curriculum (see Fortin 2008a, Garrett-Brown 2007, Emslie 2009b, Batson 2009b, Eddy 2002).

In Britain, indicatively, these currently include dance departments in De Montfort University with an inclusion of Alexander technique for a number of years, Coventry University, Middlesex and Liverpool John Moores University with an incorporation of diverse somatic methods including BMC®, Skinner Releasing Technique, and Alexander Technique, Chichester University including the approach of BMC®, University of Central Lancaster, the Trinity Laban Centre, Falmouth University (formerly the historic Dartington College of Arts), University of Lincoln, Edge Hill University, the University of Chester and the University of Bedfordshire whilst a decade ago it was also offered at the

University of Surrey. It is often the case that individual artists and academics who have developed an interest and have been trained in a particular somatic method naturally inform the curriculum they offer. Therefore it often occurs that as individuals shift professional roles they alter aspects of the content and emphasis of the courses they work with. One of the many examples of this is the inclusion of aspects of Skinner Releasing Technique at the London Contemporary Dance School while Kirsty Alexander held the role of Assistant Director. Alexander's impact is further referred to below. A more extensive survey of the application and integration of the somatic approach into Higher Education curriculum was conducted by Sara Reed as part of her PhD thesis submitted in 2011. The integration of the somatic practices into the curriculum and the identity of each of these programmes varies considerably. This often depends on the artistic and scholarly background and somatic references of practitioners and academics shaping the courses and has been a subject of debate in the Palatine event at LJMU in 2008.

Arguably, criticisms and debates persist till present, in some institutions. The content of the disagreement between a more *orthodox* and a somatic based dance education has been a key topic of discussion during the "Somatic and Creative Practices: Learning and Teaching in Higher Education" Palatine event at LJMU in February 2008. Bales and Netti-Fiol (2008) address some of the themes mentioned here in their account on the application of somatic practices in dance education and practice in the USA which, although speaking to a different geographic and cultural context, it relates largely to the tensions also present in Britain. Debates relate largely to the application of the somatic methods within the programmes of study and their relevance to the identity of the programme. Tensions also depend on the level to which a consensus has been achieved about the desired artistic identity and skills aimed to be cultivated for the professional performer and prospective graduate.

Fortin (in Greene 2009) has named the approach of the forms in the second half of the 20th century as 'eco-somatics' to describe the shift of interest towards an embracing relation to the world and a more 'balanced' relationship

between inner and the outer environments. The need for a more integrative, organic connection with the world and ecological concerns as well as other political and social concerns informed the growth of the somatic movement. During this phase, somatics evolved to cultivate not only an awareness of the body and sensory experience, but also a level of movement intelligence and responsiveness that connected the body with the environment around it.

It may be argued that the interest in 'natural' movement and in the relation of the body with nature and the environment was not a newly developed concept by somatic practitioners. As a topic of interest it may have been an extension or progression of early modernist work in dance in Europe and the USA. It has been debated in a number of observations on the development of dance history that trends and philosophical underpinnings which preceded in other arts manifested in dance in later eras. For instance, modernism in dance incorporated aspects of both romanticism, with an emphasis in nature, and classicism with a revision of the Greek classic aesthetic ideal explored from a new perspective. Both of these traits are evident in the work of the renowned Isadora Duncan and of Madge Atkinson, for example, who developed the Natural Movement dance technique in the early parts of the 20th century in Manchester in Britain. Schiphorst (2009) argues that the field of somatics has affinities with the Greek revival of the 19th century. Rouhiainen (2010) offers a deeper analysis of this affinity and illustrates the way the German Body Culture (or *Gymnastik*) movement was grounded on the body ideals pertaining the Greek revival. Revision of the Greek classic ideals were also informed by a prevailing 'orientalism' (Said 2003) also evident in the work of Ruth St. Dennis and Martha Graham. These are not the only examples of modernist artists whose work manifested traits typically attributed to different historical periods in the arts, but are referred to here indicatively. Both the emphasis on nature and an orientalist interest were carried through to other movement systems and artistic eras that developed in dance throughout the 20th century including the somatic movement and aspects of post-modern dance. Each of these concepts took a different dimension and meaning at different periods depending on the social needs of each historical and political moment. Henrietta Bannerman (2010) explores the possibility of somatics in

offering a pedagogical approach for the 21st century exploring affinities with Martha Graham technique and release-based work.

The growth of the somatic movement throughout the 70s coincided with developments in humanistic psychology that challenged the reigning belief that the mind may provide the only valid content for experience. This was a view that spawned the “human potential” and “holistic health” movements during the same decade. Somatic practitioner and educationalist Charlotte Selver whose fundamental principle of work was prompting ‘experiencing through the senses’ began her practice at the Esalen Institute since 1962 in the USA and was considered to have supported the development of the ‘human potential movement’. Batson (2009b) after Thomas Hanna (2004) suggests that advocates of these trends “valued the unity of mind, body, and spirit as fundamental to the human organism and one’s inner, personal narrative and experience as a guide for living” (Batson 2009b:1). In this context of gradual growth of ideas and conceptual and cultural ground, the somatic movement evolved fresh and deeper understandings of movement, embodiment and experience. Somatic explorations and bodily movement offered a new language regarding consciousness and developed a rhetoric around body wisdom acquired through self-awareness and self-guidance.

As perhaps one of the widely common methods of the second generation of practitioners, the approach of BMC® is examined in this thesis as a ‘socially structured movement system’¹⁴ (Grau 1993) that grew out and formed a part of the somatic movement. BMC® is examined as a movement system that was grounded on the research of its inventor who embodied trends from diverse bodies of knowledge and practices and whose experiences were situated in a particular cultural system and historical moment. It is also

¹⁴ Andrienne Kaeppler (1985) first used the term “structured movement system” to specify the subject of her research. Grounded on a structuralist framework, Kaeppler explored ‘movement systems’ which were indeed structured and, therefore, her methodological approach matched the analytical needs of the particular forms she examined. BMC® has a cohesive and distinct take on human movement while explorations are generally of an improvisational nature. In this project, I employ Grau’s modification to accommodate for this difference and occasionally alter this to ‘culturally constructed movement systems’ as a way of highlighting the cultural basis for the emergence of dance forms or other movement systems.

examined as a distinct approach to the body that has been informed by the work of numerous practitioners over the years many of who were dancers or performers that endorsed this outlook and way of working. Amongst a number of ventures in dance, theatre, therapy and athletics that aimed to redefine the self as an integrated whole, an ongoing dialogue between mind and a responsive, intelligent body, the SMBC was first established in the early 1973 in the USA.

According to the School for Body-Mind Centering (SBMC),

BMC is an integrated approach to transformative experience through movement re-education and hands-on repatterning. Developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, it is an experiential study based on the embodiment and application of anatomical, physiological, psychophysical and developmental principles, utilizing movement, touch, voice and mind. This study leads to an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body and the body through the mind.

(The SBMC, 2012¹⁵)

BMC® has interpreted and composed aspects of numerous methods with culturally diverse origins into a western approach. It offers a lens through which to begin to understand and raise to awareness dimensions of our being that in the past have also been attended to through experientially formed mappings of the body such as that of TAO (Chinese Traditional Medicine), Ayurveda, Reiki, Reflexology, Yoga and other forms. Through the use of *Experiential Anatomy*, BMC® grounds embodied experiences largely on a western scientific mapping of the body. However, taking from Bainbridge Cohen's narrations of her journey, the evolution of the form appears to have been an ongoing dialogue between attentive observations of her own and her students' sensory and motor experiences and a deep knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

¹⁵ Please note, this is an earlier version of the definition of BMC® as the official website was updated and re-structured in 2013. The newer definition is offered later on in this thesis. Both are shared here as a means to illustrate the dynamic development and shifts in the practice and language used over the years.

BMC® has drawn from scientific and positivist paradigms as well as from Eastern religious philosophy such as Buddhism. Contrary to what some BMC® practitioners in the field suggest, Bainbridge Cohen clarifies (2015) that although she was influenced by Buddhism she never became a Buddhist herself. Initially trained in Occupational Therapy in the USA and later in neuro-developmental Treatment (NDT) with Berta and Karel Bobath in the UK, Bainbridge Cohen's background has inevitably informed the work she has developed. This is evident in the content of a number of courses offered as part of the SBMC's certification programmes. Bainbridge Cohen's background and the content of certification programmes are further discussed in Chapter 3 and Appendix 7 respectively.

A number of BMC® and somatically informed dance practitioners from different methods endorsed Buddhism during their artistic journeys. With a focus on the way the mind affects our experience of our bodies, the emphasis on attending to perceptions and mastering a *mindful* presence or way-of-being-in-the-world tends to be shared between many somatic practitioners either implicitly or explicitly. This may be partly justified in the way Schiphorst (2009) analyses eastern influences on the development of 'body-based disciplines'. She states: "Eastern practices develop mind *through* body, so that the training of one creates knowledge within the other" (79). However, the degree to which this may be accurate, in my view, would demand a deeper theological and cross-cultural research. An investigation of this sort could further illuminate practice and may perhaps offer answers to philosophical questions.

This thesis works to contribute towards filling the gaps in knowledge mentioned earlier by sketching the socio-political, cultural and philosophical ground BMC® as an approach to the body evolved. It traces influences and engages with questions around legacy with the aim to unpick the meaning of this practice for the people involved, thereby, contributing to an anthropological interpretation of the method. Inquiring into legacies and lineage between practices is one of the topics that appears to attract particular interest by somatic movement or somatically informed dance scholars such as

Martha Eddy and Rebecca Nettle-Fiol. This was evident during the 2nd International Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices at Coventry University in July 2013. Speaking from the role of a practitioner-researcher, I suggest that the positioning of somatic practices, as offered in this thesis, also takes place in order to support an understanding of the potentiality of the tools we employ in the delivery of somatically informed dance work.

1.3. A Story of Practice

As a practice-led (Protopapa 2011) research project, the collection of topics discussed in this thesis is indicative of some of the themes and the kinds of knowledge I have engaged with as investigator. (Please see Chapter 2 for a detailed outline of my methodological standpoint). The practice-led approach has been applied with an interest in observing the way living artistic stories and the somatic-informed approach to practice are reflective of their cultural and artistic influences. It has also been employed driven by an interest in exploring the potentiality of this approach in diverse settings. As a result and in line with the reflexive approach recent studies have taken (Grau 1999, Ness 2004, 2007, Garrett-Brown 2011), findings presented in this thesis are drawn from a synthesis of subjective, objective and intersubjective musings as informed by the theoretical and critical frame I have engaged with. The practitioner-researcher orientation employed as part of this project also resonates with work offered in Davida 2011. Themes and relevant conceptual frameworks emerged through practice and were prioritised in terms of the way they may fulfil my role as a somatic-informed dance practitioner and a researcher in the field.

As a dance practitioner, I have moved through a number of settings. However, the principal interests I have been working with, as part of this research, may be reductively summarized as two. Firstly, I focused in preparing dancers and interdisciplinary performers to work in performance and composition. With this focus I have first taught in dance degrees in HE institutions in Britain and, later, at the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu and at the School of Music Studies and Audiovisual Arts at Ionian University. Secondly, in the

private sector I worked to help people re-connect with their bodies and move safely, with greater ease and enjoyment of movement. The pedagogic approach I employ to cater for both of these interests is grounded on a somatic and anthropological understanding of embodiment. In the different settings I have worked, I have been drawing on the same principles and tools moderated appropriately based on the needs of each group or person.

The philosophical understanding of embodiment underlines my approach to practice. The somatic together with the anthropological framing of this phenomenon also informs my pedagogic approach. In all the different settings I have taught, the notion of embodiment was central. Amongst other things, this entailed: observing one's signature way of bodily being in the world, their tendencies in movement, the place where habitual movement patterns initiated from, introducing in different ways aspects of embodying anatomic structures. Depending on the needs of the group, the setting and the type of class they opted in, the centrality of this aspect and the ways this was articulated varied.

I started this research while I lived and worked in Britain. I took the first course on 'Senses and Perception' at Liverpool John Moores University where the programme was hosted (and I was teaching at the time) in May 2008. I completed the Somatic Movement Educator¹⁶ programme in April 2012. Its emphasis is specifically on the pedagogic applications of BMC® work. For those interested in pursuing BMC® studies further, the Practitioner training programme is another cycle of studies - years 3 and 4 - that re-introduces each of the systems and foregrounds their interrelatedness and the therapeutic application of the work. This is a cycle I have not embarked on. Given my interest in dance pedagogy and the somatic application in

¹⁶ 'Somatic Movement Educator' is the title of the first in a series of core programmes offered by the SBMC. It includes intensive courses on *embodying* each of the anatomic systems of the body and forms years 1 and 2 of the programme. Courses offered include: 'Senses and Perception 1', 'Skeletal System', 'Organs System', 'Basic Neurocellular Patterns' (formerly titled 'Basic Neurological Patterns', 'Fluids System', 'Ligamentous System', 'Primitive Reflexes, Righting Reactions and Equilibrium Responses', 'Ontogenetic Development', 'Nervous System', 'Endocrine System', 'Muscular System', 'Professional Issues 1', 'Competency 1'.

movement education, in this thesis I speak as a trained SME practitioner and ground my observations on this basis.

Amongst a number of subjects, teaching of dance students in HE in Britain, included studio practice, improvisation, dance history, composition as well as subjects focusing on preparation for performance. I worked to prepare students for performance and to offer them tools with which they can play with movement for the purposes of composition. To do this, I used a range of improvisation tasks in order to: a. guide students through experiential explorations and b. offer students examples of diverse task setting methods that could be used in the context of creative practice and as tools to prepare them for performance.

As a teacher in HE and a student in a somatic approach to movement education, between 2008 and 2010, I was increasingly becoming aware of the potentiality of the fusion of the somatic approach and dance education, and of the ways it was enriching my practice and delivery. I also noted the origin of identifiable principles and tools for working with embodiment in a dance education context, some of which I was already using and other that I was developing as a result of my artistic influences. Both the observations on the fusion and the impact it was having on my work raised critical reflection that partly led to this research. I was also becoming very aware of some of the influences and the origins of pedagogic/creative tools that I had experienced and employed from influential teachers in my own journey, who had not necessarily identified where their ideas came from. The shifts in my practice, the discourse of practice that was being developed and the differences between an orthodox contemporary dance education and a somatic-informed dance pedagogy ignited the desire to embark on this doctoral research project which I began in January 2010.

While the research was evolving, so did my own practice and engagement with different applications of the somatic approach to dance and more broadly movement pedagogy. As it may be noted from this narrative of the way interests developed, I did not accept an a priori influence of somatics to

contemporary dance. Instead, out of my experiences in practice I noticed how emphasis on embodiment was made possible (through what methods) and the role somatic practices played in this. I also noticed the distinct nature of a somatic-informed community of artists that was not only local to Britain but shared values, language and practice with artists from other parts of the world. In doing so, I explored these as a social movement with an interest in understanding what were the conditions that gave rise to this movement. The notions of embodiment emerged as central to the somatics movement. It appeared to be the locus of consensus amongst practitioners from diverse methods.

Three years later, I returned to Corfu (Greece), where I explored: a. how the same approach to dance pedagogy and principles relating to preparation for performance could be applied for preparing interdisciplinary performers, b. how principles used in the somatic-informed dance pedagogy and its emphasis on embodiment could help non-dancers move with greater ease and sense of pleasure in their bodies¹⁷. Interested in developing an approach to working with interdisciplinary performers, I worked with a group of adults at the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu. Some with more experience than others in performance, some amateur and some professionals, this was a group of people aged between 19 and 60 years old coming from different professional fields. Around the same time, I also collaborated with a Pilates studio where I taught SME classes and Pilates-based somatic conditioning sessions for people aged from 16 to 80 years old. A number of people that took part experienced various musculoskeletal problems as well as more emotional difficulties such as tension and stress. As part of my work in the studio, I also collaborated with an orthopedist surgeon, a physiotherapist and a psychologist. Sessions I taught were both offered on a one to one basis and in small groups. With a heightened awareness of the boundary crossing tools used, I repeatedly emphasise that the work I am doing is educative and is not intended as 'therapy'. However, I sought to research on the boundaries

¹⁷ Please note that this is a reductive statement of the focus of my practice summarized here to point to two main themes of interest the informed this study. These relate to the identification of somatic principles and pedagogic tools and the impact the focus on embodiment might have to dance pedagogy.

between therapy and education, a question that informs the thesis but which is not a foregrounded argument here due to space limitations. Through this research, I have become particularly aware of the broad applicability of the somatic approach. The variety of the contexts I have taught have thus inevitably informed the choice of principles and some of the issues discussed in this thesis.

With regards to covering the priorities set from the goals of this thesis, the chapters in this thesis draw from examples of the history of aspects of contemporary dance in Britain, particularly New and Independent Dance. It does so while acknowledging that similar shifts in practice are true for a much wider geographic context. I acknowledge that in the age of globalisation, to consider shifts in a practice as topical, might be illusive. As a result, although the sketching of the history for the purposes of this thesis is topical, that is, it speaks to the British story, my practice is not limited to England only. It exists with me in whatever part of the world I find myself and it becomes adapted to the needs of the various groups and people I choose to work with, as I explore different applications of this approach to movement pedagogy. So although the emphasis on embodiment and the principles of practice I discuss portray an array of tools and principles used in a British somatic-informed dance education context, with slight adaptations, I have also used these in the other contexts I have taught. The way my experience in practice has raised key questions this research asks that relate to the history of contemporary dance in Britain in the past 50 years is introduced in section 2.5.

1.4. Rationale

Discussions around the impact of the arts and dance have been prevalent over the past few years amongst artists, dance practitioners and scholars. Although not always explicitly linked to the debate of impact, analyses on the transformative potential of some fields of dance practice¹⁸ appear to, at least

¹⁸ For community dance, Sara Houston (2005) has offered a useful critical examination on claims around the transformative and empowering potential of community dance projects. In the field of somatics, Garrett-Brown 2011 and Albright 2009 have negotiated the transformative potential of the somatic approach. Taking a critical perspective, this thesis aims to engage with such negotiations.

partly, address the issue. I have been both a witness and participant in discussions of this sort in the field during this research and previously in different posts in my career. In undertaking this project, I was driven by an interest in finding terms to negotiate with stakeholders and in finding means to support the continuation of art provision and accessibility both in the UK and in Greece. This is an endeavour particularly pertinent in a political and economic climate that arguably increasingly devalues the humanities and the arts with significant reductions in funding. Financial bodies appear to request quantitative or quantifiable 'proofs' of the 'worth' of the arts before they support practices and well-grounded arguments in support of dance are still being developed. Sita Popat raised the issue of impact in dance in "Moving Forwards: Practice as Research", an event which aimed to investigate agendas in Practice as Research (PaR) across dance practices on 23rd February 2011. This was organised by the Choreographic Lab, Northampton University and brought dance scholars from different institutions to exchange approaches. Popat's presentation raised debates around the position of PaR outputs and the ways the latter may challenge the increasing pressures for quantifiable outputs as a means to sustain funding for dance and dance research. I argue that by understanding, clarifying and demonstrating the fundamental existential place embodiment holds and the way dance impacts on this level, as explored in this thesis, we, as practitioners and researchers, may be able to offer both quantitative and qualitative responses as a means of advocacy. An ontological examination of corporeality through practice with a recognition of the way dance as culture (nurture) meets nature (our physiology) and an understanding of the way the mind shapes the body and vice versa might offer a proposition for responding to the way with which dance impacts on people's lives or forms a transformative experience.

This approach could complement the tendency to focus on quantification of the participation in dance, particularly evident in evaluation reports from dance agencies across the UK. In order for us to understand impact of an art form, there appears to be a gap in questioning about the way and the reason it works with people and communities when it does. Functionalist approaches to dance anthropology such as that of Williams and Kaeppler following

Malinowski have traditionally offered interesting insights on this subject. However, awareness around the critical relevance of anthropology in the field of dance studies, as noted by Grau (1993), is still emerging (Davida, 2011). It is also less acknowledged by the wider community of dance scholars and advocates as a methodological framework that could support in debates around impact. This thesis forms an example of the combination of anthropological, historical and practice-led research might help us examine impact and perhaps, analyse and appreciate our practice.

The way practice-led methodology has informed this research aligns with a consensus amongst practitioners and scholars in the field that emphasises the value of bodily knowing. In some ways, it appropriates the value of the practitioner, of the stories and content of the thinking involved in each moment of the delivery of dance. It further qualifies the facilitation of a creative session as involving deep thinking that is grounded on artistic, conceptual and epistemological views. Also as a practitioner-researcher I hope that evidence offered and questions raised here will contribute towards initiating debates in the professional somatic community and the scholarly accounts around dance pedagogy that investigate the somatic approach. I hope that this thesis will contribute in a way that future research in the field will pick upon some of the issues and develop them further.

On another note, as a participant in diverse multi-cultural groups and practitioner in BMC® and BMC® informed dance explorations, I have experienced and witnessed numerous cases of deep processing. I have also had the opportunity to discuss with numerous participants about the ways their needs were met during a *process* and the honour to be trusted by various participants who expressed objections on the ways they were held (or not) during a vulnerable moment incurred by a somatic exploration. As a means to reflect to the somatic approach and in order to develop a practice I would consider safe for participants, I find an analysis of the constituents of being human as essential in order to understand the layers of the work and its different potential implications and applications. Understanding human nature is considered useful in order to have a deeper grounding, and indeed

justification, of the somatically informed approach to movement education. Thus, the choice of the mixture of conceptual and methodological frameworks used in this thesis aims to assist in clarifying analytically existential dimensions of being human and sets the ground on which to analyse and discuss aspects of BMC® and BMC® informed dance education as found in the field.

Finally, this research project is aligned with studies (mentioned throughout the thesis) from the field of dance anthropology that aim to heighten the importance of an ethnographic analysis of dance and human movement as a source of data for understanding fundamental dimensions of being. The somatic approach to dance and movement education is seen here to offer unique data for analysis and critical engagement with the problem of dualism and questions around the formation of culture.

2. Methodological and Conceptual Framework

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(Geertz 1974: 31)

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(Aposhyan in Bainbridge Cohen 1993: vii)

2.1. Introduction

With an introduction to the field of somatics and the range of practices it encompasses in the previous chapter, I have begun to show the reasons why somatics are examined as a social movement in this research. Through an introduction to the current status of somatically informed contemporary dance practice, I have also begun to illustrate the reasons an interest to lineage and cross-pollination between dance and somatics developed. As argued, the threads that connect the two fields may be found on the emphasis placed on embodiment and the means through which this takes place in both fields. With embodiment emerging as central to this social movement and to the fusion between dance pedagogy and the somatic approach to movement education, a methodological scheme has been chosen for this thesis that will work to shed more light on the term. The study works to contribute towards a further understanding of ontological notions of embodiment by examining it as both a lived phenomenon and a research strategy. Through this, I work to develop my practice in a manner that provides safe, enjoyable and useful pedagogic or creative experiences. It also hopes to illuminate: a. how the emphasis on

embodiment has impacted on the nature of New and Independent dance practice and b. whether and how it may have influenced the emergence of BMC® as a socially constructed movement system and somatics as a social movement.

Building on from the short introduction offered in section 1.1.1, this chapter outlines the methodological and conceptual framework employed through a broader and more detailed discussion. The research methodology chosen is based on an interdisciplinary analytical lens that combines practice-led, anthropological and historiographic frames. As discussed in the introduction, capturing a moment in the history of the development of New and Independent dance, in this thesis, is framed by an interest to illustrate the role an emphasis on embodiment has played in shaping contemporary dance practice as we know it today. My role as practitioner and the anthropological lens informed the identification of the connecting threads between dance and somatic practices as being embodiment and a series of principles and tools used in practice to facilitate somatic processes. A historiographic perspective is employed to illustrate the gradual shift of the pedagogic and creative approach in New and Independent Dance since the early 70s. The combination of these frameworks has provided with data that covers the ground of illustrating the nature of work and captures another aspect of a significant period in the history of dance.

As a participant in diverse somatic based dance sessions and as practitioner, I have become witness of shifts in the pedagogy but also of cases when somatic explorations may elicit embodied experiences that involve deep emotional processing. A series of questions were raised for me as a result of this observation, such as: Why and how does working with the body in a somatic way elicit such emotional processing? What is characteristic to this approach that facilitates such experiences? Is our common understanding of the body-mind relationship challenged, and if so how? If it is challenged, what does this say about the impact somatic pedagogy may have to participants? It must be stressed that this study begins to unpick these questions but does not offer definitive answers. In my understanding, these are questions that

would require professional dialogue, exchange and research from different people in the field. Here, they form an articulation of an issue encountered in practice. I, thereby, hope that the study may also serve as an example of a professional voice that resonates with dialogues currently shaping the development of the somatic movement. For the purposes of this research, these questions led to considering an identification and examination of tools and principles that are characteristic to the somatic-informed dance approach as pertinent.

The thesis is situated within a post-positivist paradigm. As an interdisciplinary research, there are three main strands in the methodological framework that form the perspective of this thesis into somatic work. Figure 1 below, demonstrates schematically the methodological frames chosen for this study.

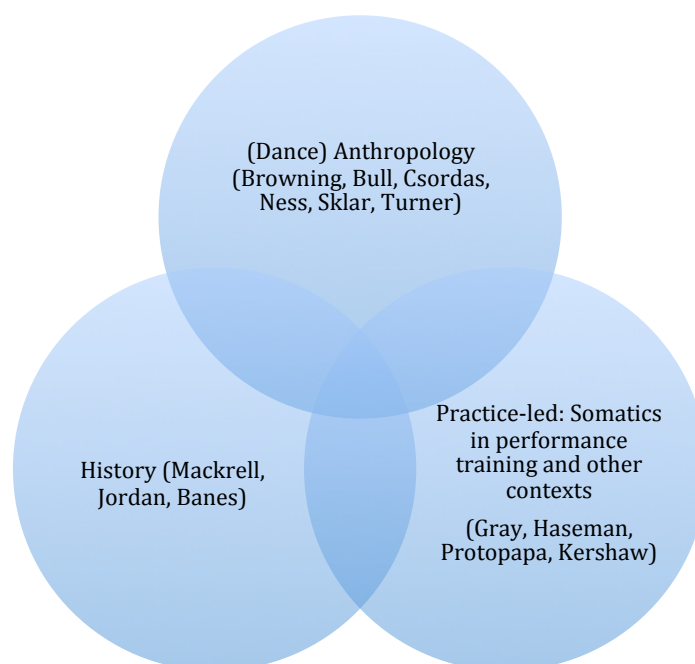


Figure 1. A schematic representation of the methodological framework employed in this thesis

First, post-structuralist dance anthropology (Browning 1995, Ness 1988, 1992, 1996a&b, 2004, 2007, Novack 1990, Sklar 1994, 1999, 2000, 2001a & b) forms the main axis. Adrienne Kaeppler (2000) offers a detailed and clarifying discussion on the distinction between ethnology and the anthropology of dance. Williams (1994:9) argues that the phrase she proposes, 'anthropology

of the dance and human movement studies', is also referred to as 'dance ethnology', 'dance anthropology' or 'performance studies'. Following Kaeppler (2000), I suggest that each of these fields, although they have similarities and overlaps in their conceptual and methodological approach, they differ in part on the focus as shaped by the school they emerge from. My approach follows the British anthropological tradition as distilled by Grau (1993). Additionally, as a researcher educated in Britain, I was introduced to dance anthropology by Janet O'Shea and Jean Johnson Jones in a module titled 'Dance Anthropology', as part of my MA in Dance Studies at Surrey University (2001-2002). This module and Janet O'Shea's guidance was influential in the development of my dance anthropological outlook which has naturally evolved since. The research is also informed by medical anthropology (Csordas 1994, 1990, Turner, 1994, 1993) and reflexive anthropology (as approached by Grau 2009).

The second methodological framework is dance history as outlined by Banes (1981, 1987, 2003), Jordan (1992), and Mackrell (1991 and 1992). The combination of ethnographic and historical methodologies follows the approach taken by Novack (1990) in her ethnographic-history of contact improvisation. This approach follows that of Sahlins 1985. The inclusion of history as a methodological platform is used as a means to examine the synchronic role of the somatic movement with the aim to understand a diachronic function (Sahlins 1981, 1985 & Bloch 1986) of "socially-constructed movement systems" (Grau 1993).

The combination of the anthropological outlook (through ethnographic methodology) with the historical (after Sahlins 1985) has allowed for capturing the synchronic with the view to understand the diachronic, recurrent processes for the emergence of a socially constructed movement system. The relation between this methodological approach and the themes raised in the thesis is shown schematically in Figure 2 below.

Throughout the thesis, I explore issues through a mixed-mode, multi-perspective informed by my role as both a trained somatic movement

educator and a researcher engaging critically with the tools of the somatic approach in dance and/or movement education. Building on earlier discussions, section 2.6 discusses the approach to practice-led research Protopapa (2011) employed following distinctions between practice as research and practice-based investigation (Kershaw 2002, Piccini & Kershaw 2003, Piccini 2004). Kershaw's differentiation between the two perspectives is endorsed in this research and is further outlined in section 2.6.

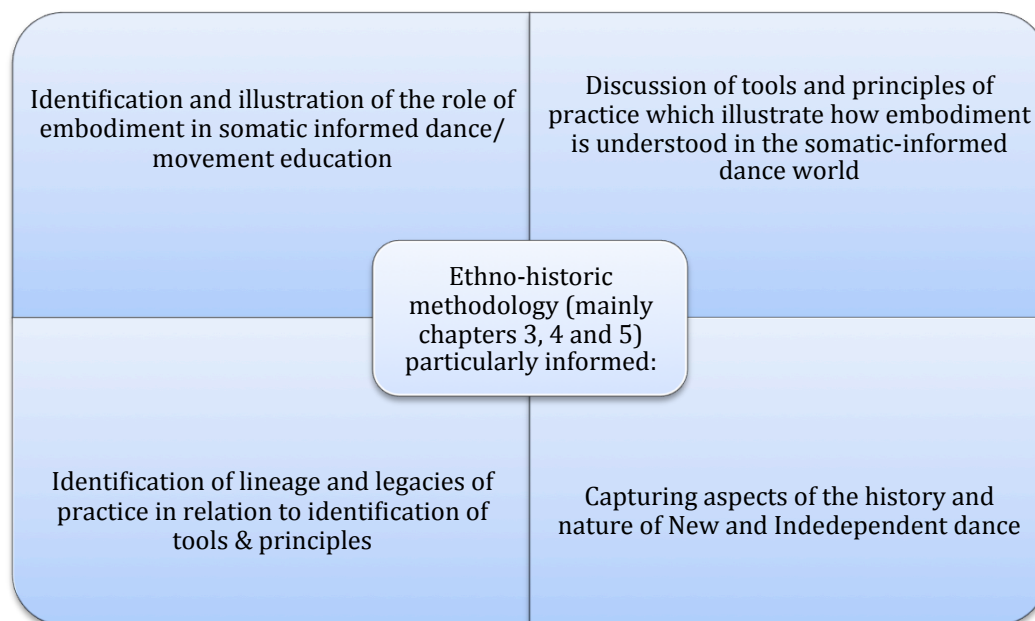


Figure 2. The relation between ethno-historic methodology and arguments raised.

Each theoretical approach has contributed in illuminating different aspects of the field of somatics as an approach for dance and movement (re-) education. As the titles of ISMETA and the first certification programme (SME) indicates, somatic practices and, therefore, BMC® may be regarded as approaches to movement education. BMC® is seen as both part of a social movement informing the outlook of the researcher and as a conceptual approach to experience and the body.

My role as 'outsider' and 'insider' (Davida 2010, Koutsouba 1999) in the somatic movement is reflected in the arguments raised in the thesis and, importantly, in my epistemological approach, questions raised about and understanding of the concept of embodiment. The duality of this role has been

considered instrumental in allowing for the illumination of some theoretical and practical/pedagogical issues. Marilize Rabe (2003) speaks to the long standing debate between “*emic*” and “*etic*” (Maners 2006) or *insider* and *outsider* approaches in the social sciences usefully quoting the work of Burawoy (1991) and Kikumura (1998) in upholding this research position. In this thesis, first person is used when I aim to illustrate a subjective position in the methodological decisions or in the argumentation. The choice not to fully immerse myself in a subjective style of writing was made for reasons related to the goals of this research and the requirement to follow conventions of thesis authorship. These reasons are outlined in section 2.4.1.

The thesis will illustrate that embodiment, as a human attribute experienced by an individual and reflected through in his or her movement (including posture or moments of stillness), contains a person’s stance towards life, an existential position. It will seek to demonstrate that embodiment is, therefore, not merely a physical manifestation of the self. It conceals aspects of an individual’s personality, her or his way to connect with experience and their way to seek pleasure. The anthropological outlook employed in this research has been especially informative in shaping this understanding as well as justifying it. As Sklar argues: “The corporeal aspects of social life provide the glue that holds together world views and cosmologies, values and social structures. They also provide the substance, the media and the organizing [sic] schema around which social life coalesces” (1994:13). The combination of the methodological platforms employed for this research has developed a particular outlook through which to observe and analyse human movement that takes into consideration subjectivity, cultural conditioning and its manifestation in the physical body and vice versa.

A circular relation between theory, practice and fieldwork was followed through this research process as shown in the Figure 3 below. This relation helped critically examine perceptions, questions and ideas. Literature offered the conceptual ground through which to understand practice and its repercussions to a large part of data offered in this thesis and deeply informed

choices made in practice. (Please refer to page 16- 17 for the reason behind my choice to use data found in literature).

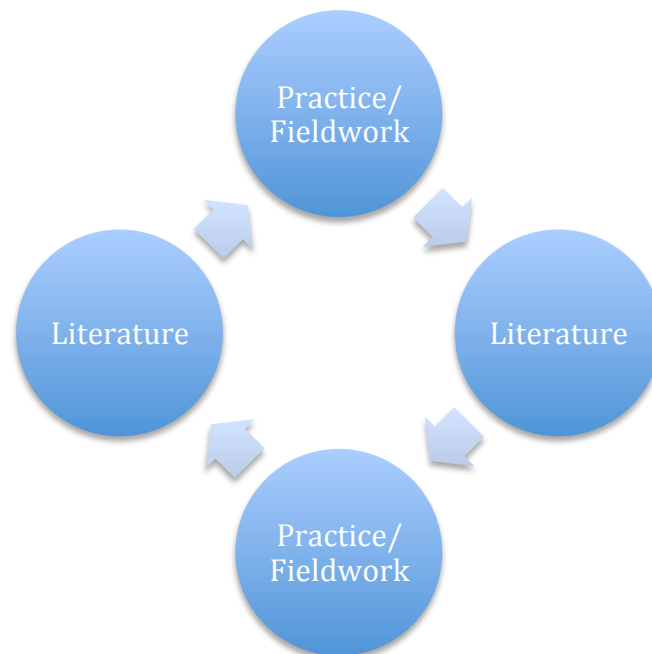


Figure 3. The circular relation between theory and practice / fieldwork used forms a variation of the practice-led research model employed (Protopapa 2011) given that it includes in this the anthropological perspective. Participant observation during fieldwork was also a moment of practice.

As inherent in an anthropological enquiry, the focus of this thesis is ontological. The methodological choices as well as the questions raised in light of the ontological interest on embodiment have, in turn, informed engagement with epistemological concerns. Besides an interest in understanding how embodiment informs the emergence of human movement and structured movement systems, the methodological choices in this project are also informed by a dance specific interest. It is driven by an interest in capturing aspects of the development of an influential and radical period in western dance history. Methodological choices are also grounded on the belief that dance as human behaviour/manifestation may advance our thinking around both ontological and epistemological issues. The sections that follow outline each of the methodological lenses and the conceptual frames employed in this study.

2.2. Dance Anthropology vs Dance Ethnography: Clarifying the Conceptual Outlook

Kaeppler (1999) and Williams (1999), both eminent writers belonging to a structuralist framework, discuss the position of ethnography in anthropological inquiry. Kaeppler's essay is particularly useful in distinguishing the theoretical inquiry and questions raised by the anthropologist and the way these inform his/her ethnographic fieldwork. With a focused interest in understanding society through analyzing movement systems, as opposed to aiming to simply understand dance in its cultural context (Grau 1993:21), the anthropologist conducts fieldwork research that will potentially answer some of his or her questions. On that basis, "Ethnography is embedded in sociocultural anthropology – which in most universities still requires the fieldwork 'rite de passage'. Thus, anthropologists of human movement are by definition also ethnographers (but not vice versa)" (Kaeppler 1999:16). It is this configuration of the relationship between anthropology and ethnography that I endorse in this research.

Kaeppler (1999, 2000) and Grau (1993) also distinguish between anthropology, ethnology and folklore studies. Distinction between these disciplines offers a clarification on the qualitative and conceptual differences between what anthropologists and other theorists do in the field (Kaeppler 1999: 13). In a comparison between ethnology and anthropology, Keesing states:

Ethnology and anthropology are closely related. Although both deal with the study of sociocultural facts, ethnology tends to specialize in the study of human cultures in historical and comparative perspective and anthropology tends to search for scientific generalizations about human behaviour and cultures. (Keesing cited in Grau 1993: 21)

But, often, the historical and comparative perspective may inform the generation of more accurate scientific generalisations of human nature and the way they shape culture (and vice versa). Anthropology asks questions

such as: “what attributes do human beings have in common? and what are the basic mental capabilities and processes that allow humans to develop different languages, cultures, and social systems?” (Grau 1993: 21). By extension, a question around “what are the basic mental and physical attributes and processes that allow humans to develop different movement systems and dances?” such as that which underpins my focus on embodiment, belongs to the anthropological interest. Anthropologists are interested in understanding how meaning is derived from movement, how the context that frames an event must be understood in order to derive meaning from it, “how intention and cultural evaluation can be derived from the framing of the event, the necessity of understanding the activities that generate movement systems and how and by whom the movements are judged” (Kaeppeler 1999:19).

In reference to the research undertaken for this thesis, I employ ethnographic methodologies with the aim to contribute towards an anthropological understanding of the diachronic function of embodiment as an existential factor contributing to the emergence of socially constructed movement systems.

2.3. Exploring the Space between Representation and Being-in-the-world: The Embodiment Paradigm as a Conceptual Lens

This section introduces to the particular conceptual references of the anthropological tradition this thesis draws upon. Specifically, it explores the way the understanding of the body and embodiment shifted in the past four decades or so and the impact the phenomenological outlook had in the development of an embodiment paradigm (Csordas 1994 a) that informs this study.

By the early 1990s, as a result of questions raised from structuralist and post-structuralist accounts, a revival of the discipline of rhetoric (Barilli 1989, Dixon 1971) significantly increased the attention given to the study of texts produced

by natural scientists, historians as well as the social scientists (Nelson et al 1987, Simons 1988, Hammersley 1993). The increased interest in the analysis of texts as a means for representation is evident both in Csordas (1994a) and in Sklar (2000). These wide-ranging and diverse analyses looked not only to describe how to write an ethnography, but also to explore dimensions such as the rhetorical devices ethnographers deploy and the function that they perform. They included criticisms of conventional forms of anthropological and sociological writing on philosophical and political grounds and have been associated with the development of “experimental” forms (Hammersley 1993). This thesis is an offspring of this current of thought.

The theoretical lens underpinning this research and the conceptual framework employed informed a reflective positioning of the researcher in the context of the wider research project. The literature search is situated within a growing body of cultural theory and dance anthropology that examines the body from multifaceted perspectives. Within this field, Thomas Csordas’ (1994a) edited collection titled *Embodiment and Experience: The existential Ground of Culture and Self* has been chosen for close consideration given its influence in some of the questions raised, views espoused and conclusions made in the thesis. Helen Thomas’ (2003) *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* is also referred to in this section. The two texts are representative of two different periods in scholarly research of cultural criticism. The first book, written in the mid 1990s, reflects the prevalence of discourses on ‘the body’ evident at the time. Thomas’ work is indicative of the progress (or lack of) in this area and complements the debate with an overview of the position dance has taken within this theoretical field and the application of discourses on embodiment and the body to dance. Reference is also made to Jonathan Owen Clark’s (2013) essay that makes a case for the plausibility of phenomenology for dance research. The introduction to Csordas’ edition *Introduction: The Body as Representation and Being-in-the-world* (1994a) that raises a series of conceptual dualities frames the content and focus of this section.

Noticing the lively presence the body had taken in anthropological and interdisciplinary cultural studies since the early 1970s, Csordas contextualises

the focus of this edited volume and sets the ground to highlight the methodological issues present in existing approaches. As the thesis begins to indicate, it is of particular interest to this study to note the concurrent development of a lively presence of the body on a theoretical level, as that described by Csordas, and on a practical level with the growth of the somatic movement and the shift in contemporary dance pedagogy.

Referring to the 1990 meeting of the American Ethnological Society, dedicated to the topic of “the body in society and culture”, he notes limits in many participants’ use of the term “body”. Specifically, he depicts the lack of the sense of “bodiliness” in their analyses “as if body were little more than a synonym for self or person” (1994a: 4). In this, he identifies two dangers: “...of dissipating the force of using the body as a methodological starting point, and of objectifying bodies as things devoid of intentionality and intersubjectivity” (Csordas 1994a: 4). The sense of “bodiliness” Csordas calls for includes sentience and sensibility in our perception of self and person, and introduces a dimension of materiality to our understanding of culture and history, both of which were goals of the new methodological paradigm he proposed.

He characteristically declares:

Along with its critical and pragmatic implications for world civilization, the theoretical implications of the scholarly discovery that the body has a history and is as much a cultural phenomenon as it is a biological entity are potentially enormous. Also, if indeed the body is passing through a critical historical moment, this moment also offers a critical methodological opportunity to reformulate theories of culture, self, and experience, with the body at the centre of analysis. (Csordas, 1994a: 4)

This profound position declared a vision for the discipline of anthropology and cultural theory that could contribute towards an understanding of the body as a fundamental existential dimension of being not only to the somatic or anthropological community, but potentially to the wider public. Although much has been done since to advance research in this area, I would argue that Csordas’ edition is as much relevant today as it was in the mid 90s given the

persistence of dualist perceptions and approaches and the hierarchical position the mind has been given over body in the western world.

Csordas' distinction quoted above points towards the two predominant theoretical standpoints evident in the discipline of anthropology. Following a detailed and judicious analysis of the role dualism has played in cultural criticism and our notion of mind and body or subject and object, he distinguishes between theories of culture where "mind/subject/culture are deployed in parallel with and in contrast to body/object/biology" (Csordas 1994a: 9). In an insightful summary, Csordas adheres a large body of theorizing to the Cartesian legacy in that "it privileges the mind/subject/culture set in the form of representation, whether cast in terms of rules and principles by social anthropology, signs and symbols by semiotic/symbolic anthropology, text and discourse by structural/poststructural anthropology, or knowledge and models by cognitive anthropology" (Csordas 1994a: 9).

Advocates of the body both in the somatic movement, dance scholarly accounts and in contemporary human-science theorizing, usually refer to dualist perceptions as "Cartesian dualism". As Csordas argues, this happens in a tendency to vilify Descartes¹⁹ and the perceptual dichotomy between body and mind as a kind of moral abjection. Reference to dualism relates to a view that differentiates between the body as material substance and the mind and mental phenomena as non-physical, a view evident in literature underpinned by a philosophical perspective of the dominance of mind over matter. In anthropology, the dichotomy between mind and body appears predominantly as a distinction between culture and biology. The institutionalization of this dichotomy is evident in a persistent distinction between cultural and physical anthropology and between trends within cultural anthropology. Reference to the body in the latter, until the 1990s, tended to be

¹⁹ However, critiques of Descartes omit to acknowledge the context within which the philosopher developed his perspective and the scope of this development. The doctrine was introduced by Descartes as a methodological distinction to support analysis and, most importantly, as a means to liberate scientific thought from theology and the oppressive and conservative supervision of religious institutions. As Csordas argues, Descartes "is doubtless not entirely to blame for the ontologization of the distinction, and the way it has become embedded in our ways of thinking" (1994a: 7).

considered synonymous with an invocation of biology (Csordas 1990). I would argue that this is the case until more recently. In the context of this research, the experience of the dichotomy between culture and biology and their interrelation begins to be illuminated by BMC® principles and processes. However, the problem is not fully resolved. Dualism and related ontological questions are more closely discussed in Chapter 6.

To define his methodological standpoint, Csordas calls for a term that is complementary to representation, “as subject is to object”, and drawing from the phenomenological tradition, suggests the use of the term “being-in-the world”. In this way, he points to a critical methodological distinction between the perspective of representation as facilitating understanding of the culture in terms of objectified abstraction, and being-in-the-world as contributing to our understanding of culture in terms of existential immediacy. In broad terms, he corresponds the distinction between representation and being-in-the-world with that between the disciplines of semiotics and phenomenology respectively (Csordas 1994a: 10). He differentiates between phenomenology proper and hermeneutics (Caputo 1986, Ricoeur 1991) and highlights the way the dominance of semiotics over phenomenology – and, thus representation over being-in-the-world – serves as evidence of the respective distinction between “language” and “experience”.

Nearly twenty years later, Jonathan Owen Clark (2013) after Paul Crowther (2009) raises similar concerns for the field of aesthetics. Although aesthetics as a field might have a different focus to dance anthropology, some of the arguments offered in Clark are pertinent and relevant to questions underlying this thesis. Clark criticises approaches to the study of art and dance deriving from post-structuralism, critical theory, semiotics or historicist hermeneutics arguing that they “tend to assimilate meaning in dance to the specific socio-cultural and historical contexts in which dance works were produced, and hence to methodologies aligned with the linguistic or literary turns in intellectual history and the human sciences” (2013: 202). As relevant to the field of aesthetics, the emphasis here is on dance works as opposed to ‘socially-constructed movement systems’ (Grau 1999) an anthropological

approach would examine. Stressing the plausibility of phenomenology as an analytical platform, Clark (2013: 202) argues,

These approaches neglect the foundational nature of dance as *movement*, the distinctive way in which it reveals and epitomizes our *animate* nature. Whilst other theories attempt to explain what a dance means or could mean, a phenomenological approach shows how it comes to be meaning-bearing at all, why it is that it seems to us that dance has something to say to us, without our being able to necessarily put this into words.

Arguably Clark does not acknowledge post-structuralist anthropological studies which have engaged with phenomenology and embodiment in explorations of the cultural and historical situatedness of practices such as those offered by Csordas, Sklar, Ness or other scholars mentioned in this section. But his clarification on the value of a phenomenological understanding of embodiment in explaining how movement can bear meaning in the first place is useful to this study. It resonates with and explains some of the choices made in this research and my outlook towards dance as data concealing fundamental information about the experience of the body, the role culture plays to that lived experience and vice versa, and the ‘sense of self’²⁰ in time and space. As this thesis will work to show, it also explains dance’s relevance to epistemology and embodiment as a foundational factor affecting change for dancers.

Additionally, Clark offers an interesting proposition for an expansion of the word ‘meaning’. He raises a pertinent critique on Graham McFee’s limited appreciation of kinesthesia²¹, and an illuminating and clarifying argument around the hermeneutic reductionism encountered in historical accounts and dance studies. Following Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2004) and Johnson (2007), he proposes that the concept of meaning could extend beyond the restrictive conceptual, propositional or semiotic frames. He therefore suggests that there are “other types of phenomena” (Gumbrecht, 2004:16) or “presence effects”

²⁰ Although this is a theme that will not be discussed in detail in this thesis, my understanding of the notion of the ‘sense of self’ is informed by Daniel Stern (1985), Linda Hartley (2004) and Emily Van Deurzen’s (2010) theorizing.

²¹ The term is variably referred to and spelled in different texts as ‘kinesthesia’, ‘kinaesthesia’ and ‘kinesthesis’. In the interest of clarity, I will use the latter version unless the term is offered in a quotation.

(Clark 2013: 213) that entail things such as kinesthetic *qualia*, images, vitality affects and experiences of heightened somatic intensity that offer “no message” (Clark 2013: 213). Clark insists that “kinaesthetic experiences *are* meaningful, just in a different way” (Clark 2013: 213). He justifies this through the rubric that ‘meaning’ may be seen as something that emerges “through the embodied organism-environment interactions in which significant patterns are marked within the flow of experience” (Johnson in Clark 2013:22). His proposition for an expansion of what constitutes meaning appears to have been addressed by anthropological approaches underpinned by the embodiment paradigm that assert that bodies bear cultural meaning such as in Sklar’s statement cited above in this chapter. However, Clark’s assertion usefully elaborates advancements offered through the phenomenological approach. In this frame of thought, meaning in this project is sought after in kinesthetic and embodied experiences, in an attempt to use the complementary nature of fields such as anthropology and historicism informed by a phenomenological understanding of embodiment as a means to produce knowledge. Perhaps due to the focus more on the reception of a dance work and less on the participant’s experience, Clark offers an examination of aspects of kinesthesia but little discussion on embodiment.

In a direct opening statement, Clark asserts that “of all the philosophical approaches to aesthetics, it is phenomenology that is best equipped to answer [the question why dance *matters* to us] satisfactorily” (2013: 202, emphasis in the original). He offers a useful account addressing a fundamental question relevant to debates around impact through a theoretically critical and philosophical analysis. The way he develops his analysis is fairly different to former phenomenological studies of dance he refers to such as Bernard (1993), Fraleigh, (1987), Levin (1983), Mickunas (1974), Sheets-Johnstone (1966) and others. Clark’s (2013: 213) emphatic position and argument illustrates the ways with which phenomenology might expand the hermeneutic possibilities of a study in dance and the notion of ‘meaning’.

Clark's and Csordas' accounts, to an extent, complement each other and resonate with the approach taken as part of this study in its interest to address questions around the potentiality of somatic-informed dance practice. The articulation of insights offered from a phenomenological perspective as outlined in Csordas (1994a, 1994b) and Clark (2013) resonate with my outlook towards BMC® and my examination of embodiment processes. Although grounded on a slightly different strand of phenomenology to Clark (2013), it was revealing, for example, to note that Csordas' (1994b) contribution was a cultural phenomenology of healing that sought the locus of therapeutic efficacy of a religious practice such as Charismatic healing in the self. Drawing from Merleau-Ponty (1966) and Bourdieu (1977), Csordas (1994b: 3) takes up the premise that "there is an experiential specificity of effect in religious healing" and works to formulate a theory that allows for the specification of the transformative effects of healing. Following an overview of anthropological approaches to questions around the efficacy of religious practices, he criticizes previous attempts as not responding adequately to such an inquiry for the following reason. As he states: "although anthropologists have produced volumes of descriptions of healing rituals, they have virtually never systematically examined the *experience* of supplicants in healing" (1994b: 3). Drawing from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology he works to cover this need. Although Clark (2013) takes up a different approach to respond to his own formulation of a question around potentiality or significance of dance practice, both himself and Csordas (1994a, 1994b) employ phenomenology to inquire into the transformative potential of a practice.

Csordas argues that "the paradigm of embodiment means not that cultures have the same structure as bodily experience, but that embodied experience is the starting point for analyzing [sic] human participation in a cultural world" (1993: 135). He asserts that "defining the dialectic between perceptual consciousness and collective practice is one way to elaborate embodiment as a methodological field...It is within this dialectic that we move from the understanding of perception as a bodily process to a notion of somatic modes

of attention that can be identified in a variety of cultural practices” (Csordas 1993: 137).

Working towards a definition of somatic modes of attention Csordas states that they are “culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others” (1993: 138). The concept of somatic modes of attention as distilled by Csordas informs the ways somatic processes in BMC® and somatic-informed dance have been attended to as part of this research. Specifically, it is the distinctiveness of the somatic approach, with particular reference to BMC®, in attending “to and with” one’s own body to his or her body and its surroundings that I seek to illustrate. Due to the particular nature of this approach to movement education, a complex dialogue between Csordas and the BMC® approach emerges that is further discussed later in this section and in 3.5.

Csordas discusses the relationship between an embodied approach and anthropological analysis proposing “a consistent methodological perspective that encourages reanalyses of existing data and suggests new questions for empirical research” (1990:5). The approach he develops from the perspective of anthropology is one that views the body as the subject rather than the object of culture. He is explicit in the way phenomenological theory informs his perspective and offers a valuable account on the significance of this approach. Csordas’ (1994a) extensive analysis on the topic invites for his concluding theoretical proposition which is the invention of ‘cultural phenomenology’, an integration of phenomenology and anthropology.

Although this is not a phenomenological study or a cultural phenomenological study, this research is informed indirectly by these conceptual – philosophical frames through anthropologists that have drawn upon them. For example, cultural phenomenology is the conceptual frame that Csordas (1994a, 1997, 2011) proposed in his quest for a paradigm for anthropology that makes corporeality and experience as central to the emergence of culture and self. As Csordas states,

The phrase 'cultural phenomenology of embodiment' denotes an attempt to gain purchase on the understanding of culture and self from the starting point of our bodies as being-in-the-world, and requires recognition that our bodies are at once the wellspring of existence and the site of experience. In effect, embodiment is our fundamental existential condition, our corporeality or bodiliness in relation to the world and other people.

(in Mascia-Lees 2011: page not available)

It is on this kind of understanding of the body that my research on the somatic movement is grounded upon, but it is not my methodological process. In his approach, Csordas "elaborates an understanding of embodiment as an indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience, mode of presence, and engagement in the world" (in Mascia-Lees 2011: page not available).

As explained, the scope of this research is to both explore notions of embodiment as understood in the field of somatics and to cover the ground of demonstrating how the emphasis on embodiment (or embodied processes) impacted on dance or movement pedagogy. For the purposes of this study and to maintain the priorities chosen, Csordas' conceptualisation of embodiment informs the types of questions being raised around the somatic informed movement pedagogy, but does not direct the analytical process of data. Understanding embodiment as a fundamental existential condition in the way Csordas suggests, offers a solid theoretical ground supporting the methodological approach of dance anthropology employed by Sklar, Ness and Novack. As already mentioned, it is particularly the methodological approach of the latter that I follow in this thesis.

Significantly, Csordas distinguishes between the body as a "thinglike" substance on which information is inscribed (Csordas 1994:14) and the body as a participatory, engaging entity which relates to the stimuli that surrounds it or is offered to it. This is a fundamental and revelatory shift of outlook towards the body as present in a dynamic connection with culture and the environment it inhabits and departs from deterministic understandings of the body as passive to culture. In Csordas (1990 and 1994a and Turner 1994), the dualistic notion suggesting the docility of the body is attributed both to

structuralism and to Foucault and Bourdieu's theories. One can easily slip from one perspective to another and, as I argue in Chapter 6, dualist perceptions are rather complex and deeply ingrained in western thought to overcome. Additionally, the way one perceives of his or her body and movement is dependent upon the experience and the discourses he or she is engaged in.

Embodiment processes as experienced in BMC® and the somatic movement strive to establish an empowering ontological perspective which substantiate the body in a manner similar to what cultural phenomenology suggests. This emphasis is seen as one that aims to level an established hierarchy of mind over body as opposed to one that, as Williams argues in a critique to Sheets-Johnstone (1981), reverses standard Cartesianism (Williams 2005: 473) leading to a consideration of the body as the locus of thought.

As a method aiming to re-educate the person towards an *embodied awareness*²² of anatomical structures, it places the focus on perception and on an outlook towards the body as conditioned by the culture and environment it inhabits. As follows from basic premises of the BMC® approach²³, some BMC® practitioners suggest that aspects of the physiology of the body such as the sense of hearing are shaped by the cultural context in which the person is brought up. Evidence of this exists in literature or in methods such as the Tomatis method, as mentioned earlier. Through processes that engage participants' attention towards the lived experience of movement and the body, BMC® cultivates awareness of embodied phenomena thereby shifting the perception of one's body as suggested in Csordas. By also attending to a universal function and nature of anatomical

²² Phrase mentioned in publicity material such as in Carroll (2011) a body psychotherapist, trained in Linda Hartley's approach to the BMC® method. Taking the standpoint of body psychotherapy, the front page of the leaflet quotes an unknown source that states "The body is neither the origin, nor the end point of self-knowledge. Rather it is part of a continual feedback loop, that connects us to ourselves, and our physical and relational environment". Hartley's work is looked at in greater detail in the chapters that follow. This is a term also used in the field, mainly by practitioners who have some engagement with scholarly research in BMC® and somatic work such as Katy Dymoke.

²³ Further illustrated in the introduction to Senses and Perception 1 in the following chapter.

systems, it is suggested that one develops the choice to 're-pattern'²⁴ their own conditioning.

It is notable that both cultural phenomenology and the BMC® focus view the body as dynamically conditioned rather than inscribed. Their similarity is one of the reasons why the two approaches are placed in dialogue with each other in this thesis. I find that the analytic complexity of this issue occurs from the fact that the dynamic exchange between subject and culture might be interpreted as a form of imposition of culture to the body. Therefore, it is dependent upon the individual's focus on this exchange whether he or she will be grounded on an empowering ontology and practice. Conversely, the level to which practitioners perceive of the process of acculturation as a dynamic or a passive one varies and, arguably, may relate to their political positioning and pedagogic approach. To further consider the issue of potentiality of practice, the extent to which BMC® as a cultural discourse might become an empowering experience or a powerful body-politic requires research that falls beyond the parameters of this thesis. However, a few key questions emerge out of this inquiry into the interplay between culture and the body.

It becomes fundamental to this thesis to consider the following:

- a) The way the notion of embodiment might be illuminated when the embodiment paradigm in anthropology is placed in dialogue with the meaning the term takes in the somatic movement. This is a consideration that will further support an understanding of notions the term embodiment takes in the field, relating to a main aim of this thesis. It will also help to understand whether the way embodiment is understood in the field has anything to contribute towards theory.
- b) The way an ontological understanding might be developed from this dialogue.

²⁴ This appears to be a contested term due to its strong connotation of a deep intervention. It is also a concept criticized by practitioners from other forms of the somatic movement, but it is very often used by some members of the BMC® community. It is used here, both for its value for an honest re-presentation of the field and as I consider it necessary to place such concepts in a critical analysis.

c) What might be the relationship between embodiment, as lived phenomenon and experience, with the emergence of culture. This consideration relates to the curiosity around diachronic properties of the emergence of socially constructed movement systems introduced earlier in the thesis.

2.4. Embodiment and Dance Anthropology

As a discipline that considers movement as a modality of being-in-the-world dance anthropology has offered useful methodological frameworks. Thomas (2003:82) highlights Sklar's theoretical approach to the analysis of movement and points at the latter's aim to integrate movement description into the analysis of culture. Specifically, Sklar suggests that "the way people move provides a key to the way they think and feel and to what they know" (1991:6). She considers that the examination of dance from an ethnographic viewpoint involves treating dance as a kind of cultural knowledge, a somatic mode of attention that incorporates mental and emotional aspects, elements of cultural history and belief systems and values. She argues that cultural knowledge "is embodied in movement, especially the highly stylised and codified movement we call dance" (1991:6). The BMC® approach adds to this position with its approach to embodiment arguing that our physiology is also partly culturally conditioned²⁵. In her investigation into the ritual fiesta of the Tortugas which takes place once a year in a small village in southern New Mexico, Sklar applies: a. movement description (the result of a long analytical process aiming to identify consistent movement patterns and motifs and movement observation checklists) b. qualitative movement analysis that involves a technique she calls "kinesthetic empathy" (Sklar 1994: 14). Explaining her nuanced approach, Sklar (1994: 15) states:

²⁵ This suggestion is further illuminated by findings in psychology and cognitive neurosciences (Cutting and Eimas 1975) regarding the cultural conditioning of listening and speech and by the approach taken in the Tomatis method also known as Audio-Psycho-Phonology (APP). From another perspectives, more recently, cultural neuroscience has become an emerging field that grew out of advancements in cultural and biological sciences. It develops new theoretical frameworks for understanding the complex interplay between "environmental, cultural and genetic factors in the production of adaptive human behavior [sic]" (Chiao et al. 2013).

Qualitative movement analysis entails, first of all, attention to movement in the midst of every kind of interaction and event. It demands tuning perception not just to the “what” of action but to the “how”, since the qualities of movement, more than its quantification, give pointed clues to proprioceptive experience... This kind of kinesthetic analysis involves more than “objective” observation. Paradoxically, one has to close one’s eyes to look at movement, extrapolating beyond its visual presentation and concentrating instead on projecting oneself “as if” into the other’s engaged and moving body.

With some lineage to Laban movement analysis and while coming from an ethnographic perspective, Sklar’s approach to qualitative movement analysis appears to be a distillation that could also describe the approach a somatic movement educator takes in observing movement.

As it will be shown in chapter 3, although it would not be essential to close her eyes, the somatic or somatic-informed dance practitioner, cultivates an ability to observe or sense movement from an “embodied place”. That is to observe or sense others while sensing in one’s body the anatomic structure she looks at or touch. This technique has been very much a part of my practice during facilitation of workshop. With respect to the purposes of this study, I have also looked for the qualitative responses of participants that demonstrate the way shifts in the felt sense of the body (some included in Chapter 6) may portray the impact the somatic approach to dance pedagogy might have on them. Based on this understanding of kinesthetic empathy and while I work to address the aims of this thesis: a. I include selectively examples of my own embodied experiences (Chapter 3 and 5), b. I have looked for qualitative reflections or descriptions of the way dance practice has informed movement experience in interviews or sources available in the public domain. The latter forms a large part of data and quotes from these are offered in different parts of this thesis.

In light of Csordas’ distinctions between structuralist and post-structuralist approaches and the respective focus on representation or being-in-the-world referred to earlier, the history of dance anthropology has shown examples of work situated in both ends of the spectrum. For example, as a structuralist coming from an ethnoscientific background, Kaeppler (1978, 1999) discusses

the significance of the means of recording data collected during fieldwork. As a representation of the culture, her analysis of the structure of the movement systems is derived by using linguistic analogies²⁶: that is identifying the relevant small pieces of movement (kinemes and morphokinemes – analogous to phonemes and morphemes), motifs, and the way these movement pieces are put together (analogous to phonology and syntax in language). Densely and deeply grounded in cultural theory, Farnell's account critically debates on the application of phenomenology in anthropology emphasising that "despite an upsurge of interest in 'the body', an understanding of the person as a *moving* agent is still absent from cultural theory and ethnographic accounts" (Farnell, 1994: 929). She argues that: "the new realist perspective on person and agency, and not the existential philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, offers the necessary philosophical grounding to accomplish an embodied definition of social actors." (929) I support Farnell's statement in that there would be significant value in understanding the person as a moving agent and that a different philosophical standpoint would be needed to illuminate questions of this kind. However, I argue, that the shift towards embodiment as a paradigm and phenomenology as a lens for dance ethnography does not necessarily have to replace an examination of notions of agency in cultural theory. Rather, it is meant to illuminate a different dimension of the relationship between bodies, comportment and culture and to further develop an equally useful analytical perspective and rhetoric in ethnography.

In a similar frame of thought to Clark (2013) following Crowther (2009) in their proposition that "phenomenology and semiotics should be *complementary* theories" (Clark, 2013: 204), I consider that Farnell's interest in the new realist approach to person and agency could be *complementary* to an anthropology informed by phenomenology. In her more recent work, Farnell acknowledges the contribution of the "paradigm of embodiment" in the period she

²⁶ Both Adrienne Kaeppler (1986) and Drid Williams (1983), leading figures in the 'anthropology of the dance and human movement studies' (Williams 1994: 9), use linguistic *analogies* in their structuralist ethnologies and critically distinguish their approach from speculations (Williams 1994 referring to Sklar 1991) that they use linguistic *models*.

characterizes as “the first somatic revolution” of the 80s and 90s. However retaining her interest in representation, she argues that:

This approach to embodiment stimulated an ‘anthropology of the senses’, which, accompanied by a broader critique of ‘visualism’ in anthropology, may have discouraged investigators from also examining visual aspects of embodied experience and cultural practices.
(Farnell 2011: 4)

A number of authors have reviewed the limitations of ethnographic research practiced prior to 1970s, with a particular emphasis on the focus on observation rather than participation. Amongst the leading dance anthropologists who have raised these methodological limitations is Sally Ann Ness who identifies herself as part of the shift towards embodied practice. She characterises herself as ‘espousing “a performer’s orientation” toward the classical ethnographic method of participant/observation’ (2004: 140). She, also, describes the text, which emerged from this approach as a presentation and illustration of her ‘process of physical, subjective, and dynamic attunement to choreographic phenomena’ (1992:3). An increasing number of studies have taken a similar approach since the late 80s including Alter (1992), Browning (1995), Jackson (1989), Meduri (1988), Novack (1990), Sklar (2001), Zarrilli (1998) all writing from a dance or performing arts perspective and broadly situated in dance anthropology, dance ethnology or other relative discipline. The advocated advancement to knowledge and understanding of human movement gained through an embodied methodological approach in this body of work tends to be justified and often illustrated with the use of phenomenological theory. It could be argued that the growing body of interdisciplinary research combining anthropology and philosophy is a logical progression in knowledge having its roots in the intrinsic existential aspects of inquiry about the human being inherent in both of these fields. More specifically, studies of dance anthropology informed by a phenomenological view tend to investigate the way culture is embodied and reflected through movement but, also, examine the way the human and movement plays an active role in the formation of culture. The relevance of phenomenology lies in and allows further illustration on the investigation of the

way experience is processed by the human body (seen here as an entity with interrelated physical, mental and emotional functions). It is within this field of anthropology that this thesis is situated.

As mentioned earlier, structuralist dance anthropologists have critiqued the emphasis on phenomenology. In a review of Helen Thomas' (2003) *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*, although Williams (2005) criticizes phenomenology as applied in dance anthropology, she does not engage with or acknowledge 'cultural phenomenology' or ontological discussions offered in Csordas (1994a), a book published eleven years earlier. In her review on Thomas, Williams relies on the ontological objections of her former student Brenda Farnell, but does not address issues illuminated in Csordas (1990, 1994a&b) or Turner (1994). However, the phenomenological perspective is acknowledged yet critically addressed in Farnell's later work (2011). She refers to Csordas' (1990) outline of the 'paradigm of embodiment' for anthropology and adds Farnell and Varela 2008 in the sketching of this methodological approach.

The anthropological and ethnographic lenses employed in this thesis have firstly contributed to the identification of this community as a social movement. Secondly, it has formed the conceptual basis that allowed for the identification of one of the threads connecting and underlying this movement's cultural meaning. That is a holistic view of the body and an emphasis on embodiment and bodiliness as of particular importance to one's way-of-being-in-the-world and to one's wellbeing. The emergence of embodiment as a theme for this research has both emerged out of preliminary research and informed the construction of the field further outlined below.

2.4.1. Language as Mediator of Experience

Csordas (1994a) critiques objections to the study of experience that support that "all experience is mediated by language – therefore one can only study language or discourse, i.e. representation" (1994a: 11). The significance of this critique lies in his insightful argument that "the polarization of language and experience is itself a function of a predominantly representationalist

theory of language” and that “language gives access to a world of experience in so far as experience comes to, or is brought to, language” (Csordas 1994a). He supports and traces the notion that language is a modality of being-in-the-world in Johann Gottfried Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt’s “linguistic relativism” (Risager 2006: 60) and applauds Heidegger’s concept that it does not only represent or refer, but “discloses” our being-in-the-world.

A number of authors in this book (Becker, Low, Jenkins and Valiente, Landerman) contribute significantly to the theme of inseparability between bodily experience and cultural meaning. Adding to the investigation into the theoretical and methodological implications of this methodological proposition, Low and Jenkins and Valiente substantiate Kirmayer’s (1992) ‘insight that metaphor is the critical meeting ground between textuality and embodiment’ (cited in Csordas, 1994:16).

The theme of language as representation and as embodied experience is interweaved throughout the book. The plurality of perspectives and insights into this matter depict further dimensions of this issue. These tailor towards a need for awareness of methodological differentiation between the following manifestations of language: a) language as representation of a process of self objectification, b) language as representation of a subjective experience caused by others’ objectification of the subject - as in Cathy Winkler’s analysis of the pain caused by rape, c) as an expression of the experience of mind/body dissociation, or d) as a product of embodied, and thus subjective, attunement. The issue of language is also present within a growing body of work in cultural theory examining movement and/or dance as lived experience.

Helen Thomas stresses that the “difficulty of translating dance practices into verbal language is a perennial one for dance scholarship and cultural criticism” (Thomas 2003:87). In this study, the qualitative research approach informed by cultural phenomenology has allowed to consider the metaphoric use of language when expressed as response or description of somatic

experiences by participants, peers, students and myself in the field. This led to an understanding of metaphor as grounded on embodied experience.

The issue of language as representation of experience or embodied reality has been a persistent issue in the writing process of this thesis which emerged out of the same debate. The different nature between a body-based often poetic language occurring in somatic work and the requirement for a scholarly ethnographic documentation of the somatic movement and a fair representation of the work of a professional body such as BMC® placed tensions in the writing style used.

To allow for clarity, given the nature of the arguments raised and an emphasis on the distinction between knowledge as scholarly activity and as embodied reality, throughout the thesis, reflexive comments, testimonies, metaphoric use of language and/or somatics related language are quoted or included in italics. The choice not to immerse myself in a subjective style of writing in this thesis was made for the following reasons: Firstly, it was led by the particularities of the goals of this research such as my interest in capturing shifts in practice since the 70s and the nature of somatic and somatic-informed dance work. While I see myself as an Independent dance artist and a part of this movement, the goals of the thesis required an opening out to capturing the work of others in an effort to illustrate lineage and the growth of a community of practitioners. Therefore, phrases and examples of the metaphoric use of language or of a body-based language are offered where relevant as another way of illustrating the nature of the practice and the somatic movement. Secondly, the style of writing offered follows the conventions of thesis authorship expected in the academic setting this work is submitted. In its focus in fulfilling the parameters required, it may also be argued that it forms evidence of the dichotomization knowledge around human existence has undergone in a scholarly setting.

2.4.2. Constructing the Field and Methods of Documentation

To further outline the methodological framework and ethnographic choices made during fieldwork, this section discusses the way the field was

constructed and the methods of documentation employed. What constitutes 'the field' in ethnographic research has been reconfigured in the past thirty or so years. Arguments offered in Amit's (2000) edited collection present a number of issues considered as part of the shaping of the contours of the field studied in this research. For example, the volume challenges the necessity for a "clear separation of professional and personal areas of activity" (introductory note to the volume, page unknown) and questions the notion of "the field" as separate from everyday life. This position together with the approach authors in Davida (2011) have taken, resonates with my position as a practitioner-researcher in a western contemporary dance context. This is a research position that has informed the shaping of the field. (My role as practitioner-researcher is further discussed in section 2.4.3 and 2.6 below.)

BMC® is looked at cross-culturally as an outcome of a globalised environment. The construction of the ethnographic field has extended to include diverse settings and contexts where BMC® or other somatic forms are practiced or hosted. It also includes settings that, following individual practitioners' interest and or expertise, play a leading role in the advancement of knowledge of somatically informed dance practice. These have included institutions, organizations, conferences and gatherings in Britain, France and Greece. Participation in certain conferences referred to below served both as fieldwork and opportunities for scholarly exchange. People I have communicated with include somatic practitioners working in the field of health, dance artists who have been either informed or are critical of the somatic approach and its inclusion in Higher Education dance pedagogy and scholars active in research on somatics and dance.

The field has also reached out to the places where participants of the SME programme come from or currently live. It is in this sense imaginary and perhaps even virtual. Contact with some informants from the BMC® community during the last few months of the writing process happened mainly through social media and skype. As mainly an observer, exchange of practitioners in social media appeared as a distillation of shared interests amongst people from around the world. Although field research has taken

place in different countries, the main place the field is situated is in England. Research in different countries has served different purposes in the analytic process and is reflective of the permeability and relatedness of cultural boundaries in the age of globalisation. However, the exploration of the history of somatic practices is specifically focused in its relation to the development of aspects of contemporary dance in Britain. Focusing on this historic and cultural instance offers the evidence on which to analyse practice and explore its distinct principles as found in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. It is the same principles and methods that may have informed aspects of contemporary dance practice in other parts of Europe and the USA, but which have not been analysed or identified in this perspective before.

A number of publications have also been examined. These include books and other publications such as Tufnell and Crickmay (1993 and 2003), Lansley and Early (2012), Franklin (1996), Bainbridge Cohen (1993), Hartley (1994) and Aposhyan (2004), published during the period of interest and written by some of somatically informed dance practitioners that played a role in the shifts of dance and somatic practices. These sources have played a dual role: On one hand, they serve as ethnographic data demonstrating an aspect of the field, whilst, on the other hand, they have informed my understanding and approach in my practice as a facilitator and artist. The term “somatic-informed dance practices” introduced in the introduction of this thesis, to refer to the field in the contemporary dance world which draws from somatic practices is endorsed in this thesis as it adds specificity and usefully describes choices made during field construction.

I have employed mostly an ‘overt’ approach. A ‘covert’ role was employed only in cases where my role as a researcher could be potentially anticipated due to the nature of the event or in publicly available events such as the Somatic Movement Conference in Paris (June 2011). Below is a list of significant moments in fieldwork to date, demonstrating the range of contexts the field was comprised of:

- the SME programme in Britain which I began in May 2008 and completed in April 2012
- the Summer Dancing Festival at Coventry University (UK, June 2010)
- the Somatic Movement Conference in Paris (June 2011)
- facilitation of somatically informed creative movement workshops at the Summer Academy of Acoustic Ecology at Ionian University in Greece (July 2011)
- the Somatic Gathering in Lancaster, England in October 2011
- “Move: Choreographing You” containing exhibition, performances, discussions in London, November 2011
- Conference on Dance and Philosophy, Roehampton University, February 2011
- Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry University, UK, July 2011
- “Contact Improvisation and Physical Mindfulness”, a series of workshops leading to a score taught by Ann Cooper Albright at the Municipal Theatre of Corfu, Greece, April 2012 (I participated in a part of this event)
- Lecture and movement workshop at Department of Audiovisual Arts, Ionian University, Greece
- Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry University, July 2013
- “The Big 30: Now and Then – X6 and Friends – A Round Table Discussion”, Chisenhale Dance Space, UK, 20 October 2013
- “Embodying Cellular Consciousness Through Breathing and Moving”, two-day workshop with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, 16-17 May 2015, Patras, Greece

As an artist exploring creative and pedagogic curiosities and ethnographer in this field, I also took part in numerous classes led by various artists whose work has been somatically informed both in Britain and beyond. I also took sessions with BMC® teachers outside the SME programme in Britain. Amongst others these include: the deeply influential, inspiring and, sadly, early departed Gill Clarke in a course co-facilitated with Lucia Walker (June

2010), Miranda Tufnell (Lancaster 2011), Linda Hartley (Lancaster 2011), Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (Paris, June 2011 and Patras, May 2015), Thomas Greil and Janet Amato (Paris, 2011), Helen Poynor, Martha Eddy and others.

The ethnographic field has been constructed including as many forms of exchange of this community as possible. In a globalised world with extensive virtual communication, including social media pages such as Facebook was considered essential. From an ethnographic perspective, the inclusion of such data is considered illustrative of the ways the BMC® community interacts. It offers a rich database of “thin” and “thick” (Geertz 1973) descriptions, valuable photographic material and footage which forms an already existent form of documentation or primary data with the language used, the interests, the aesthetic and the values shared. It also offers an indication of the aspects of the work that the SBMC selects to advertise as illustrative of their current work and developments, as well as an illustration of the way BMC® is managed as a commodity.

Finally, it is worth noting here that there is acknowledgement of the limitations inherent in the construction of any field which might extend beyond a particular geographic area and which is characterised by diversity and plurality of approaches and applications. However, effort has been made to engage with and represent settings not examined in this light or represented in previous studies. The construction of the field has importantly been informed by the connections between the fields and applications of somatic work. Additionally, as an anthropologist who follows a practice-based approach, some of the settings included in the constructed field are also places I have practiced and which have been partly chosen as having a relevant interest to the research. The path of my practice (as explained in the introduction of this thesis, section 1.3) is a reflection of the ways influences and lineage are connected to real living histories and, therefore, may not be restricted to a confined space/context or a linear representation. My participation in each of the settings listed above has allowed both to hone in the focus of this research. It has also allowed me to ‘test’ ideas in more formal settings with a number of people, and to concrete thoughts and further define

the position of this work within a larger frame of thought, academic discourse and perspective to scholarly research.

Referring to feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith, Sklar states that to ground discourse in corporeal experience is "to begin from direct experience and to return to it as a constraint or 'test' of the adequacy of a systematic knowledge" (Smith in Sklar 1994: 13). For Sklar, bodylore does not only treat the body as a subject, but approaches bodily ways of knowing as formative of discourse itself. Following this line of thought and grounded on embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology (Csordas 1990), participant observation has been a fundamental method in fieldwork accompanied by fieldnotes and/or audio recordings. Audio recording was used as a means to document events and a tool grounded on reflexive methodology (Etherington 2004) used to record reflections on events directly after they took place. Lengthy reflective notes were also written throughout the research process and during fieldwork. Photographs were taken at different stages, but given the delicate nature of the work, I have tried to keep photography to the minimum²⁷.

In cases when audio recordings were used as a means of documentation, they replaced fieldnotes. Voice recording was found to be relevant and useful to this research due to the experiential nature of BMC® work and the difference in modes of thinking when embodying, speaking or writing. In order to fully immerse myself in the embodiment processes I engaged with during participant observation, there emerged the need to *integrate* sensory experiences in the manners that the body-based knowledge acquisition required. This, at times, meant that experiences or processes had to be worked through non-verbally, in drawing, moving, dancing, singing, free-associative writing, reflective notes (however brief or non-linear) or simply through informal discussions.

²⁷ BMC® and some somatic informed dance sessions involve *embodiment processes* that lead to deep processing, an experience of deep sensing and attuned focus that both develops and requires a safe, confined and confidential environment. In the interest of not interrupting these processes, the photographs I took were minimum, especially for sessions led by others. However, some stills are available through the SBMC and other practitioners' publicity material. Some of these are shown in figures in the chapters that follow.

As briefly mentioned earlier, the BMC® approach to knowledge acquisition acknowledges a multilayered process for embodied understanding to take place. In this process, cognitive, sensorial and kinesthetic experiences appear to be inextricably linked. Learning to recognise and trust the bodily impulse, the use of creative outlets as a means to integrate knowledge, the development of a mindfulness of the moment or for the need to rest form significant elements in the pedagogic approach employed. The practice invites for a spontaneous and embodied response to newly introduced information. Some practitioners, even tactically, heighten the importance of embodied understanding as opposed to intellectual processing grounded on the inherent and established, in the somatic world, notion of bodily wisdom and corporeal intelligence.²⁸ Pedagogical aspects and principles of this approach are further discussed in Chapter 4.

As an ethnographer partaking in an educational process, it was considered significant to follow the suggestions of the somatic discipline studied. In doing so, a different bodily or sensorial experience of familiarity with information became evident. The acquisition of embodied knowledge and educational processes that allow such progression might be discussed in numerous ways and could offer useful insights on established pedagogic practice. Being a vast subject, a detailed discussion on the potentiality of the somatic approach to education in general and dance education²⁹ in specific falls beyond the confines of this thesis. A discussion of pedagogic principles and their impact on embodiment is offered here as a means to engage with specific ontological questions.

A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with somatic and dance practitioners who have played a role in the exchange of principles and concepts between the somatic and the dance world in England between the 1970s and today. (Please see Appendix 3 for a draft interview plan.) Amongst them were: Sue McLennan, Katy Dymoke, Duncan Holt, Amy Voris, Sarah

²⁸ This approach to learning also has a number of affinities with humanistic education, as for example the way learning time is addressed.

²⁹ Fortin, Long and Lord (2002), Fortin and Girard (2005), Fortin (2008) Garrett-Brown (2007) and numerous authors have contributed with insightful research on this topic.

them were: Sue McLennan, Katy Dymoke, Duncan Holt, Amy Voris, Sarah Whatley, Katye Coe, Natalie Garrett, Kirsty Alexander, Penny Collinson, Kerstin Wellhofer and Jens Johansen. Artists interviewed still practice today and impact in different ways in the development of the interface between dance and somatic work holding different positions in the dance and/or somatic education and therapy sectors. Choices of interviewees were informed by an interest in incorporating people whose involvement or contribution has not been addressed in previous histories with the aim to document testimonies of people who witnessed developments without necessarily leading them. I have also attempted to demonstrate that the influences of somatic practices and the New Dance movement, in Britain, reach beyond London in different settings.

During fieldwork, I had numerous informal discussions with practitioners and participants practicing diverse somatic methods as well as BMC®, particularly, during the SME programme. Participants and peers often expressed confidential reflections on their processes which I have kept undisclosed. However, I have endeavoured to represent a wide range of responses where relevant in the analysis with reference to similar examples available either in the public domain or through my own practice-based research. As my role as a researcher in the method began a year and a half after I commenced my studies in the SME programme, a time by which I had established some personal relationships with participants, I chose not to conduct formal interviews or questionnaires. This was a methodological choice aiming to ensure that participants' attention would remain undivided from the course and that the established sense of safety in the programme would not be impeded. Instead, during courses, I endeavoured to spend as much time as possible exchanging with different participants and participating in group discussions during breaks or in the evenings.

2.4.3. Tensions Between Being an 'Insider' and 'Outsider' in Ethnography

Polarities such as that of 'inside' versus 'outside', 'first person' versus 'third person' descriptions; 'phenomenological' versus 'objectivist' or 'cognitive'

versus 'behavioural' theories and, most commonly, 'emic' versus 'etic'³⁰ analyses have been a recurrent problem of methodological discussion since the mid 20th century and yet remain an issue till present. Throughout this project, I have been aware of my dual role as 'insider' and 'outsider' in the BMC® / somatic community. Three texts have informed my endeavour to resolve occurring tensions in this position: Koutsouba's (1999) analysis of the issues emerging from a dual capacity as *informant* and ethnographer, Ness' (2007) review on Tomie Hahn's *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance* and Geertz's (1974) epistemological discussion on the qualities and nature of ethnographic documentation and what constitutes anthropological understanding. Davida's (2011) edited volume exploring the practitioner-researcher perspective also resonated the approach employed in this project and with a number of challenges encountered. Please see Appendix 4 for an excerpt of a reflection of what I call my 'in-between' role as an insider and outsider in the field and some of the insights this has led to.

My role in the research appears to illustrate a notion of permeability of identity or subjectivity, and perhaps resonates with notions of emergent subjectivity (Garrett-Brown 2012). However, I will not delve into a discussion of this topic here. To me, the in-between role offered both opportunities for self-reflection and a critical distance that allowed for an identification of what are the distinct cultural traits observed that makes me view this community as a social movement and what is different or new for dance. This research position offers varied degrees of critical distance, of a sense of difference to the culture being examined which, as argued in more traditional forms of anthropology, is what offers the possibility of identification of the cultural traits that hold meaning for the particular community. The in-between role also offers varied degrees of sameness to the culture studied as the investigator reflects on traits and endorses or refutes dimensions of the practice. Traits identified are outlined and discussed in relation to the questions addressed in this thesis.

³⁰ As deriving from distinctions in linguistics between phonemics and phonetics.

Geertz (1974) begins with a critique on the dramatic response the academic community had to the publishing of Bronislaw Malinowski's *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. He stresses the epistemological significance of the issues raised by Malinowski's diary and clarifies the ways with which the book rendered the way anthropological work was conducted fairly implausible. He states: "The myth of the chameleon field-worker, perfectly self-tuned to his exotic surroundings - a walking miracle of empathy, tact, patience, and cosmopolitanism – was demolished by the man who had perhaps done the most to create it" (Geertz 1974: 27).

The qualities of the ethnographer outlined here by Geertz have often been the subject of debate around ethics in ethnography particularly with regards to the feasibility of such an approach. Some of these qualities underpinned the guidelines for ethical practice in ethnography as outlined by the American Anthropological Association until 1999 (Frosch in Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999). Seizing the opportunity of the incident of the publication of Malinowski's diary, Geertz proceeded with debating that criticality is inevitable to emerge in an ethnographic setting whilst clarifying what the essence of an ethnographic outlook should aim for. In a characteristically familiar to his subject tone he stated:

To grasp concepts which, for another people, are experience-near, and to do so well enough to place them in illuminating connection with those experience - distant concepts that theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life is clearly a task at least as delicate, if a bit less magical, as putting oneself into someone else's skin. The trick is not to achieve some inner correspondence of spirit with your informants; preferring, like the rest of us, to call their souls their own, they are not going to be altogether keen about such an effort anyhow. The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to.

(Geertz 1974: 29)

As a dance artist and trained SME, I have naturally adopted a number of the principles and practices entailed in the BMC® perspective in my work. However, as influenced by my western background this approach was distinct enough to be able to discern its cultural characteristics and to allow for critical analysis. I have endeavoured to remain reflective throughout my practice

about the applicability of BMC® principles in diverse artistic, educational and cultural contexts thereby both exploring what the somatic movement maintains as an ethnographer, as Geertz suggests in his last sentence, whilst formulating my own approach to practice, it's relevance and applicability.

Ness's review demonstrates the benefits of a practice-based understanding of a cultural form in providing a richness in ethnographic descriptions, but critiques Hahn's approach which defies the presence of a critical observation of the totality of a community's cultural predicament (2007: 361). In doing so, she criticises both Hahn's account and her scholarly ancestor Cynthia Bull (Novack) for the renowned research on the American Contact Improvisation community as a social movement. Ness argues that both accounts are particularly illustrative of the practices they represent, a strength attributed to the fact that they are written by practitioners, but critiques them for disregarding asymmetries of power both within the practice and outside apart from few exceptions.

Amongst the various responsibilities to the public and the profession listed for anthropologists, the American Anthropological Association requires that researchers remain truthful to the community group they represent whilst considering the social/political ramifications of information disseminated (Frosch in Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999). In this thesis, both Ness and the American Anthropological Association's propositions are endorsed for considering the social implications of information received. My role as a practice-led informed ethnographer and the greater scope and priorities that emerge from practice inform my choice. For example, as a somatically informed facilitator I considered it to be a matter of responsibility to first address issues occurring by the nature and principles of the practice in the interest of protecting participants and, then to engage analytically with a debate around the politics of practice. The critical dimension of this thesis is, therefore, generated by the desire to: a) resolve tensions emerging in practice and, b) to illuminate more aspects of the same social movement. Although emerging issues of politics and power are not the main topic selected to be discussed as part of this thesis, they are highlighted where relevant and it is

considered to be a topic needing further investigation following the completion of this project.

To ensure I hold confidences and with a focus on maintaining ethical research practice, I attempt to both protect members of the movement whilst remaining reflective on practice through the choices of the case studies I analyse in the thesis and the choice of names disclosed or anonymized. In the thesis, I therefore disclose and analyse examples / case studies available in the public domain through publication (as in Bainbridge Cohen 1993) or other medium (including social media) and from my own practice rather than of peer participants in the SME Programme. I also use data from testimonies of artists or analyses of scholars available in the public domain in books, artist-led magazines or scholarly journals. This is particularly true for chapter 4. As explained in the introduction of this thesis, sources available in public are regarded as primary data based on the fact that they are written by authors (including dance scholars) who form part or inform the shaping of somatic-informed dance practice.

However, my experiences in the SME programme have deeply informed my understanding of BMC® as a somatic approach and method of somatic movement education, and the nature of somatics as a social movement. My role as a researcher in the community emerged after I had started the SME programme. I declared this shift to practitioners and participants when the change in my position occurred and endeavoured to retain my role as a researcher discreet without changes in the methods I communicated with each of them until the completion of the programme. This was a methodological choice in courtesy of the sensitive work that was taking place in the courses and with an interest to respect the boundaries set by the organising association.

It may be argued that apart from empathy, tact and cosmopolitanism (Geertz 1974, Grau in Munsie 2008), although the latter is not a term I would endorse, an ethnographic 'state of mind' may also be based on a desire to experience first hand a different existential positioning as developed in diverse cultures. It

may be grounded on a fundamental belief that exposure to diversity with an openness to see reality in other people's terms (as much as this may be humanly possible as argued by Geertz 1974) may inform our own understanding of our position in the world and may unravel limiting perceptions emerging from our own cultural conditioning, thereby informing self-knowledge. As Margaret Mead (2001: 9) asserts,

as the traveler who has once been [away] from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own.

2.4.4. Reflexive Anthropology and Personal Politics

The dispute between structuralism and post-structuralism discussed above is also evident in the relevance of reflexivity to dance anthropology. As post-structuralist the work of Sklar (1991), Thomas (2003) and Ness (1992), represent a particular reflexive approach to the anthropological study of dance. This has received severe critique by structuralist anthropologists such as Williams (1994 and 2005) and Franken (1994). In a critical overview to self-reflexivity written with a polemic and almost personal tone, Williams (1994: 6) unveils a dispute between contemporary (for the time) currents in dance ethnography and the structuralist take. This is an informative critique offering useful scholarly insights on the topic, but sets the reader out of focus due to a style of writing which seems to aim to insult besides engaging in an academic exchange³¹. Williams' (1994) critical overview of self-reflexivity is toned down as it builds to a conclusion clarifying what it is she protests against. She singles out Drewel (1991) and Sklar's (1991) articles, as scholars whose work has status in the field, and criticizes them for radical misunderstandings of what 'reflexivity' consists and for conflating the notions of 'reflexive' with 'subjective' and/or 'personal' anthropology (Williams 1994: 8-9). In doing so, she notes the lack of critical engagement with and acknowledgement of "the ideas of reflexivity held by numerous sociologists, social anthropologists,

³¹ Grau (1995: 140) addresses the issue of the Williams' caustic criticisms of other scholars' work as well as the selective range of accounts that Williams approves of.

semantic anthropologists and semasiologists” (Williams 1994: 8) since the early 70s. She doubts the existence of a new reflexive anthropology and challenges its advocates to explain the way this differs or resembles preceding formulations of this strand of thought. She refers specifically to Crick (1975), Pocock (1973) Williams (1976), Kaeppler (dates not given), Varela (1984), and to Gouldner’s (1970) overview of when the notion of reflexivity appeared in American sociology in the final chapter of his book.

Williams’ protest seems reasonable to me for the following reasons. First, her epistemological stance is nurtured by an objectivist tradition where first person, the lived experience of the ethnographer or empirical aspects of movement would be omitted. Also, the anthropological research she has contributed to the study of human movement is grounded on a solid, structuralist, detailed and careful yet distant and formalistic movement description and analysis. Alfred Gell has discussed her article *Deep Structure of the Dance* (1976) arguing that her accounts “are both arbitrary and excessively formalistic, as well as in some cases committing her to generalizations which are plainly empirically untrue” (Gell in Grau 1995). As a result, an account that falls outside of these parameters would naturally seem foreign to this scholar.

The reflexive anthropology scholars such as Sklar and Ness advocate for takes into account the corporeal and lived dimensions of the experience of movement acknowledging the existential significance of embodiment, a focus not provided in structuralist accounts. The ethnographer’s first person experience contributes to offering significant qualitative information about the cultural system studied and the experience of being-in-the-world in the particular context, a dimension that the structuralist approach would not be able to *represent* (in Csordas’ or positivist terms). Additionally, what Williams (2005: 468) considers as “embarrassing self-revelations” in Sklar’s work appear to me to be honest documentation of an ethnographers process in the field, thereby not concealing biases under the cover of objectifying generalizations.

Reflexive anthropology has been an area of particular interest and growth over the past three decades and is found to complement studies that have employed the embodiment paradigm or that have endorsed the process of observing bodily shifts in the experience of movement during fieldwork or participant-observation (Sklar 1994, 1999, 2001a, 2001b; Ness 1992, 1996a, 1996b, 2004, 2007; Novack 1990, Browning 1995). Since the early 90s, numerous accounts illustrate selected moments of the ethnographer's journey during fieldwork and research responding to a call for a deeper understanding of the role the ethnographer's subjectivity plays in her perspective. The need for reflexivity in anthropological research has been stressed by scholars such as Avanthi Meduri (1988), Deidre Sklar (1991) and Andrée Grau (1999) and more recently Dena Davida (2011). As discussed, it is also a topic that has received its own critiques from structuralist or more traditional anthropological standpoints such as Drid Williams'.

Valuing Andrée Grau's (1999) line of thought in declaring the viewpoints that frame her perspective into anthropology politically and theoretically, I consider such reflexive stance useful for this thesis. In this respect, I endorse the view that anthropology is based in a politics that "aims to secure a recognition that the non-Western is as crucial an element of the human as the Western and thus is sceptical and critical of Western claims to knowledge and understanding" (Mascia-Lees et al., 1989: 8). This view is complemented by Geertz's analysis of a western conception of the person that opens this chapter. To repeat it here he states that:

The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe; a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures. Rather than attempt to place the experience of others within the framework of such a conception, which is what the extolled "empathy" in fact usually comes down to, we must, if we are to achieve understanding, set that conception aside and view their experiences within the framework of their own idea of what selfhood is.
(Geertz 1974: 31)

Conversely, I consider cultures to bare a distinct kind of wisdom that becomes the ground for behaviour. Therefore, in a multicultural and globalised world, understanding of different conceptions of the person in exchanges with the world's cultures is considered highly enriching.

Mascia Lees' observation is valuable for a number of reasons. To me, besides the fundamental value of equality between cultures and claims to knowledge and understanding, it converses interestingly with debates around the ethnicity of western dance practices brought up by Joanne Kealinohomoku³² since 1969/1970 and recently followed on by Dena Davida (2011). Supporters of this position emphasise the need to liberate ethnography from implicit imperialist assumptions encountered, as Davida implies, in the exasperation of some dance historians and critics, or aesthetic philosophers who still consider concert dance forms such as ballet to retain a privileged position in the world's dances as cultural heritage. Davida's volume is inspired by Joann Kealiinohomoku's progressive assertion (for the late 1960s field of dance anthropology) that all dance forms are ethnic and western theatre, or else called, concert dance forms, such as ballet should also be investigated in this light. This strand of dance anthropology opposes to more traditionalist views such as Buckland's (1999) that argue that some dance forms are more ethnic than others.

Examining aspects of the "ethnicity of postmodern dance" Davida's volume begins to respond to a fundamental concern (2011: 30). That is to demonstrate the way contemporary dance ethnographers may begin to suspend the weight of the "dubious colonialist past" (Davida 2011: 8) of anthropology, thereby, maintaining it relevant to as Davida states: 'a globalizing, de-colonizing world in which concepts such as "far-away," "exotic," and "primitive" are now perceived as vestigial remnants of an obsolete and racist western nostalgia, if not the clichéd fare of the travel industries' (2011: 8). Her explicit statement and focus resonates with the view

³² The respected anthropologist was for nearly three decades the forerunner of a series of very few ethnographies which examined western theatre dance forms and movement practices from an anthropological perspective. A significant contribution to this scholarly and political challenge was made by Cynthia Novack (Bull) in her ethno-historic documentation of Contact Improvisation in 1990.

of current anthropological research driving this project. It therefore focuses in aspects of western contemporary dance viewed in a similar light to Davida's volume and objects to stereotypical or reductionist views of cultures. It also refutes obsolete notions of distance and articulations in discussions around the origins or influences of some somatic practices that tend to conceal an 'orientalist' basis.

The exploration of contemporary dance forms as situated in diverse cultural contexts found in Davida's volume (2011) sets a ground for debate around the nature of ethnicity of cultural practices in a globalized context. This is a deeply complex topic elaborately addressed by Said (2003, first published in 1978) Appadurai (1990) and Clifford (2013), but has not been discussed enough in relation to dance. My view of the possibility to de-colonize anthropology in a globalised, post-colonial context, arguably an unfinished endeavour is informed by these texts and is a topic that will be further investigated in the future. My interest in this subject includes an exploration of critiques of post-colonial theory which argue that the "preoccupation with 'identities' and dismantling of the ideological and cultural legacy of colonialism have masked the continuing dominance of global capitalism" (Dirlik 1994 in Bush 2006). Therefore, engaging with claims suggesting the de-colonization of dance anthropology with a critical stance is considered pertinent.

To further clarify my position, I find Davida's (2011) political positioning of a practitioner-researcher study into western concert dance forms useful and refreshing as long as the researcher retains the same interest in understanding cultural forms of movement beyond their own. I, therefore, argue that a preoccupation with examining the ethnicity of western cultural practices by westerners themselves only, might conceal a risk for another kind of ethnocentricity that would require reflection. My position as ethnographer with regards to this point is illustrated in my reflections offered in Appendix 4.

I also embrace Grau's clarification that "anthropology in general, and the anthropology of dance specifically, are concerned with the tension between cultural norms and human creativity, between socio-historical constraints and

human agency” (1999: 165). My choices in practice reflect a humanist and anthropological interest. The reverse is also true in that practice has inspired and developed a humanist and anthropological perspective. Choices in practice and in methodology reflect a value system and a vision of humanity shaped by my academic and cultural references. Moral and legal philosopher Martha Nussbaum’s (2011) critique on empathy clarifying that “one may have empathy but not have the right values” resonates with my approach as an anthropologist and educator. It also resonates with my understanding of the notion of intersubjectivity (Clark 2013, Garrett-Brown 2011). I take somatics as a liberating experience and not one that requires complying with an aesthetic value or dress code in order to be accepted or acknowledged by the community of practitioners. Therefore, small acts of critical resistance informs the kinds of traits I have chosen to inherit by the somatic movement evident both in my personal life and in my practice, in things I choose to do or not.

The political basis of my work is informed by a leftist orientation and a mixture of humanist, Marxist and feminist perspectives. These are ideologies I have engaged with directly or through osmosis and participation in artistic movements that are grounded on these references including the somatic movement or, earlier in my career, community dance. My understanding of a democratic society is shaped by interpretations of early (ancient Greek) articulations of democracy as offered by Greek philologists. Although a lot of my references have affinities with feminist theory and I have endorsed conceptual positions of this theoretical field, this aspect is not directly employed in the research. In keeping with an interest to contribute towards resolving binary oppositions including the male/female divide, I therefore focus on a humanist perspective.

In the realm of acts of political resistance resides my interest in sustaining an allowance for people’s emotions and emotional expression in a western culture and capitalist system that works to disregard or de-value them in the name of efficiency and undisturbed productivity. Martha Nussbaum’s articulation of the role and value of emotions in political life (2013) expresses aspects of my interest in this.

To summarise, sections 2.2 to 2.4 offer discussions of the different conceptual and methodological standpoints that constitute the anthropological approach taken up in this research. Section 2.2 outlined the way an ethnographic methodology has been employed to respond to the specific anthropological question this research asks, following Grau's (1993) distillation. Section 2.3 placed sources such as Csordas (1994a) and Clark (2013) in dialogue with each other. In doing so it introduced to the way the embodiment paradigm, as outlined by the Csordas, has formed the lens through which: a. I examine BMC® and somatic-informed dance in this research, b. I see the relationship between the body and culture. Section 2.4 introduced to the way the specific dance anthropological approaches this research draws upon. Through thematic discussions, it has also outlined: a. the choices made in the way language is used in this thesis, b. the sites that have constituted the field in this research, c. my approach in negotiating tensions in my role as insider and outsider in the field, and d. reflective declarations about my positioning as an anthropologist and practitioner in this project. The sections that follow analyse the historical dimensions of the research and further distil what constituted my practice.

2.5. Merging the Historic with the Ethnographic: Some Methodological Considerations

This research forms a synchronic investigation of a historical moment viewed through an anthropological prism. This combination has proved to be a stimulating task that raised a number of reflections on western culture. This research partly follows the methodological example of Cynthia Bull's (formerly Novack 1990) ethnographic history of the early years of the contact improvisation community as a social movement. The combination of history and ethnography allowed Bull to reveal a temporal specificity of an era in dance. She examines contact improvisation as a social movement that emerged in a particular socio-historical moment, in the 1960s in America. Quoting Bull (Novack), Sklar (2000: 71) discusses:

A "kinesthetic ambiance" exists in movement experience, Novack writes, "which helps to create and which calls up the ethos and mise-en-scène of a particular time" (138). Contact improvisation was a way of moving that embodied the "touchy-feely, group encounter"(160) ambiance of the era.

In some respects, it may be argued that the somatic movement is another manifestation of the same ambiance as both developed in the same socio-historical as well as political and philosophical context and shared a similar aesthetic. Arguably, BMC® also informed the development of aspects of contact improvisation as a practice and vice versa. Leading contact improvisation practitioners such as Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith had an ongoing dialogue with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen since the 1970s, often as part of early documentations of the practice of BMC® presented in the contact improvisation community magazine, *Contact Quarterly*. Nelson has been living with the inventor of Contact Improvisation, Steve Paxton, for nearly a decade and together with Smith have been lifelong companions and collaborators. For example, the influence of the BMC® material on the exploration of the reflexes is evident in a documentary on Contact Improvisation titled *Fall after Newton* (Christiansen et al: 1987).

A number of dance historians and scholars have contributed to the research of the period between the 70s and today, namely Stephanie Jordan (1992), Judith Mackrell (1992), Roger Copeland (1983a & b), Sally Banes (1987), Ramsay Burt (2006), Sarah Whatley (2005), Whatley in collaboration with Varney and Bennett (2009) and others. Placing key texts that have significantly shaped our understanding of the period discussed in dialogue with each other has allowed for reflections on conceptual and terminology issues. Some of these reflections are further articulated in Chapter 4 in order to illustrate the context where somatic-informed dance emerged and to situate it in a historic era. In doing so, I suggest that perhaps by maintaining a perspective that resists confining periods to labels would open up the space for analysis and allow for more data that show interconnections rather than distinctions to be drawn, thereby noticing similarities and differences in the way authors name practices, forms, historic periods or even genres.

One of the re-current debates about the period investigated is the distinction between what constitutes post-modern dance and where this differs from New Dance, independent and experimental dance sectors. This is a topic discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. The methodological choices made as part of the historiographic analysis for this thesis endeavoured to address the issue of labelling in order to identify and examine which aspects of contemporary dance in Britain were influenced by the somatic movement. Beyond chronological synchronicity, the practices examined share processes and principles, but differ in focus and aesthetic criteria as well as function within the context in which they operate. Principles and practices shared between aspects of contemporary dance and somatic practices, with particular emphasis on BMC®, begin to be discussed in Chapter 4 and are further analysed in Chapter 5.

As an example of the methodological issue explored, here is an exchange between sources regarding the development of aspects of contemporary dance in Britain. Jordan (1992) examines the work of Strider, the X6 collective and the emergence of the New Dance movement in Britain and makes one of the most significant historical contributions on this period to date. She clarifies that she does not offer an overview of the movements, but a close examination of organisations and artists who led the way in the development of an alternative movement to the Graham-derived tradition in Britain. A year earlier, Judith Mackrell, in *Post-Modern Dance in Britain: An Historical Essay* raises a similar kind of debate. She offers an overview of the movement influenced by the work of Sally Banes whilst critically engaging with David Michael Levin's insights on post-modernism in dance. Mackrell identifies Richard Alston, Rosemary Butcher and Limited Dance company as post-modern. She clarifies that what distinguishes them as such is their sources and not chronologically their position in the history of British dance (Mackrell 1991: 47). She notes the lineage between post-modern dancers and Cunningham, the American minimalists, American improvisation practice and release work introduced in England by Mary Fulkerson.

Jordan argues that, as an artist who has participated in the early stages of the X6 collective, Butcher's work is also related to New Dance practice. However, Butcher's work establishes a distance from some of the X6 experiments. In a documentation of a conversation with the artist, Jordan documents Butcher's criticisms on the "unfinished" nature of much of the work shown at X6. Here the artist states: "people didn't work long enough at things" (Butcher in Jordan, 1992: 85). Mackrell describes the aesthetic characteristics of the artist's work and notes her influence on other artists:

Butcher's work, improvisatory, understated, scrupulously composed, eschewing hard-core technique in its calm, minimalist vocabulary, set the tone for a whole strand of British post-modern work - influencing and meshing with choreographers like Dennis Greenwood and Miranda Tufnell, Sue MacLennan, the early work of Ashley Page and Jonathan Burrows.

(Mackrell 1991: 48)

Banes' methodological approach, in her seminal work on post-modern dance in the USA, has been, in many respects, adopted here as it takes into consideration artists' own identification with eras and genres. Jordan's and Mackrell's work complement each other in a stimulating way.

There is a difference in the historical terminology used between scholarly disciplines. Historians argue against the use of the term post-modern. However, dance scholars like Banes, Jordan and Mackrell have explicitly used this term. This is both the result of historians' and critics' need to differentiate between periods and practices, but also follows the way artists call themselves. A number of disagreements become apparent and the lack of consensus amongst dance scholars problematises the attempt to label a practice.

Mackrell argues that over-dogmatic classification such as that of David Michael Levin is problematic. She suggests distinctions in artists' work according to the focus of each piece and nature of their work. In that way, she opposes to sweeping categorizations of an artist's work under only one label. Levin is also criticised for using terminology that is not accepted. He seems to

embrace historians' view (such as Hobsbawm 1994) that the avant-garde died in the mid – 20th century.

This appears as a somewhat logical debate since the particular artistic era has shown a pluralism and diversity never before experienced in history. To raise this issue, Eric Hobsbawm (1994: 287-288), wittingly, argues:

When people face what nothing in their past has prepared them for they grope for words to name the unknown, even when they can neither define nor understand it. Some time in the third quarter of the century we can see this process at work among the intellectuals of the West. The keyword was the small preposition 'after', generally used in its latinized form 'post' as a prefix to any of the numerous terms which had, for some generations, been used to mark our mental territory of the twentieth-century life. The world, or its relevant aspects, became post-industrial, post-imperial, post-modern, post-structuralist, post-Marxist, post-Gutenberg, or whatever. Like funerals, these prefixes took official recognition of death without implying any consensus or indeed certainty about the nature of life after death.

It seems, however, that some consensus exists with regards to the nature of dance in the different phases of post-modernism and New and Independent dance in Britain. However, the nature of work and the distinctions in definitions would require further analysis and debate from diverse perspectives and by different scholars. Distinct methodological questions have been encountered with the application of each conceptual framework employed in this thesis. Dance historian Alexandra Carter (2003) has offered a useful introduction and overview of methodology in the historiographic process.

The combination of the historiographic and ethnographic lenses has allowed for an identification of the philosophical ground on which somatic work developed. This provided some ground for understanding: what the emergence of somatics as a social movement says about the western contemporary world and its needs; the way socially constructed movement systems emerge out of influences such as a moment in history and its events, culture and systems of thought and, finally, what somatics as approaches to movement say about us as humans and about embodiment as a lived

phenomenon. These questions raised particular methodological concerns relating to historiography and the limitations of linear representation of influences and progression of ideas. As it will be shown in the section that follows, a way to address these issues was to experiment with different means of portraying developments in dance during a certain period besides historiographic writing.

2.5.1. BeeDocs Timeline – 3D as a Thinking Tool

The process of examining theoretical approaches to historical events in relation to each other revealed overlaps, intersections and tensions. Identifying and, where possible, resolving tensions, has been a fruitful process. To identify intersections and address tensions and issues of categorisation, the need of a software emerged that would have a level of sophistication which would allow these to become visible in a format that is navigationally feasible. There was also the need for the inclusion of data in multimedia format which served as primary data and which could be used in an interactive way. The choice of the software was also informed by my teaching practice and an interest in e-learning resources that facilitate an engaging learning experience for dance students. To support the analysis of historic data, I experimented with various types of software. BeeDocs Timeline-3D appeared, initially, to be the one that allowed for most of the desired schematic representation to take place. The software has been used firstly as a thinking tool and secondly as a method of documentation. Initially, the choice of the software was based on the need for it to reflect my way of seeing the history of dance as situated artistically, historically, culturally and politically. It is based on the need to see events and artists' work in relation to each other whilst placed in a chronological order.

The requirement for a schematic representation of influences and connections was researched in an effort to portray exchange whilst maintaining clarity. The visual representation became of value to the research as in my view it offered the possibility for visualising the situatedness of people and practices and the ground on which culturally constructed movement systems were formed. The diagram accompanying Eddy's article in the first issue of the *Journal of Dance*

and Somatic Practices (2009) seen in Figure 4 below is an example of an attempt to represent schematically the intricate interrelations between systems of thought, cultures and practices or cultural products.

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Figure 4. Eddy's diagram portraying founders of somatic training programmes and their influences (2009: 24).

Although this is a rich resource, one is directly struck by its multilayered appearance. It also does not clearly demonstrate what philosophical or cultural context concepts came from in each method. With this illustration, Eddy offers a significant first attempt to address the scholarly and analytic need of lineage and legacy. In the same article, Eddy begins to document some significant developments in the presence of somatics in Britain offering an historical overview which is, however, by no means exhaustive.

The schematic representation of influences may be useful in the first instance as they provide a reach source of data. But influences are much less linear. In the context of researching the growth of the somatic movement, it is often the case that somatic as well as dance practitioners interested in the somatic approach have not only taken part in one practitioner's approach or method.

For example, Bainbridge Cohen (2015) spoke of a number of practitioners who have trained with her and are not represented as linking to her in some way in Eddy's diagram. For example, she states:

Eric Franklin...completed the four-year training to become a BMC® practitioner between 1995-1998. Jamie McHugh has studied with me off and on for more than twenty years through not in training. Seymour Kleinman and I were class mates at Ohio State University (1964-65). I also was a guest in his programme at OSU. Two of his doctoral graduates are graduates of BMC®.

This is not to say that diagrams have to provide the whole picture. Already Eddy's diagram may be viewed as illustrating to an extent the non-linear nature of exchange which is of particular interest to this project. People's notion of embodiment, their perception of their bodies as well as their practices evolve through exploration and exchange with others. In the interest of discussing how this social movement evolved, it is also useful to be reminded that part of the nature of dance as an art form is that artists take part in a variety of workshops thereby exchanging ways of working, language, somatic, dance and creative experiences with various practitioners.

The identification of lineage as a way of capturing a historical period in the development of somatic-informed dance practice in Britain was at times a complex process. During fieldwork, I came across cases of artists who choose not to mention influential practitioners they have worked with. This may have been due to the fact that certain approaches are more foregrounded in their memory as influential to their practice than others. But it may also have been due to professional rivalries or a professional criticism to someone's practice. Similar constraints were encountered by Novack (1990) in her ethnographic-history of Contact Improvisation which has inspired aspects of the methodological approach taken up in this research.

As part of this research, with an interest in finding alternative means of representing history, the historiographic approaches of Sally Banes, Stephanie Jordan and Judith Mackrell informed the construction of parallel timelines on BeeDocs Timeline 3D software with events noted on each

timeline as referred and classified by authors. Parallel timelines, describing events that occurred at different times and in different places, have been placed on top of each other. Terminology and descriptions used in each timeline are grounded on each historian's or critic's perspective of the history of the past forty years. Timelines present events which occurred in America since the 1950s, as well as events which occurred in Britain since the 1960s termed as New Dance and Post-modern by Jordan and Mackrell respectively.

Digitisation and interactivity allowed for the analysis of data in multimedia formats (video, sound, photos etc.) emanating the aesthetic essence of the era. It offered an immersion to the aesthetic of the styles emerging, a multisensory experience and allowed for an embodied way of engaging with data and linearity. It supported the organisation of data and allowed for some level of navigational ease, although this had its own restrictions. It could become an engaging interface and ultimately a learning resource offering flexibility in the format it is being presented. However, due to its linearity, and particularly in presenting parallel timelines, identifying the links and navigating between events or artists could become a visually rather confusing task and was not always possible. The engagement with Bee-Docs Timeline 3D helped develop historiographic concerns while allowing for a more detailed investigation into connections between practices and artists.

The perspective of dance history has allowed for situating the somatic practices in artistic, historical, cultural and political context. It has also informed the identification of: a) the pioneers of the somatic movement, b) of links and influences between events, artists and their sources, and c) of working principles and philosophies and of aesthetic values. The historical perspective has also supported the process of drawing lineage between the development of the somatic movement and post-modern/New Dance in Britain. Claid's autobiographical documentation of the history of New Dance has also illuminated some of the shared, amongst artists and somatic practitioners, principles of practice and points towards the gaps in our analysis of that period.

The series of timelines and the terminology issues surrounding a linear representation of something as organic as the emergence of a 'socially-constructed movement system' in Grau's terms, informed the decision to prioritise the examination of principles shared amongst artists and somatic dance practitioners in Britain as opposed to chronologically ordering events. This tool facilitated the identification of principles, values and philosophy of practice as evident in somatic work and adopted by contemporary, New and/or Independent dance practitioners. However, it was considered restrictive with regards to its representational potential. The requirement to develop an immersive environment portraying in some form the lived experience of engaging with influences and culture, of making artistic choices and the non-linear way this occurs was not full-filled by this tool. This historiographic and analytic process also raised methodological issues around the construction of a history, notions of subjectivity and non-exhaustiveness.

Indeed any linear representation lacks the capacity to schematically represent the permeability of methods, ideas and concepts including the use of timelines. Therefore, the anthropological perspective and question around the emergence of culture could not be fulfilled through a linear historic account or representation. My exploration with BeeDocs Timeline 3D led to insightful information regarding terminology as applied in the historical accounts examined in relation to each other. It also allowed an examination of the 'synchronic' (Novack 1990 after Sahlins 1981, 1985) and lineage in a detailed fashion which, in turn, led to a need for a different means of representation, which will be further explored in future stages of this research.

The exploration of the socio-political and cultural context of the last four decades has informed the interpretation of both the concepts the somatic movement endorsed and those that it resisted. In doing so, the historical investigation was used to illuminate anthropological questions such as the way somatics as a social movement form a 'synchronic' (Sahlins 1981) manifestation of the ways 'socially-constructed movement systems' (Grau, 1993) emerge through the organic interplay between embodied experience and collective practice. This approach is situated within trends in social history

that discuss social movement and groups, analysing everyday events and relationships in people's lives as repositories of larger cultural conditions. It follows the line of thought of anthropological currents that look at history as strands of culture in time instead of an ongoing narrative. This frame in anthropology combined synchronic and diachronic analyses, thereby tracing cultural and social structures through time. In dance anthropology, Novack (1990) follows the same tradition informed by the discussions of Sahlins (1981, 1985) and Bloch (1986) on this topic. Methodological and conceptual choices have been made to also inform an examination into a cross-cultural response to the somatic movement and how the meeting points of participants reflect a social response to western culture.

2.6. Practice-led Research: A Reflexive Outline

This section builds on from the introduction to my approach to practice offered in section 1.3 in two ways. Firstly, it outlines the theoretical ground on which my role as a practitioner-researcher was shaped with reference to key sources. Secondly, it provides more detail on the settings in which I taught and briefly outlines the way my approach to practice led to choices made around themes discussed in this thesis.

My 'practitioner-researcher' role has been specifically grounded on practice-led research methodology, as articulated by Carol Gray (1996 and 2006) and Brad Haseman (2007) after Gray (1996). I have also been informed by Efrosini Protopapa's (2011: 13, emphasis in the original) exploration of "*some of the specificities of the relationship between performance practice research and theory, but also between practice-led research and the professional arts scene*". Her insightful desire "to allow for a tension to exist between the two and perhaps be able then to 'get on with it'" (Protopapa 2011: 103) is embraced. The notion of practice-led research is employed here as an "ongoing and persistent practice" enabling "practitioners to initiate and then pursue their research through practice" (Haseman 2007: 147). Clarifications around the position that practice occupies in research and in advancing knowledge have been usefully outlined by Baz Kershaw's formulation of the

terms ‘practice-based’ and ‘practice-as-research’. Kershaw summarises a distinction between the two and supports the value of a combination of these approaches. He states:

I take *practice-based research* to refer to research *through* live performance practice, to determine how and what it may be contributing in the way of new knowledge or insights in fields other than performance. Hence, practice-based research may be pursued for many purposes – historical, political, aesthetic, etc. – and so researchers may not need to be theatre scholars to pursue it. By *practice-as-research* [italics in the original] I refer to research *into* [italics in the original] performance practice, to determine how that practice may be developing new insights into or knowledge about the forms, genres, uses, etc., of performance itself, for example with regard to their relevance to broader social and/or cultural processes. Again performance practice may be investigated through practice-as-research for many purposes, but the researcher(s) will need to be in some sense a creative performance practitioner(s) in order to pursue this type of research.

(Kershaw, 2002: 138, italics in the original)

Following Protopapa’s suggestion (2011), I employ the term ‘practice-led’ research as a model of enquiry found somewhere between the terms Kershaw proposes, “a model that searches for insights both *about performance itself* and in other fields of knowledge *through* performance practice” (Protopapa 2011: 104). The way I have engaged with the reflective aspect of my ‘insider-outsider’ role, as discussed in section 2.4.3 above, is also through practice.

My approach to practice-led methodology involves a variation of what this form of research might encompass given the nature and focus of my practice as part of this project. As opposed to a live performance event, my position and role in the facilitation of somatic informed dance studio practice or somatic informed creative and improvisation sessions aiming to prepare dancers or interdisciplinary performers for performance is examined. This focus offered the opportunity for the development of an approach drawing from a wide range of artistic, pedagogic and theoretical references. In the first instance, each of the settings I practiced outlined below could be regarded as educational and, therefore, perhaps demanding an educational methodological approach. However, especially in the context of the sessions

offered in preparation for an interdisciplinary performer, the ephemeral nature of this exchange between myself and participants and the deeply creative processes we both engaged in have been viewed to relate more to a dance making process rather than a confined traditional educational setting. I therefore saw my pedagogic approach as a creative encounter some times reaching a form of sharing and other times not.

The shaping of what in an educational discourse would be called as learning objectives in each setting was informed by the community of participants and context and by artistic and anthropological considerations of what the somatic approach might offer to an aspiring performer and to a dance making process. My own creativity was also nurtured and quenched by some of these exchanges as material offered in sessions most often responded to participants' *processes*. In this respect, there are findings that have been integrated with and disseminated through my approach to practice not available in written form. However, some issues addressed in practice have been selected for theoretical analysis in this thesis as relevant to the main themes explored in this format. With respect to the ephemeral nature of both 'the field' in ethnographic research and somatic informed creative dance practice, I chose not to create a class scenario in which to be examined and therefore submitted a written account.

Practice included teaching at dance departments in Higher Education Institutions in the UK and, in Greece, at a music department and a department of audio-visual arts. The focus of my practice as part of this research has been two-fold. First, explorations were driven by an interest in the ways with which BMC® may complement the process of development of a somatically informed pedagogic approach and ways with which to cultivate the contemporary dancer. As explained in section 1.3, my practice evolved while this research was in progress. Following my curiosity around the applicability of the somatic approach to pedagogy and on what the emphasis on embodiment offers, I gradually explored other avenues of practice both in Britain and in Greece.

My engagement and explorations of different applications of the somatic approach to movement pedagogy informed the identification of principles and tools characteristic to the somatic approach and the understanding of their impact to participants. Practice was driven by my curiosity around the impact the somatic emphasis on embodiment has on people and on the way they experience and perceive of their bodies and movement differently after a somatic-informed session. As explained in section 1.3, I have noted that, in essence, the principles and tools used in each of these contexts are essentially the same and that it is on the nature of these tools that impact is based. It is this understanding, that led me to a process of identifying and discussing tools and principles in this thesis. The same realisation drove my curiosity around the way these principles may shift dualist perceptions (Chapter 6).

However, to respond to the aims of this thesis, discussions are focused around and speak to the British story. Only very few examples of responses by participants in Greece are used as data in Chapter 6 where they support an ontological argument that is relevant for both cultural contexts. In other words, I chose to allow for my practice to evolve without restricting it in terms of application and cultural context and observe what this would bring to the argumentation. The multiplicity of contexts and applications informed insights on the following themes:

- a. identification of the particular way embodiment is approached in the somatic movement and somatic-informed dance
- b. allowed for observations around what the emphasis on embodiment offers to dance through the particular tools and principles employed in the somatic approach
- c. made the non-linear way for the evolution of somatic-informed dance more practice palpable
- d. it also deepened an understanding of boundaries between cultural and geographic contexts as perhaps illusive in the age of globalisation.

In the UK, research and observations began with a module titled “Preparation for Performance” that I led at Liverpool John Moores University and which

included the direction of a choreographic project for 1st year students. Following my own influences choreographically and pedagogically, the creative process was grounded on notions of *emergent form* and entailed creative task setting that drew from a post-modern approach to dance making. It also drew from BMC® as a tool for *sourcing from* the body, for movement material generation and for developing a series of skills³³ considered useful for the contemporary performer. In workshops taught as part of *studio practice* or other modules with an emphasis on developing creative skills for performance or dance making processes, teaching was seen as a creative encounter with students and incorporated principles and pedagogic processes further analysed in Chapter 5.

The creative and pedagogic approaches employed aimed to enhance creativity and were grounded on the belief that cultivating an ability to embrace a 'sense of self' may be the source of uninhibited creation. Together with other colleagues, we saw this quality to be the source for empowering development of the artist and for challenging norms in their artistic work through discoveries of identifiable styles. The discovery of a sense of 'individual'³⁴ style is considered to be a natural repercussion of attending to a 'sense of self'. The notion of the 'sense of self' is often used by somatic-informed dance practitioners. Without offering explicit definitions, practitioners imply that the phrase encompasses a sense of attunement to the self. Qualities often cultivated through the somatic approach entail the performer's ability to *inhabit the space*, to emit a sense of *embodied presence* whilst *being in the moment*. A performer's ability to be *embodied* and *in the moment* was found to enable responsiveness during performance. Responsiveness requires attunement and attentiveness to the moment and the environment,

³³ Although critical debates exist around skill-based education, particularly in light of somatically informed pedagogy, I use the term here in the interest of clarity. I use it also as a means to acknowledge the tension occurring from the institutionalization of somatic forms during a time when Higher Education, in Britain in particular, is increasingly focusing on a quantitative, skill-based model. Discussions and data from the field has also shown that although somatic informed dance practitioners might not outline explicitly performance skills acquired from this approach. However, they do outline learning outcomes describing performers' attributes in student handbooks as required by an HE institution in Britain. Following data found in the field, a discussion of attributes valued in a contemporary dance performer is offered mainly in Chapter 5, as relevant to the argumentation.

³⁴ I purposefully aim to avoid the use of contested words such as 'unique' or 'original'.

and a level of liberation that allows for an impulsive, organic response through movement. It is a quality of particular significance in choreographic work that entails improvisation during performance. It is also a topic of particular artistic merit often addressed in practice and amongst colleagues that warrants further attention.

In collaboration with the Regional and Municipal Theatre³⁵ in Corfu, I taught a series of master-classes titled "The *Soma* as a Resource Initiating Interpretation in the Performing Arts" (one in October 2012, February and March 2013). From March to mid-April 2014, I was invited to run six weekly half-day workshops on a subject of my choice. The sessions were aimed to lead to a form of informal sharing as a means to offer participants the opportunity to understand and reflect on their own attributes as performers and the way this approach might inform qualities of performance. Due to schedule restrictions of the Regional and Municipal Theatre, the sharing did not take place, but participants had the opportunity to develop movement scores based on somatic explorations, to experience the process of devising for performance and reflect on the differences between this approach and other more traditional approaches they had mainly experienced.

The workshops introduced interdisciplinary artists with an interest in performance to some of the concepts explored through somatically informed creative approaches to performance training. Participants entailed, dancers, actors, musicians, a psychologist who was also an emerging play writer, school teachers and a lawyer with interest in the performing arts. The content of the workshops were shaped by myself and formed part of an emerging approach to interdisciplinary performance training that is in progress as an outcome of observing the potentiality of somatic principles and tools in practice.

My role in the facilitation of movement sessions for non-dancers was also examined. With an interest in exploring the applicability of the somatic

³⁵ For an introduction to the cultural context and to the organization, please see Appendix 5.

approach in a different cultural context and for non-performers, since October 2012 and in collaboration with a Pilates studio, I established a private practice in Corfu where I facilitated somatically informed movement workshops, somatically informed Pilates based sessions and BMC® for small groups or on a one-to-one basis for more than 20 hours a week. This was in collaboration with a Pilates instructor and a Yoga practitioner with who we shared the same space. As part of this, a collaboration was established with two orthopedist doctors, one of which I also taught. Another dimension of the practice was encountered here.

A number of participants in this context initially interested in Pilates, have taken part hoping to ease different symptoms deriving from musculoskeletal conditions, tension in the abdomen area, as well as nervous system degenerative disease such as multiple sclerosis. Collaborations with doctors are still emerging. In all cases, my position was declared as an educator with some knowledge of ways one may find ease in movement and, perhaps, ways one may have more pleasurable experiences with one's body. I have meticulously declared that the sessions offered are not therapy or a form of 'treatment' as derives from my SME title and the emphasis of the programme. However, the blurred boundaries between education and therapy have been a re-current issue that requires much attention and investigation from this emerging field³⁶. Facilitation in every context is aimed to cultivate participants' understanding and sensing of their bodies and their ability to self-manage tension and holding. A wealth of cases and data have offered insight into this approach's potentiality, only some of which are analysed and discussed in this thesis.

Theoretically informed practice has been a dynamic process of exploration developing knowledge that has been relevant for the facilitation of sessions, of which only a small part is analysed here. Painter's formulation of practice as a mode of research has resonated with my practice-led approach. As Painter argues:

³⁶ Please see conclusion for a summary of my engagement with this issue. Findings from an inquiry into this topic will be disseminated following this research project.

The acceptance of practice as a mode of research acknowledges that there are fundamental epistemological issues that can only be addressed in and through practice — that practice ‘can be both a form of research and a legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available.

(Painter 1996 cited in Piccini 2002/3: 2)

Findings of the research are becoming publicly available in most forms of facilitation offered as they inform my outlook to participants’ learning process and the pedagogic tools employed.

Practice-led research, as outlined above, informed the research process in various ways. Most importantly it generated and allowed for a non-linear process of analysis and reaching to conclusions. Themes or issues that emerged as of significance during practice were analysed and discussed through the conceptual lenses outlined in each chapter and then explored again in practice following the outcomes of analysis in writing. Identifying the conceptual lenses that would be most suitable for the kinds of answers required was the product of an exploration and dialogue between theory and practice. There appears to be a temporal difference between resolving tensions or questions in a written account and in practical work. At times, starting with explorations of hypothesis/conclusions in practice before the analysis had taken place was needed. There were instances it became imperative to prioritise finding answers and solutions to issues encountered in practice before the thesis was written linearly from beginning to end. This meant that chapters were written back to front instead.

2.7. Introducing a Vocabulary of Embodiment as Encountered in the Field.

This section works to clarify a series of terms that are often used in the field with some understanding but often with a lack of clarity around their meaning, the relationship between them or where they came from. To attempt a risky categorising, the terms introduced in this section contribute to further understanding aspects of the experience of being embodied, factors that affect our experience of having a body. They are factors that affect the

‘phenomenal experience’ of movement and the body. That is they affect the way a person senses and perceives of their movement and the body from a first-person perspective.

Clarifying what the phenomenal experience might entail, Anna Pakes explains that it may involve: “the sensation of the muscles tightening in the shoulder as the arm lifts, the feeling of tension between the arm reaching up and the legs rooted in the ground, the sense that the surrounding air offers resistance to the gesture” (2006: 87). In this section, I draw from different fields and texts in an attempt to offer some clarification on some of these terms and their relation. This is not to imply that I will attempt an account aiming to explain how embodiment works, although a number of questions around this are inevitably induced and will inform future research in the field. However, to consider how embodiment functions has been the subject of scientific inquiries in a broad spectrum of fields including anthropology, neurosciences, cognitive sciences, psychology and phenomenology. A seminal account that attempts this and offers significant clarifications on the subject of embodiment is Shaun Gallagher’s (2005) *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. This source will support the construction of terms offered here.

The somatic movement, and in particular BMC®, although interested in this concept and claiming to heighten the role of embodiment, is more concerned with the experience of it rather than explaining how it is possible. As deriving from the goals of this research, this thesis is concerned with illustrating how embodiment is approached, experienced, or else, practiced in somatics. As it will be illustrated in Chapter 3, the somatic approach of BMC® focuses on facilitating experiences of what it feels like to ‘embody’ an anatomic system or body-part. In doing so, BMC® uses “embodiment processes” that involve conscious explorations of anatomic structures facilitated through a series of pedagogic tools such as movement (mostly improvisation), touch (hands-on practice), sound (using the vibration of the voice to *awaken* body tissue), imagery and a process called ‘somatization’ defined below.

Bainbridge Cohen outlines the process of embodiment as follows: “The process of embodiment is a being process not a doing process. It is not a thinking process; it is an awareness process in which the guide and witness dissolve into cellular consciousness” (2001: page not available). With the terms ‘guide’ and ‘witness’ she refers to the intentional focus, cultivated in BMC®, that guides action and explorations and the intentional attention to the body that heightens awareness of the body. That way she begins to break down the process of consciously attending to the body, what it involves and where it leads the participant.

In phenomenological terms, one could say that BMC® attempts to use perception to lead to a pre-reflective state of bodily experience that Bainbridge Cohen calls ‘cellular consciousness’. Attempting to simplify, it suggests that it uses conscious explorations with attention and the body to lead to a pre-conscious state of being that involves a heightened presence of the body. With the term ‘cellular consciousness’, she refers to a state of being that involves an awakened sense of the bodily tissue and an understanding of bodily tissue as structure that has a different state of consciousness. This is a controversial conceptualisation of the physiology of the body that begins to gain purchase in discussions around consciousness. Bainbridge Cohen (2015 during workshop in Patras, Greece) explains that in the past five years she has participated in interdisciplinary discussions on the subject of consciousness during which each member such as neuroscientists, philosophers and herself expressed their own positions and thoughts. But she clarifies the dialogue has not yet gone in depth or detail conceptually.

Continuing to outline the process of embodiment she refers to two steps in the embodiment process that lead to embodiment. These are ‘visualization’ and ‘somatization’. As she explains:

Visualization is the process by which the brain imagines (visualizes) aspects of the body and informs the body that it (the body) exists. In this process there is a director or guide.

Somatization is the process by which the kinesthetic (movement) and tactile (touch) sensory systems inform the body that it (the body) exists. In this process there is a witness – an inner awareness of the process.

(Bainbridge Cohen 2001: page not available, emphasis in the original)

In BMC®, the notion of ‘somatization’ is not only a process, but also refers to a pedagogic tool that involves the participant(s) lying, generally with eyes closed, in a comfortable position while receiving a form of guidance to a somatic experience. Explaining the origin of the term ‘somatization’, Bainbridge Cohen (2015) explains: “Thomas Hanna was part of our somatic group that gathered at Esalen [Institute]. I coined the word ‘somatization’ based upon his coining of the word ‘somatic’”. In the first edition of her book *Sensing, Feeling and Action: The experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* (1993: 1), Bainbridge Cohen explains the term as follows:

I use [the] word ‘somatization’ to engage the kinesthetic experience directly, in contrast to ‘visualization’ which utilizes visual imagery to evoke a kinesthetic experience. Through somatization the body cells are informing the brain as well as the brain informing the cells.

In my experience, the practice of somatization deepened my attention to inner structures and sensory information that arrived to my consciousness through observation. The practitioner leads participants through descriptions and metaphoric language based on their own embodied experience to a journey of consciously visualising, observing and noticing inner anatomic structures or body tissue. Following the process of visualization I gradually developed an understanding that instead of thinking of inner structures as images, it helped me to try to ‘listen’ to the anatomic part or tissue. This helped me deepen my attention further. It is one of the tools used in BMC® that cultivate the ability to notice subtle changes in the body. It is also a tool that cultivates what Bainbridge Cohen calls the ‘witness’ in the quote offered earlier. Following the definitions of ‘visualization’ and ‘somatization’, Bainbridge Cohen then proceeds with a definition of embodiment offered in the introduction of this thesis in which the experiential basis of discoveries in this method is illustrated.

In referring to embodiment processes in this thesis, I look to a somatic way of working with embodiment as outlined by Bainbridge Cohen above. I also refer to embodiment processes as experiential explorations drawn from a somatic approach to movement education that may take place in a somatic-informed dance context and which involve specific pedagogic tools analysed in this thesis. The somatic-informed practitioner guides the participant in a number of ways using distinct tools some of which are introduced in Chapter 5.

Therefore, these explorations, as referred in this thesis as involving somatic principles and tools of working with the body such as voicing, hands-on, imagery and somatization.

Through the particular pedagogic tools an intentional and focused process of *awakening* the cells, tissues and the body unfolds which involves our attention. The notion of *awakening*, refers to a process of making the felt experience of bodily tissue available to the conscious mind, to perception. This initiates a process of heightening different types of awareness. For example, it could be argued that a fundamental objective of the somatic approach to movement education is to heighten kinesthesia - the body's capacity to sense its weight and itself in space through movement as indicated in Bainbridge Cohen's statement above.

Sheets-Johnstone (2011: 11) offers a treatise to kinesthesia stating:

As a formed and performed art, dance is grounded in the qualitative intricacies, complexities, and possibilities of human movement. Kinesthesia is in turn a sensory modality basic to the art of choreography and the art of dancing.

Clark (2013), however, does not fully accept the centrality of the role of kinesthesia to dance, but accepts two aspects of this modality that Sheets-Johnstone clarifies as a progression of Husserl's work. Clarke highlights the dynamics of movement, as categorized by Sheets-Johnstone (2011:123), and the 'two-foldedness' of kinesthesia as felt *and* as perceived (210, emphasis in the original). In doing so, he highlights the 'inner' and 'outer' components. As he explains "through kinesthesia, we experience directly our ability both to feel and to perceive our own movement" (Clark 2013: 211).

In the field, the notions of embodiment and kinesthesia are often referred to with a blurred definition or an implicit relationship between them. During practice I have noted that a cultivation of kinesthesia supports the process of 'becoming' embodied. With an interest in exploring the relationship between embodiment and kinesthesia, the role of the latter in somatic-informed dance is further mentioned in different parts of this thesis.

The cultivation of kinesthesia, as offered in somatic education, involves emphasizing the importance of this sense as fundamental to our being-in-the-world besides the five senses. Through conscious explorations in BMC® and somatic-informed dance practice our ability to be aware of this sense of the body is developed. It is, therefore, to the ability of attending to and being aware of kinesthesia that the term 'kinesthetic awareness' refers to. Kirsty Alexander (2003) speaks of a 'kinesthetic intelligence' cultivated through another somatic method, Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT). Drawing from Gardner (1993), she defines it as "a form of intelligence which develops and reveals itself through our bodily skills" (Alexander 2003: 3). She provides this explanation as a way of introducing the benefits of SRT for foregrounding dance's nature as a kinesthetic art form.

In an anthropology of the senses and an analysis of the way the senses are perceived in different cultures, Kathryn Linn Geurts (2002) argues that kinesthesia may be considered as the sixth sense that the Western European/Anglo-American culture has neglected to acknowledge. Bainbridge Cohen implies a similar criticism in her introduction to the senses in the handbook offered as part of the course "Senses and Perception I". Under the title "The Six Senses", Bainbridge Cohen offers an introduction to the physiology of and interrelation between touch and movement explaining:

Our senses begin as potential. They develop in response to experience.

The primary sense organs of touch and movement are located throughout the body – in every cell. Touch is emphasized in the skin; movement is emphasized in the proprioceptive and kinesthetic

receptors in the joints, ligaments, muscles and tendons; the interoceptors of the organs; and the vestibular mechanism of the inner ear.

Movement and touch develop simultaneously. Touch is the other side of movement. They are the shadow of each other.

(1988: page not available)

This statement provides with a BMC® specific explanation on the way the senses of touch and movement develop in relation to each other. To me, in this statement Bainbridge Cohen also identifies the way kinesthesia as a sense modality is physiologically made possible through different receptors and physiological mechanisms.

It is useful here to distinguish kinesthesia from proprioception. Reference to proprioception is made in Fortin 2009. Somatic practitioners (Albright 2012, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Jens Johansen and other practitioners whose workshops I have attended in the field) often argue that part of the efficacy of the somatic approach is found in its work with proprioception. However, it is a term that, to date, I have not found an adequately analytical explanation in the field or reference to the framework where the term is drawn from. Responding to this need, Gallagher (2005) offers a detailed analysis of the term and of complications that are relevant to the concept. Interested in the way embodiment functions, he looks through an interdisciplinary lens at the conscious and non-conscious dimensions of bodily experience and the way these interrelate. Specifically, he notes: “Proprioception signifies one of the specific areas where the distinction between phenomenal consciousness and physical body gets re-defined” (Gallagher 2005: 6). Noting the complexity of the phenomenon and the different meanings the term takes in different fields he states:

On the one hand, neuroscientists may treat somatic proprioception as an entirely subpersonal, non-conscious function – the unconscious registration in the central nervous system of the body’s own limb position. In this sense, it results in information about body posture and limb position, generated in physiological (mechanical) proprioceptors located throughout the body, reaching various parts of the brain, enabling control of movement without the subject being consciously aware of that information.

(Gallagher, 2005: 6-7)

He refers to Sherrington (1953) who uses proprioception in this way and who emphasizes the lack of awareness to neural events and proprioceptive activity. Specifically, according to Gallagher (2005), Sherrington maintains that “I perceive no trace of all this [proprioceptive activity]” given that I have no awareness of neural events which “register the tension at thousands of points they sample in the muscles, tendons, and ligaments of [a] limb”(Sherrington 1953, cited in Gallagher 2005: 7). The points Sherrington refers to appear to correspond with Bainbridge Cohen’s “proprioceptive and kinesthetic receptors in the joints, ligaments, muscles and tendons” (1988: page not available) mentioned earlier. There are two main differences here. First, our sense of movement is also informed by receptors found in the organs and by the vestibular system. Second, that through the practice of BMC®, Bainbridge Cohen claims that this information may be perceivable which for western mappings of the body appears controversial.

Following the approach to proprioception found in the neurosciences, Gallagher argues that psychologists and philosophers have a slightly different take on proprioception and sometimes treat the concept as a form of consciousness. For psychologists and philosophers, Gallagher notes: “One is said to be proprioceptively aware of one’s own body, to consciously know where one’s limbs are at any particular time as one moves through the world” (Gallagher 2005: 7). Sheets-Johnstone’s explanation of the concept relates to this approach, according to Gallagher. She states:

Proprioception refers to a sense of movement and position. It thus includes an awareness of movement and position through tactility as well as kinesthesia, that is through surface as well as internal events, including also a sense of gravitational orientation through vestibular sensory organs. Kinesthesia refers specifically to a sense of movement through muscular effort.

(Sheets-Johnstone 1998 cited in Gallagher 2005: 7)

Sheets-Johnstone’s articulation appears to resonate to some extent with Bainbridge Cohen’s inclusive approach, in that they both refer to a sense of movement that derives from different mechanisms, although the former’s

introduction to kinesthesia might be found limited in BMC® terms³⁷. “Thus...” Gallagher continues, “proprioception can mean either non-conscious *information* or a form of conscious *awareness*. Conceptually, I try to keep these different senses apart by maintaining the distinction between proprioceptive *information* and proprioceptive *awareness*, respectively” (2005: 7). Gallagher’s distinction is useful for understanding an aspect of BMC® which implies that through embodiment processes that work with proprioception, non-conscious *information* may be brought to conscious *awareness*. Gallagher’s explanation that “On the embodied experiential level...these two aspects of proprioception are fully integrated” (2006: 7) appears to me to resonate with the somatic approach. Perhaps, the emphasis the somatic approach to movement education places on experiential methods of integration of the body and mind with the aim to reach an embodied state of being-in-the-world, also explains the lack of clarity around the term proprioception encountered in the field. Gallagher’s explanations are endorsed in this thesis in understanding the notion of proprioception. The way the somatic approach to movement education cultivates a sense of integration will be further analysed in Chapter 6.

In the context of somatic movement education (following the title of the BMC® programme of study) and somatic-informed dance pedagogy, emphasis is very often placed in the field on the way the body has the capacity to know before ‘the mind’. It is suggested, that the body has the capacity to know without the conscious awareness being always essential in guiding the experience. This is implied in phrases offered as guidance in embodiment processes suggesting to ‘trust the body’ or in affirmations such as ‘the mind is the last to know’. Both of these statements were made during workshops I have taken part in. It is also often stressed that cognitive information is not the only form of knowledge possible. Somatic-informed dance practitioners as well as somatic practitioners often speak of an embodied or bodily knowledge referring to this capacity. To return to Csordas’ (1994a) introduction to ‘bodiliness’ earlier in the thesis, somatic-informed dance practitioners appear

³⁷ Please note that Sheets-Johnstone’s approach to kinesthesia quoted here is from an earlier publication to that of 2011 cited earlier in this chapter.

to add sentience and sensibility to the perception of self and person and introduce the dimension of materiality and the body in learning and in our capacity to understand. They introduce to experiential ways of understanding, learning or knowing 'through the body'. The notions of embodied or bodily knowledge as an aspect of embodiment and of the somatic movement will be elaborated in different ways through the body-based language that developed in somatic-informed dance that is introduced in the chapters that follow.

The rhetoric that developed in this community of practitioners employed terms from various fields. Some of the terms used may have been drawn from neurosciences, psychology, philosophy or other field. It is with the recent development of scholarly activity in the field of dance and somatic practices that the conceptual origin of terms is beginning to become clearer. Some of the concepts used in BMC® or indeed in somatic-informed dance, for example, are grounded on phenomenology but the source of this language is not necessarily acknowledged in the field as such. Additionally, as seen with the terms 'guide' and 'witness' in Bainbridge Cohen's quotes above, there might be conceptual commonalities between fields, in this case BMC® and phenomenology, but the function of perception might be described differently in the somatic method. This points to a process of osmosis between systems of thought and a rather complex system of knowledge exchange and transmission. To identify the conceptual home of terms may be useful in this stage of development of this professional field. It can help clarify where and how the somatic approach to dance education might impact and may gradually lead to further our epistemological understanding.

The vocabulary introduced in this section presents dimensions of embodiment that may provide some insights on how the somatic approach to embodiment has impacted on somatic-informed dance practice. As explained, examples of this interface in this thesis are drawn from New and Independent dance in Britain. The vocabulary introduced forms an introductory conceptual map that firstly may offer some insights on the nature of the person, often referred abstractly as the *self*. Secondly, it may begin to frame how movement and bodily experience is impacted upon in somatic-informed dance.

As Gallagher argues,

In some fashion, quite obviously, the human person is embodied in human form and matter. The human body, and the way it structures human experience, also shapes the human experience of self, and perhaps the very possibility of developing a sense of self. If the self is anything more than this, it is nonetheless and first of all this, an embodied self.

(Gallagher 2005: 3)

Conversely, a practice that focuses on heightening the role of embodiment not only in dancing but in being human, as in the somatic approach to movement education, has the potential of impacting upon or shifting one's sense of self (please see earlier reference to this in section 2.6). The somatic approach cultivates certain aspects of embodiment discussed in this section which may gradually lead to an altered sense of self, a claim often made by somatic-informed dance practitioners. Based on this claim, the abstracted reference to the notion of 'sense of self' found in the field will be further indicated in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodological and conceptual framework employed for the investigation of somatic work as part of this thesis. Based on a post-structuralist anthropological perspective, it begins to raise key themes that emerged from ethnographic data collection and an exploration of the history of interrelation between somatic practices and contemporary dance in Britain from the 1970s onwards. It specifically refers to lineage between BMC® and New and Independent dance. The chapter introduces the interdisciplinary methodological approach used hoping to further illustrate the anthropological understanding of embodiment that informs this research. In responding to the call for cross-disciplinary research on this topic, this and the following chapters work to heighten the significance of an understanding of this phenomenon for epistemology and our experience of being-in-the-world. It begins to rationalize conceptual choices based on the argument that the phenomenon of embodiment constitutes the ground on which transformation or impact of somatic or somatic-informed dance practice may be possible.

The vocabulary introduced in section 2.7 includes aspects of embodiment that the somatic approach, through specific principles and tools, begins to impact that in turn may ultimately lead to a shift in the person's sense of self. The discussion in section 2.6 also forms part of the conceptual ground on which practice is understood in this thesis. Through a discussion of the theoretical frame employed, the three main strands of questions encountered in this thesis are being introduced relating to potentiality, subjectivity and ontology.

The following chapter introduces to the BMC® approach to embodiment as a lived condition. This is offered with a view towards: a. introducing stages of the development of BMC® as a method and situating it in context, thereby working towards fulfilling a main aim of this thesis, that is to examine BMC® as part of the somatic movement, b. examining the way the somatic approach to embodiment has impacted on New and Independent dance in Britain. It is also provided as an attempt to clarify claims encountered in the field regarding what the somatic movement offers in its attempt to unify experientially the body and mind.

3. Introduction to Body-Mind Centering®: Outlining Practice, Theory, Method and Philosophy

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(Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 102)

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, somatics as a social movement is illustrated through a descriptive introduction to the practice of BMC® with reference to the stages of development of the method over the past few decades. BMC® is illustrated as being part of the somatic movement through: a. indicating some fundamental theoretical premises it is grounded on, and b. through a narrative demonstrating the way the inventor's journey in life and practice and her situatedness in the world informed the growth of the work.

Historic data that indicate how the work developed in stages since the 60s are offered with the hope to contribute towards covering a lack of a documentation of the progression of the BMC® material as a culturally situated practice. Such data involve the order, the period and the context in which that is material offered in the different courses of the SBMC evolved. It also includes the identification of some participants that took part in Bainbridge Cohen's early explorations and who later became BMC® practitioners or teachers and continued passing on this approach to others thereby widening the somatic community. This synthesis of information is drawn from discussions with practitioners and Bainbridge Cohen in person and from textbooks and existing audiovisual material such as a recorded discussion between somatic practitioners Bainbridge Cohen and Emilie Conrad. As part of outlining the way the practice has evolved over time in a globalized western context, an

introduction is also offered to the BMC® training programmes available to date and their emphasis.³⁸

Description of each of the anatomic systems studied in BMC®: a. illustrate the nature of the practice of BMC® thereby introducing to the way the term embodiment is used in BMC®, and b. indicates the types of mapping of the body that BMC® ascribes to. As explained in the introduction of the thesis, the concept of embodiment is understood in this research to be the connecting thread amongst somatic approaches. Understanding the nature of the work and the way embodiment is approached in this somatic method, as an example of the way the term is used in the somatic movement, is considered to be a fundamental step before proceeding to illustrate how the notion of embodiment has impacted aspects of British contemporary dance.

Informed by the lens of the embodiment paradigm and a historic approach discussed in the previous chapter, the narrative of the inventor of BMC® is viewed as the example of an embodied self that bears all her reference points in her bodily explorations for 'embodying' the anatomic systems. The introductory narrative of Bainbridge Cohen's story in section 3.6 outlines her influences and lineage, thereby responding to another objective of this research that aims to situate practice through identification of legacies of practice and lineage. Bainbridge Cohen's influences and lineage are now ingrained in the method that was created through experimentations with numerous participants many of whom were dancers. In 1993 (page 2) and as part of the introduction to her first articulation of the practice, Bainbridge Cohen wrote:

Over the past twenty years, several thousand people have participated in the study and development of BMC, some briefly and a few for twenty years. The large number of people who have studied at the school have given the work its breadth. The approximately thirty people who have consistently collaborated with me over the past ten or twenty years have been essential in giving the work its depth... Together we have filtered through our differences towards a common experience which embraces

³⁸ Please see Appendix 2 for programmes licensed by the School for Body-Mind Centering offered in different parts of the world shown in the chronological order they were established.

all of our differences. The BMC principles are drawn from this collective experience. The universal has emerged out of the specific just as the specific has emerged out of the universal. This is part of the nature of the work.

Inventor and participants are seen in this thesis as barers of cultures, multiple practices and discourses. Through their culturally situated embodied explorations they have formed a new cultural practice. So the BMC® approach to movement education has evolved from within a culture that placed embodiment to the centre of experience and movement pedagogy. I, therefore, gradually begin to argue that BMC® is a method that emerged through experiential explorations and reflections on embodiment and inevitably through the ever present existential condition that the people who practiced and contributed in its development were inevitably embodied selves.

Additionally, the content provided in this chapter is informed by an ethical responsibility I carry as an anthropologist. That is to do justice to the work of a professional body (SBMC) through a sensitive and impartial representation of their work. In this choice, I worked to navigate through tensions between critiques around the potential limitations of the practitioner-researcher role (Ness 2007) and a code of ethics to anthropological research usefully outlined by the American Anthropological Association (2012).

A detailed analysis of the practice of BMC® is not the aim of this chapter as this has been partly offered elsewhere in sources such as Aposhyan 2004; Bainbridge Cohen 1993; Hartley, 2004, 1995; Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011. However, in briefly introducing concepts, principles and the method of BMC®, as part of an illustration of the nature of the work, this section aims to set the ground for the discussions and analysis that will follow serving a particular epistemological and anthropological purpose. The distinctive approach of BMC® is seen in this thesis to be an experiential distillation of a number of discourses and scientific research that developed in the west in the 20th century. In this study, BMC® serves as an example of the ways a structured movement system may reflect and emerge out of systems of thought

that are understood as culturally located but also shape them. The BMC® participants and practitioners' explorations of concepts with and through their bodies gave rise to a new discourse of practice that gradually also influenced the praxis of contemporary dance.

The distinctive outlook to and experience of embodiment that BMC® cultivates is argued to shed new light to Csordas' (1994a) proposition that culture is existentially grounded on embodiment and experience. Capturing the essence of the method of BMC® through an ethnographic history serves as an example of the ways with which a social movement and a culturally constructed movement system such as that of somatics may absorb concepts, respond to or explore questions rising from science and its findings or lack of. It is also used here as an example of the way with which, through this emerging process, the somatic movement has raised new questions for science to respond to.

The presentation and introductory analysis of BMC® in this section is written from both a practitioner's and an ethnographer's perspective. It is informed by a multi-perspective approach to research, that is, by my own practice in diverse settings and contexts outlined earlier in the thesis, observations on the work of others, and by other practitioner's reflections on their work either in published or anecdotal form captured through this ethnographic process (in interviews or fieldwork). Analysis and descriptions are also informed by the outcomes of the Pool Project as outlined in Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011), a distillation process of BMC® by the BMCA, following Ellen Barlow's³⁹ initiative. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's (1993) essay 'Introduction to Body-Mind Centering' offered in the SBMC's official website until a re-construction of the site in 2012 has also offered a brief outline of the method as a discourse. Excerpts of this essay together with results of the Pool Project are found in Miller, Ethridge and Morgan's (2011) volume which offers diverse reflections on BMC®'s methodologies, philosophies, theories, and principles. Descriptions and outline, in this section, are also drawn from the official webpage of the SBMC that

³⁹ Ellen Barlow was one of the founders of the Body-Mind Centering® Association.

serves both as field material, primary information and as an example of a representative voice of the inventor's description of the work. Descriptions of the work in other sources (Aposhyan 2004, Hartley, 2004, 1995, Johnson 1995) where the method is represented have also informed this chapter and are being referred to as relevant below. The role and dialogue between all these sources and practitioners who participate in the BMCA or work independently shows the dynamic and still evolving shaping of articulations of the BMC® approach.

Sources referred to in this chapter are used as useful introductory outlines to the practice. I often quote from texts as both a means to help with clarity and as primary data. Direct quotes used serve as the 'informants' own words about their own world aligning with Geertz's (1973) emphasis on the importance of representing a community in their own terms.

3.2. The Practice

As indicated in the previous chapter, BMC® is a somatic method that involves conscious explorations of anatomical structures through embodiment. In this instance, embodiment is referred to as an ongoing active experiential process of integration of the different dimensions of a living human being and not merely as an existential condition.

The practice was first developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, an occupational therapist and movement practitioner. As Bainbridge Cohen clarifies (2015), the practice began to be offered as a training programme in 1973 in New York, and then in 1977 in Amherst (USA) when Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Len Cohen re-located. The first structured programme with set courses, hours and curriculum started in 1980 and lasted for two years. The first graduation was in November 1982. Bainbridge Cohen notes: "People who completed the two years [September through May] became certified BMC® practitioners, those who had continued to study with me from the beginning in NYC became

certified BMC® teachers⁴⁰. They had completed 7-9 years". Amongst the first BMC® teachers were:

- Sandy Jamros and Linda Tumbarello
- Gale Turner who is now a primary teacher in BMC® training programmes in the USA and was a former member of Meredith Monk's collaborative group, The House (she won a Bessie award in 1990 for her performance with Meredith Monk)
- Beth Goren
- Sara K. Vogeler who also has a background in dance
- Patricia Bardi who after her studies moved to England where, as I will explain in Chapter 5, influenced a number of dance artists and later moved to Amsterdam
- Ruth Judds who passed away many years before in New York and
- Gail Stern who had studied dance in New York and elsewhere and later became a physical therapist. She now teaches in a physical therapy school in Massachusetts.

BMC® is a method that emerged amongst a number of ventures in dance, theatre, therapy and athletics. It grew out of and formed parts of a counterculture that aimed to redefine the self as an integrated whole, an ongoing dialogue between mind and a responsive, intelligent body. It is a distinct, innovative and, for some, controversial approach to the body, human experience, health and pedagogy for people of all ages, body types and abilities. As its name suggests, it is grounded on the fundamental premises that: a. the mind is inseparable to the body and that their role in forming the self may be explored through this work; b. that the physical dimensions of being are inseparable to the mental and may be centered through this work. "Centering" these dimensions in BMC® means partly to reach a place where one experiences, recognizes and understands these two dimensions as one.

⁴⁰ As it will be further clarified below, a certified BMC® practitioner is equipped to deliver BMC® material in an educational or therapeutic context. A BMC® teacher is able to pass on the work to others and teach in certification programmes.

Bainbridge Cohen explains that “‘centering’ is a process of balancing, not a place of arrival. This balancing is based on dialogue and dialogue is based on experience”(1993:1).

Embodiment, in BMC®, although not considered a place of arrival is often considered a virtue, a valued quality for an individual’s bodily way-of-being-in-the-world. In BMC®, an *embodied person* is considered to be able to respond to his/her environment in an integrated, instantaneous, organic manner. As clarified in the introduction, the use of the term ‘embodied’ here refers to a distinct quality of relating to one’s body, a particular way-of-being-in-the-world which has heightened the person’s ability to sense and ‘listen’ to his or her bodies and act with a somatic awareness in relation to the world around them. This is a quality cultivated through somatic practices and espoused by the contemporary dance world as of great significance for the 21st century performer. The reasons for this emphasis placed on embodiment from the dance world will be further illuminated in the following chapters.

Through its distinct approach to somatic movement education, BMC® suggests that the embodied person may be freed from inhibiting spontaneous action and has a wisdom and economy in his or her response to the moment. The person that has a sense of embodiment is considered to be ‘in tune’, able to ‘be in the moment’ both of which qualities are valued as superior to a ‘disembodied’ way-of-being-in-the-world.

Interestingly for this research, this is a term used by Sklar in an outline of her inclusion of embodiment in her ethnographic approach. She states: “It is easy to disembody. With the flick of the mind we can alter our perception of the material world or create sensory worlds in abstraction” (Sklar 1994: 107). The statement is shared here as an example of the way, by the 90s, language gradually became shared not only in cultural theory but also in experiential practices such as the field of somatics.

The potential of BMC® in guiding a person to discover an optimum way-of-being-in-the-world is stressed by Aposhyan who argues that much of the suffering in the world “is rooted in our fundamental ignorance about ourselves as humans – how we function, and the optimal ways for our bodyminds to work” (2004: xii).

BMC® offers an analytical and pedagogic perspective to look at or reflect on the way movement is initiated and which anatomic system(s) it is mostly grounded on. It offers an interpretation of the ‘mind’ of the action, a mental quality of behaviour as grounded in the different physiological structures. Following findings in diverse theoretical fields including, western and eastern philosophy, somatic psychology, neuroscience, anatomy and physiology, to name a few, the method has identified mind states, emotional states as well as personality traits which correspond to different body systems and to different parts of each system. These traits or states become available to one’s consciousness through the process of embodiment of each anatomic system as introduced through the practice. In other words, the phenomenal or bodily nature of mind states or character traits become experiences one can ‘witness’, perceive, observe and reflect upon. This process is known as *witnessing* and will be further introduced in section 3.5.

My reference to character traits and their expression through embodiment, although not explicitly mentioned as such in SME training I attended but evident in the method’s approach, appears to have affinities with Wilhelm Reich’s identification of a series of character types with corresponding postural styles. Character analysis was further developed by his students and a more individualized perspective of body interpretation was articulated in bioenergetic analysis developed by Alexander Lowen, a patient and student of Reich’s. Reference to this affinity is made as a means to position these ideas in time. BMC® offers a lens through which to *witness*, observe and reflect how tendencies of behaviour, including culturally conditioned thought and habitual movement patterning emerge out of the lived body and enables the creation of

associations between lived bodily sense and behaviour tendencies.

The BMC® community is characterized by diversity and a dynamic dialogue shaping the evolution of the practice. The BMCA plays an active role in fostering exchange between practitioners and developing further research in the field of BMC®. There are numerous principles in the BMC® approach that have been outlined in various ways by practitioners or students who have collaborated over the years. The BMCA, however, through Miller, Ethridge and Morgan's volume (2011: 16) depicts nine principles which as they state 'appear to be more "fundamental" than others'. The list quoted below emerged initially out of sharing individual experiences of studying the work and was compiled by certified practitioner Alison Granucci in 1989. In 2006, in one of the yearly BMC® conferences in the USA, the list was reflected upon, condensed and agreed upon by the participants of the conference (Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011: 16). The nine principles are:

1. All cells have consciousness (mind).
2. All levels of physiological organization (e.g. tissues, systems) have consciousness that can be experienced directly.
3. As we begin to make all systems more conscious, they become more accessible.
4. We can transmit to each other the embodiment of the group's shared learning.
5. The mind of the body system (e.g., bones, muscles, organs, nervous system) is reflected in the room when that system is touched.
6. It is possible to create, evoke, and titrate resonance.
7. Support precedes movement.
8. Embodiment can initiate movement; movement can initiate embodiment.
9. There is a difference between the map of the body and the territory of the living person's somatic experience.

(Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011: 16-17)

As evident in this list some of the premises that underlie the BMC® approach challenge predominant western conceptions of the body-mind divide. They also challenge a mechanistic view of the body and form the basis for initiating particular phenomenal experiences of and from the body. Numerous ontological

questions may be raised by the nuances in perceiving the self and the body offered in this list, but it is beyond the purpose of this thesis to respond to all. Some ontological questions regarding the role these principles play in practice are addressed where relevant in the thesis with reference to fields that may offer a language or concepts to understand these nuances by.

BMC® is a distillation of the fusion⁴¹ of principles from practices as diverse as, and yet, as complimenting as Neuro-developmental Therapy (Bobath), occupational therapy, modern dance, Bartenieff Fundamentals, Yoga, Buddhism, meditation, Japanese body-mind approaches including martial arts, anatomy and physiology all of which form Bainbridge Cohen's education background and perspective into bodywork. Section 3.6 illustrates the wide range of practices that informed the emergence of this approach. It is also the product of Bainbridge Cohen's, and through her guidance, of numerous people's innate and cultivated ability to sense and perceive their bodily experiences on a microscopic level. Her interdisciplinary background, talent and ongoing research gave her the tools to notice, or else recognize what was happening in the physiology of herself and others and the corresponding 'mind states' that include affective states and thought processes and patterns. All this formed the basis for the development of this form.

The emergence of BMC® as a method was also informed by Bainbridge Cohen's ongoing dialogues with dancers and other artists who had an interest in the body and its' function and who, she has clarified, have helped shape the form as we experience it today. Her work with disabled children from the beginning of her career as an occupational therapist informed her outlook, interests and research. Findings in sciences have also influenced Bainbridge Cohen's journey but have also been informed by her discoveries. For example, BMC® teachers I have been taught by have at times mentioned Bainbridge Cohen's meetings with neuroscientist and pharmacologist Candace Pert as a

⁴¹ As asserted in a small group discussion during fieldwork and training by a certified teacher of BMC® in the Somatic Movement Educator Programme. The name of the practitioner is undisclosed here for ethical reasons.

way to demonstrate the connections of the development of the practice with developments in other forms of research. Pert's book *Molecules of Emotion: Why You Feel the Way You Feel* (1997), although often criticized as controversial, it offers an interesting explanation of the way the notion of the body-mind and the connections between the physical and the mental work.

BMC® has interpreted and composed aspects of numerous methods with culturally diverse origins into a western discourse. Some of the concepts it uses are borrowed from positivist frameworks such as physiology. This aims to offer a scientific understanding of some dimensions of our being that have been explored through older experientially formed mappings of the body such as that of TAO (Chinese Traditional Medicine), Ayurveda, Reiki, Reflexology, Yoga and other forms.

A fundamental premise on which the BMC® approach is based maintains that the body in motion or stillness has an inherent reason and intelligence and that each cell, tissue or anatomic system “has organic purpose, knows that purpose, and conducts itself to carry out that purpose” (Miller, Ethridge, Morgan 2011: 14-15). The purpose it refers to does not merely respond to physicalist or mechanistic questions such as what might be the structural function of the femur or other anatomical structure or tissue. In BMC®, the purpose of each cell, tissue or anatomic system is understood in terms of the way these structures shape and are shaped by mental processes, emotions, experiences and environment. It also adheres to the notion that the lived body and living tissue ‘stores’ and processes experience as much as our minds since the body and mind are inextricably linked, one shaping and informing the other throughout our lives.

Training with a number of BMC® teachers in the UK and France and observations in my practice informed by this outlook led me to a further observation. I thus add that BMC® maintains that in their developmental journey, individuals’ comportment is shaped distinctively through a number of

complex factors including surroundings and culture, perception, habitual movement patterning, relational patterns and genetic code. According to the BMC® approach, all these factors together with the individual's agency and perceptions develop a 'signature' bodily way-of-being-in-the-world which is grounded on the person's inherent tendency to be or become more attuned with certain kinds of tissues or body systems. This understanding of embodiment means that from a movement analysis perspective, the somatic educator or BMC® practitioner may identify which body systems or tissues a participant habitually sources from thereby identifying their state of mind or personality characteristics as well as any imbalances in anatomic system integration. The method ultimately maintains that reflected in his/her movement is the individual's comportment which manifests both their personality traits as well as the processing which happens on a physiological basis. From another angle, BMC® offers an interpretation of the physiological ground of personality traits.

Methodologically, the two primary areas of focus of the BMC® approach, as outlined by Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011) are (1) "the evolutionary and perceptual-motor basis of our human development and (2) the awareness of the structural, functional, and energetic nature of our human anatomy and physiology" (Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011: 14). The two areas of focus are further illuminated in the BMCA's introduction to BMC® which identifies four main areas of inquiry in the practice:

1. Body Systems, Tissues and Cells;
 2. Developmental Movement Patterns;
 3. Touch and Repatterning; and
 4. Movement Facilitation and Expression
- (Body-Mind Centering® Association, n.d.)

The learning process involves hands-on work ("the art of touch and repatterning", Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 2), imagery, visualization (as defined in Chapter 2), somatisation processes (as defined in discussion in section 2.6), vocalization, anatomical illustrations and models, playful props, and movement

explorations. It may also involve “art, music, meditation, verbal dialogue, open awareness or...any other means” (Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 1). Depending on their background, interests and influences, different practitioners also incorporate in their teaching other pedagogic methods.

For example, as part of the UK SME programme between 2008-2012 Jens Johansen led us through meditation practice drawn from the Zen Buddhist tradition that he followed and in a couple of occasions introduced us to Katsugen Undo, a Japanese meditation method explained further in section 3.6. Another example of the contribution different practitioners make to the way BMC® is facilitated is the addition of Authentic Movement sessions into the UK programme. As Bainbridge Cohen clarifies (2015) “Authentic Movement is not part of BMC®. Someone might share it but its an ‘outside’ of the curriculum”. It is worth mentioning here that Authentic Movement is a method often used in Dance Movement Psychotherapy. At least with regards to the way it is used in somatics, Janet Adler has been a key figure in the development of the practice. It is, also, a practice that forms a fundamental part of Linda Hartley’s Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy Diploma programme, according to practitioners who have graduated from this.

In BMC®, learning takes the form of exploration with gentle shifts between intellectual activity and playful embodied action. Facilitation may be offered in the form of a creative workshop parts of which might be lecture or discussion and involving individual and/or group work. The format of the session depends largely on the practitioner’s preferences and background and is grounded on his understanding of the facilitation methods available and the way she can more accurately offer an embodied experience of the particular tissue introduced. The use of touch, sounding, *somatisation* and movement are however, predominant tools in guiding a person through an embodiment process. (An overview of selected pedagogic tools and principles are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.) Through practice, participants learn to differentiate their experiences of the different living tissues developing an ability to initiate movement from each

place (a cell, an organ, a ligament or other body part) as well as recognizing the qualities of mind states and actions or movement that emerge out of his or her attention and sensing of each system. They learn to witness, perceive and differentiate between phenomenal experiences derived from embodying different tissues, diverse sensations and sensory information underlying their actions. The BMC® approach attributes the sensory and bodily ground of experience on physiological processes and vice versa and cultivates participants' ability in becoming conscious of these processes. By outlining and embodying each system participants discover the ways each system *supports* or offers a grounding or 'source' for their movement.

In the professional accreditation, the skeletal, the organ, the fluids, the ligamentous, the endocrine, the nervous system, the muscular system are all explored and 'embodied' in intensive and rigorous training courses. In private practice or in education settings the material is offered in a manner usually tailored to the needs of the participants. The order the systems are encountered in each of the professional training programmes available from the SBMC differs slightly. There is also an evolving process through the decades relating to content of courses. Material becomes enriched with findings in sciences and the contribution of the numerous practitioners delivering the work around the world besides Bainbridge Cohen's own ongoing research. The sections that follow introduce some general aspects about the BMC® approach to each of the systems, illustrate how material evolved over the years and situate the practice within a cultural and historic frame while indicating some of the influences that informed the BMC® approach. An outline of the structure of programmes and the certification processes that evolved over the years is provided in Appendix 6.

3.3. The Anatomic Systems Through the Lens of BMC® and The Evolution of the BMC® Material

In the BMC® approach each of the body systems forms part of a whole, the self. Through this approach, one can reflect upon elements of oneself, comfort

zones or potentially identify oneself more with one or two of these systems rather than another. The integration and understanding of the interplay between the anatomic systems as well as how one completes or may support the other is a fundamental principle that a practitioner would most often work towards.

The anatomic systems and the emphasis on developmental movement as approached by BMC® are introduced in this section in the order Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and her participants explored them and ultimately evolved as material of the SBMC. It should be noted, however, that the inevitable linear structure of a text may not be fully representative of the way Bainbridge Cohen's questions emerged and when exactly material was shaped. As with other culturally constructed movement systems or social movements, the evolution of BMC® has followed an emergent process. Therefore, there have been times that questions, explorations and material on different body systems were being shaped during the same periods.

Besides Bainbridge Cohen (1993), this section is informed by the work of authors who have contributed in outlining this method and making it accessible in a written form. As an SME trained in the BMC® approach I have had access to material and self-study guides offered in binders for each of the courses. Some examples include reflections of my own experience of embodiment processes. All these are distilled for the purposes of this brief introductory description which, to repeat, has an ethnographic purpose. The descriptions of the BMC® material are summarised in this chapter in order to offer an introductory understanding of its distinct approach to embodiment and the human body as a living organism. Case studies in the chapters that follow will examine and analyse aspects of the BMC® material in greater detail as relevant to the themes each section engages with.

Bainbridge Cohen in Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011) offers a particularly useful and illustrating introduction to the BMC® approach which summarises the function of and outlook to each of the systems and developmental material.

Her summary as presented in the particular source (written in 2009) also shows the development of the material and the clarifications she made with the contribution of participants and other BMC® teachers along the way. The excerpt from Bainbridge Cohen's introduction, as presented in Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011) is used here in various occasions as a means to include the current tendencies and focus of the form. The repeated representation of the inventor's voice in the context of this research is considered necessary for two reasons. Firstly, to my view, it reflects a hierarchical role Bainbridge Cohen and the SBMC hold in the delivery of the BMC® material, which is also evident by the licensing scheme structured by the SBMC for programmes offered around the world. Secondly, it is viewed here to support the attempt to represent this work in as much an accurate way as possible. It is indicative that Bainbridge Cohen's position is often referred to by practitioners⁴² during practice or professional training to illuminate an experience or aspect of the work further. However, this is not to say that numerous individuals and participants have not contributed to the development of this form or that practitioners follow a prescriptive educational approach to their delivery. Practitioner training programmes and BMC® teachers including Bainbridge Cohen stress the importance of self discovery and individual research in this approach in shaping methods of delivery which suit or reflect the individual's take on the work within the limits that maintain the BMC® content and approach.

Bainbridge Cohen compiled her first book in 1993 with articles and interviews she had contributed to Contact Improvisation magazine *Contact Quarterly* (CQ) between 1980 and 1992. Subsequent editions of this book have included additional material following the development of the practice BMC® such as an emphasis on ontogenetics and embryology. These additions are also indicative of the evolving nature of the practice in terms of content. CQ is a resource initially published in 1975 as a forum for the exchange of ideas and support of

⁴² For example 1st generation practitioners, that is certified teachers who completed one of the first USA certification programmes in the 80s with Bainbridge Cohen might refer to her observations or insights aiming to add an aura of wisdom as a way to illustrate further or reinforce their point. To encourage independence, Bainbridge Cohen on the other hand has requested to avoid relying on her words and the use of the phrase 'Bonnie says'.

artists interested in the evolving contact improvisation community. Currently it is a biannual independent, artist-made, not-for-profit, reader-supported magazine on dance, improvisation, performance and contemporary movement edited by leading figures in the Contact Improvisation world, Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith. It has served as a source to present material, reflections, discoveries and observations written by artists for artists and it continues to present cutting edge artistic practice. Bainbridge Cohen's contributions in *CQ* illustrate the interest of the contemporary dance world in BMC® and their inquiry into somatic principles.

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Figure 5. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Nancy Stark Smith 'sharing weight' in a playful moment in 2007 (School for Body-Mind Centering, 2007).

Besides Bainbridge Cohen's articles and interviews in *Contact Quarterly*, the first attempt to outline the work of BMC® was by Linda Hartley in *The Wisdom of the Body Moving* first published in 1989. BMC® has also been outlined, through particular lenses, by others such as Aposhyan (2004) for its application in Body-Mind Psychotherapy, Hartley (2004) for its application in Somatic

Psychology⁴³ and Johnson (1995). Based on the BMC® material practitioners have embarked on their own journeys of exploration of embodiment and have offered insights and contributions to the BMC® community grounded on the field they applied the material. Bainbridge Cohen repeatedly refers to her dialogues with participants and practitioners and the value of their insights in shaping BMC® material, the details of which have not been yet documented but are reflected on the work.

The notion that the nervous system ‘signals’, ‘orders’ or ‘directs’ the muscles to generate movement or the predominant conception that movement may only be initiated in the muscles is in many ways challenged by BMC®. The BMC® approach offers the tools to observe the way a sense of other body parts or tissues may impact on our movement and its quality.

3.3.1. The Skeletal system

This was the first system that Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen explored experientially. Skeletomuscular work was her original work, as she states (Kuypers, Andrien, Corin, 2006). Bainbridge Cohen (2015) clarifies: “We explored all the bones, joints and muscles in New York [between] 1973-1976”. For six years, she was teaching four to five classes a week on the details of how feet work and how muscles cooperate with the bones in movement. She initially worked with the embodiment of the bones and then with the way the muscles pull the bones.

The skeletal system provides the supporting structure, shape and form through which we can move and locomote through space. Through shifting attention to the bones as alive, porous and active tissue participants discover possibilities of effortless movement. Attending to the joints and the spaces within them clients explore more range and possibilities of motion.

Bainbridge Cohen asserts that

⁴³ Body-Mind Psychotherapy and Somatic Psychology are two distinct forms and approaches to body-oriented therapy which, however, share principles and ground.

Through embodying the skeletal system, the mind becomes structurally organized, providing the supporting ground for our thoughts, the leverage for our ideas, and the fulcra or spaces between our ideas for the articulation and understanding of their relationships.

(cited in Miller, Ethridge, Morgan 2011: 5)

The language used to describe the connection between body and mind and the relationship between the physiology of the body and thought processes is notable here. Further research would be needed for the analysis of somatic-based or body-based language encountered in the somatic world. It may be seen in the above statement that a distinct understanding of physiology as structures that encompass mental processing is explored and a physicalist outlook of the body is challenged. For BMC® practitioners to claim that 'the skeletal system...provides the supporting ground for our thoughts' refers to sensorial information available in our having a skeleton that informs the way we think and function. This is information that before embodiment processes remains 'pre-reflective'. Through 'the embodiment of the skeleton' as suggested by BMC® it may be witnessed and reflected upon, to the extent that insights grounded on bodily and experiential observations such as the above statement arrive to the realm of consciousness.

BMC® allows for conscious reflection on aspects of bodily experience that in phenomenological terms would be called 'pre-reflective' or 'pre-noetic' aspects of the experience of the lived body. In a simplifying manner, one could say that the terms 'pre-noetic' (Gallagher 2005) or 'pre-reflective' (Csordas, 1994a) characterise aspects of lived, bodily experience that, according to research to date, may not be consciously perceived⁴⁴.

The introduction of each system may have multiple applications. An applied example of its application to movement education is the sense of the skeletal structure of the sacrum in an attempt to support a student (in a very limited time frame) to find a sense of alignment in the lower back. The image of a pendulum

⁴⁴ Knowledge on perception and embodiment is fast advancing with developments and discoveries in the fields of neuroscience, cognitive sciences and phenomenology. See, for example, discussions in the interdisciplinary work of Shaun Gallagher (2005).

connected with a string to the coccyx allowing the sacrum to soften towards the ground was given. With guidance, she focused on sensing the skeletal structures of this part of the body whilst softening the knees and ankles that led to a tilt of the pelvis and improved a lordotic posture. This client had been taught in a traditional approach to exercise (mainly through a physical educator's take on Pilates) to tilt the pelvis forward through tensing the buttocks muscles in order to even the secondary curve of the lower back and to align the pelvis with the thorax. Following this brief exploration, she reflected that the experience of softening downward from the sacrum while sensing its skeletal structure differs significantly to the sensation she had before and gave her a sense of freedom of movement in the lower limbs and less of a feeling of tension in the lower back. I have offered explorations using different imagery to a number of cases and all report the difference in the quality of the movement and the sensation and the easefulness the first offers.

3.3.2. The Muscular System

The muscular system was the second system Bainbridge Cohen experientially explored in herself and with others, in the dance sessions she taught in the 60s. Muscles form a tensile three-dimensional framework which supports and moves the skeletal structure. They provide the elastic forces which move the bones through space. (Bainbridge Cohen in Miller, Ethridge, Morgan 2011: 5) The notion of elasticity of the forces which muscles produce is offered a heightened significance in the BMC® approach as this is the means through which the body can achieve an integrated way of moving as opposed to isolating body parts through muscular tension and holding. This concept will be further discussed in the chapters that follow. Bainbridge Cohen explains that "Through this system we embody our vitality, express our power, and engage in the dialogue of resistance and resolution" (Miller, Ethridge, Morgan 2011: 5).

3.3.3. Developmental Movement

In New York, between 1973-1976, Bainbridge Cohen also taught classes on

developmental movement but as she explains (2015) she had not yet differentiated between patterns until she moved to Amherst. There, she states “I began to differentiate between the RRR [Righting Reactions, Equilibrium Responses influenced by the Bobaths] and BNP [Basic Neurological Patterns] based on an article I read in 1963 on spinal, homologous, homolateral and contralateral patterns. I think it was by Margaret Rood [an occupational therapist]...In the 1970s, while still in NYC, I read another book on these patterns from Temple Fay and another author [I think it was] Wilcock from the Institutes for the Development of Human Potential but the patterns had different names”.

Through her studies with the Bobaths, her influences and importantly through her explorations Bainbridge Cohen identified the ontogenetic (human infant development) and phylogenetic (the evolutionary progression through the animal world), processes of movement development that she asserted as underlying all forms of expression through the body systems. Gradually, she thematically outlined and grouped these processes into the following courses: Primitive Reflexes, Righting Reactions and Equilibrium Responses (also named as the alphabet of movement), the Basic Neurological Patterns and later in the 90s Ontogenetic Development. The title ‘Basic Neurological Patterns’ was changed a few years later to ‘Basic Neurocellular Patterns’. As Bainbridge Cohen explains (2015), this was a decision that aimed to refer “more to the cellular essence while still maintaining BNP recognition”.

The BMC® approach to the impact of movement development in a person’s shaping of his or her comportment or a personal embodiment illuminates a different angle of the concept of embodiment and underlies some of the discussions that take place in this thesis, particularly in the analysis of some case studies where relevant. The reflexes, righting reactions and equilibrium responses form the fundamental elements of movement and they combine to build the Basic Neurological Patterns that are based upon pre-vertebrate and vertebrate movement patterns. Each of the developmental patterns or reflexes

are explored through an experiential process guiding participants to bring into consciousness the sensory feedback and support embodying each of the patterns offers in their movement.

In BMC®, development is viewed as a non-linear process occurring in overlapping stages each of which contains elements of all the others. The concept of non-linearity and overlapping of developmental stages resembles Daniel Stern's (1985) theory of the different senses of self in the field of transpersonal psychology. Stern's theory argues that each sense of self emerges out of a previous formation and underlies the next to some extent. According to BMC®, during each stage, the discovery of each movement pattern is seen to relate with our emotional development. For example, arranging one's weight in relation to gravity and space is underlined by all these patterns and relates (partly) to our perception and its formation. Therefore, on the grounds of BMC®, Bainbridge Cohen asserts that:

Because each previous stage underlies and supports each successive stage, any skipping, interrupting, or failing to complete a stage of development can lead to alignment / movement problems, imbalances within the body systems, and problems in perception, sequencing, organization, memory, and creativity.

(cited in Miller, Ethridge, Morgan 2011: 8)

The parallelism offered between BMC® and transpersonal psychology is not to suggest that there was direct lineage between the two fields. As Bainbridge Cohen (2015) states, the "overlapping developmental waves (stages) is a direct outgrowth of the embodied practice" and clarifies that she does not know Stern work. Of value to this section is to note that concepts such as the overlapping developmental 'waves' for BMC® or 'stages' for Stern are not nuances of the BMC® approach. Rather, Bainbridge Cohen's assertion illustrates the different means through which different fields arrived independently to a conceptualization of the developmental journey that is so similar. It is of interest to note that this discoveries took place in the 70s when developmental theories

were burgeoning. With a view towards grounding my own practice, the inquiry into similarities or affinities between BMC® and other theoretical fields aims to contribute in identifying fields that might offer solutions to tensions encountered in practice.

The progression of our perceptual and motor development is also viewed to establish a process-oriented framework for the dialogue of the body systems and for the way we will perceive our experiences, our bodies and through that, the outer world. The BMC® approach suggests an optimum alignment of inner cellular awareness and movement with outer awareness movement through space. This premise is believed to address body-mind problems at the core and, therefore, ease them. It is believed to develop a more engaged or connected relationship with the world around us with a balanced attention to inner needs as much as outer demands or offerings.

3.3.4. The Organ System

After spending many years exploring the skeletal and muscular basis in movement (a tendency indicative of the usual focus of western dance, sports, or other movement training up to present day), Bainbridge Cohen started noticing that only a small portion of what she was experiencing was derived from the muscles or bones. In the autumn 1976, she taught the first organ and endocrine workshop where they explored the effect organs had in movement. This was a concept that grew and evolved out of her interaction with Yogi Ramira who she had met in 1967. Bainbridge Cohen had hosted him in an apartment in New York for two months where he also taught Yoga classes. Ramira introduced her to the notion that different postures stimulated certain organs and glands and that yoga was used on that basis as a form of therapy for conditions such as diabetes at a centre outside Madras in India. With an improvisational nature, informed by modern dance and influential developments in post-modern dance in America, Bainbridge Cohen began to explore this concept by initiating and sequencing breath, movement and voice from her organs. While observing the results from her experimentations she began sharing the work with others in

classes and observed their responses. It was through this process that certain principles, patterns and tasks emerged which involved the relationship of the organs to movement, breath, voice, touch and mind states (Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 28). The organs form the content within the musculoskeletal framework of the body. The soft tissues of the internal organs, or viscera, carry out the vital functions for our survival, “breathing, nourishment, elimination” (Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 29) “maintaining, renewing and reproducing life” (Hartley 1995: 182). The organs’ volume, weight and tone provide support in the movement of the skeletal framework from within. A sense of three-dimensionality and the earthy quality of being in the moment was often suggested during my training. Associations with emotions were also made at times during embodiment processes.

In 1976, Bainbridge Cohen gave the first workshop on organs. She had been working on the organs with individuals until then, but never in a class. She worked with a group for six days on two different weeks. The sixth day she decided to work with a gland which, as she states in one of her interviews (Contredanse 2004), became a revealing adventure.

3.3.5. Endocrine System

The endocrine glands form the major chemical regulating system of the body. They are closely aligned to the nervous system. Passing directly into the blood stream, their secretions affect all the cells of the body and shape how we feel.

Bainbridge Cohen states that “This is the system of internal stillness, surges, or explosions of chaos/balance and the crystallization [sic] of energy into archetypal experiences. The endocrine glands underlie intuition and the perceiving and understanding of the Universal Mind.” (in Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011: 6) Her statement is another illustration of the kinds of reading and understanding of bodily functions BMC® proposes and of possible theories or even doctrines it draws from, proposes or implies. For example, the notion of

archetypes have been deeply explored by Carl Jung⁴⁵. The language used demonstrates a deeply analytical outlook towards the body and an ambiance of a cosmic understanding present in various strands of the somatic movement.

The location of the glands as explored in BMC® correlates to that of the Chakras in the Yoga tradition. Bainbridge Cohen (2015) explains that the book that influenced her in regards to the chakras was Alice Bailey's 'Esoteric Healing: A Treatise on the Seven Rays Volume VI' which she read in 1977. (This book was first published in 1953). This was a source she came across after experiencing 'the embodiment of the glands'. Her experience, as she states (2015), modified what she had read.

As Bainbridge Cohen has explained, BMC® has drawn from traditional physiology, non-traditional physiology and embodied explorations to develop principles as well as a mapping of the body. In the case of the endocrine system, BMC® appears to have drawn facts from western science and physiology, eastern traditions and experiential journeys in order to discover the sense of embodiment of different parts of the endocrine system and Bainbridge Cohen's explorations with participants. The correlation is indicative not only of the BMC® references and influences, but importantly of the experiential basis, or else, the embodied ground of the emergence of structured movement systems such as Yoga.

During the Endocrine System Course in 2011, Jens Johansen⁴⁶ contacted

⁴⁵ See Jung 1998 (65-125) for selected writings on his theory around archetypes, the development of the idea of the collective unconscious and other relevant topics.

⁴⁶ Jens Johansen is a dancer, actor, movement-teacher and therapist from Germany. He is a senior BMC® - Teacher and co-director of the SME programme in Britain together with Katy Dymoke and elsewhere. His autobiographical note summarises his reference points stating: "For many years he studied with teachers in the fields of theatre, dance, voice, ritual, humanistic and Buddhist psychology, yoga, meditation, body-therapy and others. Among his teachers are Lama Chime Rinpoche, Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen, Matt Mitler, Grotowsky-Laboratorium, Carl Rogers, Ron Kurtz, Bob Rease, Tim Buckley, Martha Moore, Aja Addy, Upledger Institute, Suprpto Suryodharmo, Amos Hetz. Jens has Performance-experience since 1980 and has been teaching internationally since 1982" (Moveus, 2014). Some of these influences such as his interest in humanistic psychotherapy and Rogerian theory, he discussed in greater depth at interview (11 October 2013). Together with Friederike Tröscher and Thomas Greil he founded

Bainbridge Cohen to discuss around the material. Returning to class enthused, he shared a moment of their dialogue when Bainbridge Cohen emphasised how she was at the time discovering the increased significance of the perineum in the balance of the endocrine system. Commenting on how characteristic it was of Bainbridge Cohen to work in this way, Johansen reported her saying 'Oh it's all changing Jens, it's all changing'. This short story is telling of the relationship between practitioners during the delivery of the BMC® material, Bainbridge Cohen's hierarchical position and dynamic role in the advancement of the practice which is, however, not restrictive of other practitioners' experimentation. This short story is also telling of the way the BMC® material evolves to date.

3.3.6. The Nervous System

The nervous system consists of the brain and the spinal cord, the spinal, cranial and peripheral nerves and the sense organs of taste, smell, hearing, touch, equilibrium and vision (although the senses are explored in more detail in the Senses and Perception course). Hartley (1995) characterizes the nervous and fluids systems as forming the systems of communication and transformation. Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011) characterize it as the recording system on the ground that it records and stores our perceptions and experiences and it is where patterns of engaging with an experience are formed and recalled. The nervous system forms a control center for psychophysical processes. The patterns developed condition our future responses. Repeated emphasis during my training was given on the fact that the potentiality for repatterning in embodying the nervous system lies on that it offers a choice for an alternate response. By embodying certain aspects of the nervous system, one experiences a consciousness / 'mind' state which feels like it is before the impulse or the habitual response. Bainbridge Cohen interestingly describes what the embodiment of some of the systems feels like as follows:

MOVEUS in April 2007, an organisation that hosts BMC® Certification Programs in Germany. Johansen teaches the BMC® material internationally.

Working with muscles, bones and organs was not so difficult. They are more tangible. Working with the glands is *working in more like a place* but going into the nerves *comes from above* [she gestures lowering her hands in front of her body].

(Kuypers, Andrien, Corin 2006)

This body-based language, or else, this embodiment-based language shown in italics in the quote above is also characteristic to BMC®. It is also identified as such in the official SBMC webpage describing the method.

It is in the Nervous System that one may also experience the 'I', a sense of self and agency of action as it "establishes the perceptual base from which we view and interact with our internal and external world" (Bainbridge Cohen in Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011: 6). They also state that the "nervous system underlies alertness, thought, and precision of coordination" (Miller, Ethridge and Morgan 2011: 6).

3.3.7. The Fluids System

In an article first published in 1991 in *Contact Quarterly*, Bainbridge Cohen clarifies that the explorations of the fluids system are based on a combination of approaches as argued for the endocrine system above. It has drawn from traditional physiology, non-traditional physiology and the results of embodied explorations in the SBMC. The date here indicates a time when material had already been consolidated to a level that could be shared in a written form. As opposed to examining the fluids in isolation from one another as in traditional physiology, Bainbridge Cohen has been influenced by two approaches on the CSF (cerebrospinal fluid). The first is by Dr. John Upledger's perspective on the pressurestat model, with whom she trained in Craniosacral therapy. The second is Dean Juan's⁴⁷ emphasis on the flow of the CSF through the fascial tubules.

Emphasising the role embodiment processes have played in shaping the BMC®

⁴⁷ Dean Juan's "Job's Body: A Handbook for Body Work" first published in 1987 has been an influential source in the field of bodywork or somatic work and therapeutic massage. Bainbridge Cohen has also declared this source as being a significant influence to her approach to embodiment and bodywork.

material and the nuances the method proposes in the way tissue is understood and perceived as a result of the conscious experiential explorations Bainbridge Cohen (2015) stresses: “I discovered the ligaments as specialized fascia continuous with the fascial planes. Also, fascia itself as a semifluid. Fascia belongs to both categories.” This aspect of fascia was the approach introduced to us in the SME training. The second point she clarifies is that her and participants who studied with her “embodied CSF a few years before [she] became aware of John Upledger and craniosacral rhythm.” And continues: “I then studied with him though at the time we had different views – He felt the CSFR [Craniosacral Fluid Rhythm] was constant. I felt/feel it is variable based on other fluid dynamics. I was the keynote presenter at his...conference many years ago.”

During the SME training in the UK, we explored CSFR through visualization, movement improvisation and hands on. One of the tasks we were guided through was to exchange hands-on with a partner. My partner lied on the floor on his back and I sat behind him holding his head gently in my hands. I spread my fingers softly to allow for his head to lean on my hands effortlessly. As guided, I paid close attention to avoid tension in my palms or in any way compress his skull. We were asked to open our awareness and, without actively doing something, to observe if we could sense in our hands any movement in the joints of the bone structure of the head. It was explained that as CSF is secreted, the volume of fluid in which the brain ‘bathes’ increases and therefore some otherwise in-perceivable movement between the parts forming the skeletal structure of the skull occurs. As the fluid increases and decreases minute expansion and contraction takes place respectively. As quietness in the space settled and our focus deepened, I began sensing very subtle, slow and rhythmic movement of my partner’s skull that corresponded to these descriptions. I had been skeptical up until that point, but through this experience my perception of the head as an anatomic, living structure that has movement in its structure (besides the movement of thought) changed. It was also noted in the session that whether the CSF rhythm is noticeable in hands-on varies

between people and as I worked with other people I found this to be true. But to think of the brain and spinal cord as bathing in and protected by an organic, protective, warm, fluid environment adds a sense of restfulness in my thinking, alters the rhythm of my movements to a slower pace and relaxes my spine. As I focus my attention on CSF, perhaps the expression of my face changes as I sense tension releasing in my face as well. This sensation is present with me wherever I am, or whenever I choose to focus on it.

The anatomic body part that is mostly understood as the locus of thought, the home of the central nervous system was now given other dimensions. I had often practiced dancing with the head in many ways. For example, I had explored dancing while noticing and playing with the momentum the weight of the head gave to my movement, but to know of the rhythm and movement that forms part of the head's structure was a discovery. Explorations of the CSF forms just one small example of the way BMC® approaches the embodiment of the fluids. Additionally, it is an indicative example of the way it shifts one's perception of a body part.

In its approach to the Fluids system, the SBMC explores "the dynamic interrelationships between the fluids as one fluid system" (Bainbridge Cohen: 1993, 66). There is emphasis placed on the transformational properties of the body's fluids and the way each of the fluids transforms to become another while it changes environment and function in the body. This transformational quality of the fluids often becomes an allegory for a person's ability to adapt or adjust, to a new situation. In its approach, the SBMC takes into consideration traditional physiology and, therefore, identifies the fluids system into several subsystems. Embodying the fluids involves explorations of each defined fluid allowing for the emergence of a conscious understanding of the qualities of movement, relational/ communication patterns and rhythm each one raises. The chemical nature, consistency, function, pathways of flow and rhythm of movement of each fluid are seen as sources emanating support for movement.

Hartley's statement below is illustrative of the BMC® perspective into this system:

The fluids concern the balance of rest and activity, self-nurturing, nurturing of others, play, laughter, the setting of boundaries and limits in self-defence, active and receptive communication, rhythm, movement, and meditative stillness. Our ability to flow between these states depends on the willingness of our mind to choose to flow with the process of change within and around us. To fully experience the dynamics of life, we need to immerse ourselves fully in whatever is at hand, to go to the very heart of the energy it demands, let ourselves be absorbed in it, moved or silenced by its rhythms.

(Hartley 1995: 269)

As Bainbridge Cohen recalls (2015), the material for the Fluids and the Ligamentous system was developed in 1982. This is again indicative of the ongoing evolution of the practice and the way the work developed in stages.

3.3.8. The Ligamentous system

In recalling the emerging process of embodying the ligaments for the first time, Bainbridge Cohen clarifies that it was easier. But it seems, she indicates, that the challenge in this embodiment process is in distinguishing it from the muscles. She explains "I feel ligaments guide the muscular response by creating the spatial dynamics of the bones. I know more now but this has been from the beginning". By 'creating the spatial dynamics of the bones', the ligamentous system offers boundaries of movement between the bones and definition of movement into space. Ligaments transfer muscular responses, directing the path of movement between the bones and they hold organs in a suspended place within the thoracic and abdominal cavities.

I studied the Ligamentous System in December 2009 at Liverpool John Moores University which partly hosted the Somatic Movement Educator training course. The approach offered in the particular instance placed an emphasis on viewing the particular material from the broader spectrum of connective tissue.

Interestingly for this discussion, Jens Johansen, the co-director of the British

course, disclaimed that in his view the course should be titled differently to indicate it's reference to and embodiment of the whole connecting tissue system.⁴⁸

By supporting the alignment of bones and organs, the embodiment of the ligaments offers a sense of containment, clarity, integration, specificity and efficiency of action. This is a characteristic attributed to the ligaments by teachers during the SME programme. Personal embodied explorations appear to raise these qualities to awareness as well as a sense of elasticity and connectivity of body parts. The types of action here is at once reflective of the state of mind or personality characteristics of the person. Bainbridge Cohen states that "It is through the mind of the ligaments that we perceive and articulate clarity of focus and concentration to detail" (in Miller, Ethridge, Morgan 2011). The inherent sense of elasticity and capacity for rebound help with re-connecting with oneself and a sense of unity of one's own system.

The content of the discussion in Figure 6 below demonstrates a kind of familiarity to human physiology that is characteristic in BMC® informed work or dance practice informed by specific somatic methods that focuses on the *embodiment of* human anatomy and physiology such as BMC® or Continuum Movement. It also demonstrates the body-based language that the SBMC identifies as one of the characteristic aspects of its approach. This illustrates the way the BMC® community may engage with physiology, the aspects of human physiology they emphasise, their outlook to it and the kinds of interpretations they discern from it.⁴⁹ The qualities and use of language amongst somatic

⁴⁸ This detail is offered here as an indication of the ways with which individual practitioners develop their own perspective on the work making the development of the method a dynamic process. This differs from other somatic practices such as, for example, Skinner Releasing Technique which offers a rich but much more prescribed methodology and task setting for the future delivery of the work. For example, the emphasis on the importance of music for a process was repeatedly stressed by a Skinner Releasing Practitioner and HE dance lecturer, who used the music played and suggested in the SRT training course in her own classes. The material covered in the Ligamentous system includes fascia as connective tissue, although fascia, as explained in the section above, is explored both as semi-fluid and as connective tissue.

⁴⁹ With a consideration of ethics I have concealed their names here and have chosen to 'like' this discussion as a means to declare my dual position as an insider and outsider in this research and to declare to the participants of the discussion that I have been witness to this.

practitioners will be further illustrated in Chapter 5.



Figure 6. Snapshot from a public discussion on facebook between three people, two of which are practicing somatic movement therapists.

Continuum Movement or also referred to as 'Continuum' is a somatic method developed by Emilie Conrad (1934-2014) that officially emerged in 1967. As stated in the method's website, "The central teaching of Continuum is that ALL fluids of the body -- whether circulating blood, the tides of cerebrospinal fluid, the pump of the lymph system, the net of membranes or the swirl of viscera and brain -- function as fundamentally ONE undulating stream of intelligence" (ContinuumMovement, 2013). Affinities between the BMC® and the Continuum approach to the Fluids may be found both in the concept of regarding all fluids as one as well as in some of the tools Continuum uses in its own experiential

tasks. Illustrating their connection Bainbridge Cohen clarifies (2015): “Emilie and I both approached [fluids] from [a] cellular fluid ground but differently and lovingly”. This is to say that some somatic methods take a similar approach to the body or might have drawn from similar theoretical or cultural frameworks rather than to suggest a continuous exchange between practitioners. However, some exchange of ideas and insights took place after independent research had taken place between somatic practitioners who have had similar inquiries or similarities in their approach. (Please see Figure 7 for a picture of Bainbridge Cohen with Emilie Conrad at Esalen in 1987 as further evidence of their exchange.) For example, besides Conrad, Bainbridge Cohen has had exchanges with Andrea Olsen or other practitioners who explored experiential anatomy. Exploring the concept of *fluid resonance*, Conrad grounded her explorations on the concept that “All fluids, whether in the cell, the body or the planet, function as a resonant intelligent whole and can never be separated” (ContinuumMovement, 2013).⁵⁰

The familiarity and means of engagement with anatomy and physiology in this illustration illuminates the BMC® outlook to dualist perceptions and its position with regards to a prevalent critique on biologism. It, perhaps, confirms the argument that in the phenomenal experience of the embodiment of the ligaments the ‘biological substrate’ (Csordas 1994a) is acknowledged while it is offered further interpretation arising from lived experiences of the particular tissue. Thereby it may be argued perhaps that BMC® abides more to the phenomenological readings of experience.

⁵⁰ For an introductory overview of the method by its inventor please see ContinuumMovement 2013. For a series of discussions between Emilie Conrad and leading figures in dance and the somatic world including Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Judith Ashton and Anna Halprin please see Conrad’s series *Moving Legends* (2010).

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Figure 7. Bainbridge Cohen and Emilie Conrad at Esalen Institute in 1987. (Bainbridge Cohen, 1987) This picture shows the professional exchange between practitioners, the role of Esalen Institute as a space that enabled dialogue and the presence of BMC® as part of a wider cultural movement.

3.3.9. Senses and Perception

Senses and Perception 1 was the first course offered in the SME certification programme in the UK. The content of this course was developed in 1982 together with the fluids and the ligamentous system. The order in which the courses are currently offered in each certification programme, as Bainbridge Cohen explains (2015), is at the discretion of the educational director of each programme. *Senses and Perception 1* is a four-day intensive course that guides participants in studying and embodying the senses. It heightens an embodied awareness of the senses amplifying one's ability to perceive through each sense modality. It also offers an opportunity to study, reflect and observe the way we perceive through movement, hands-on and re-patterning (T&R), and Mind (The School for Body-Mind Centering®, 1993). The course aims to:

- Introduce to the BMC® approach
- Introduce to the importance and role perception plays in our sense of self and in our interpretation of sensed experience and events in our life.

It introduces to the notion that our perception and senses are conditioned by experience.

- Introduce the notion that perception informs the ways we sense, experience, relate to and interpret the world around us.
- Offer the opportunity to embody experientially each sensory modality of the body, the capacity for 'inter-modality' and the role embodiment of each modality and all together plays in our perceiving of the self and the external world. The notion of inter-modality refers to the inherent capacity of our senses to interrelate and influence each other. It is a term explored in neuroscience and phenomenology and usefully analysed in Gallagher (2005).

The BMC® approach seems to extend Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the way physiological processes are not subject to a passivity of the body. Instead it recognises the role of perception in processing stimuli. Merleau-Ponty states:

...physiological processes are not passively produced by incoming stimuli. Rather, my body *meets* stimulation and organizes it within the framework of my own pragmatic schemata. A stimulus 'when it strikes a sensory organ which is not "attuned" to it', does not reach perceptual consciousness (1962: 75).

Below is a partial and indicative list of principles and techniques characteristic to the BMC® approach as offered in the self-study material provided as part of the SME certification programme in May 2008. It states:

Development of the Senses and Perception:

1. Our senses begin as potential. They develop in response to experience.
2. Our senses begin to develop in utero, where our fundamental pattern of perceiving is established.
3. Each sensory modality influences and is influenced by all others. Touch and movement develop first and establish the baseline for smell, hearing and vision.
4. The earth (gravity is our first support and establishes the baseline for our future bonding. We bond first through water and then air.
5. Bonding/defending/learning is a psychological/physiological process.
6. Each resolution leads to new patterns and options.

7. The senses develop through appropriate stimulation.
8. The pathways of any sense(s) that are underdeveloped may be utilized by another (other) senses.
9. Each sense needs its own autonomy so that it can integrate with the other senses with dynamic mobility/stability.
10. The primary sense organs of touch and movement are located throughout the body – in every cell. The sense organs of taste, smell, hearing and vision are located in the head.
11. Movement and touch develop simultaneously.
12. Each sense has temporal/spatial/weight aspects.

(The School for Body-Mind Centering, 1993)

Aspects of this work are revisited in the Nervous System course. The Senses and Perception are re-examined in the practitioner training programme as do the other systems, in which context I have not participated as yet.

3.3.10. Ontogenetics leading to Embryology

Ontogenetic Development was the most recent course (roughly between 1995 and 2005) added to the Core Programmes of the BMC® material. This course came from Bainbridge Cohen's study with the Bobaths and, as she states (2015) "was the foundation for [her] own approach to developmental movement. She continues: "It took years for me to realize that I had not articulated it as a whole to others". Recent findings in science, however, and her explorations with other teachers have led to deepening this enquiry into embryology and the development of the embryo. Bainbridge Cohen's emphasis on embryology is beginning to enrich and inform the material of the particular course and is increasingly a subject she delivers on. For example, a workshop she led in Cologne on 3rd and 4th November 2007, with the subject "The Origins of Movement – The Embodiment of Early Embryological Development", was recorded and made available in a DVD format. This was produced by Moveus, the organization licensed to run BMC® approved courses in Germany. An increased interest in embryology and findings in this field seems to also influence Linda Hartley's work today. Hartley expressed her interest in this area and shared material she had collected on the formation of the fetus before leading us into a somatic exploration during the Somatic Gathering in October 2011 in Lancaster, England.

3.4. Embodying the Cell

“All life begins and ends in the cell” (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993: 67).

Underlying the embodiment of the cells are feelings of a continuation between “cellular anxiety and at easement [sic]” (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993: 4), between inner and outer focus, receptivity and expressiveness and rest and activity. Experiencing the cellular fluid is reminiscent of a recuperative, resting state without the need or force of doing something. The cellular fluid manifests as presence, as simply being without doing. In the section “Fluid Combinations and Support of Other Body Systems and the BNP” of the Somatic Movement Educator course ‘syllabus’ notes Bainbridge Cohen asserts that “the activity of cellular breathing ...underlies being nature” (1995:1). The mind of the cell, and therefore behaviour, at different states is reflected on the physiology of the cell at any given moment. More specifically, BMC® suggests that the function of the cell membrane lipid bilayer⁵¹ manifests that connection. The membrane’s layered appearance is reflective of the organisation of the phospholipid blocks⁵². In BMC®, this image is also used as an indication of the different mind

⁵¹ Integral membrane proteins (IMPs) are incorporated within the cell membrane and, according to Lipton (2001), may be functionally divided into receptors and effectors. Receptors are molecular structures that receive ‘information’ from the surrounding environment. Effector proteins are generally found in two conformations: an active arrangement where the protein expresses its function and a ‘resting’ arrangement in which the protein is inactive. Candace Pert (1997), in her partly biographical book *Molecules of Emotion: Why you Feel the Way you Feel* claims to have been a leader in discovering receptors and their function on the cell membrane. The particular source although often criticized for a number of reasons is being referred to as a representative example of the sources advised as illuminating in the BMC® training. It is also an illustration of some of the theoretical fields and approaches to scientific findings that informed and matched the BMC® approach to the body and its development. Some of the sources referred to in this part of the thesis are also used as ethnographic data. Sources such as this inform both the ethnographic process of describing the cultural group studied and interpreting of findings in a way that offers insights in the meaning of the particular practice, event or information for the particular social movement.

⁵² Bruce Lipton, an American developmental biologist and chiropractor, has contributed towards an understanding of the development of ‘cellular consciousness’. He has rejected genetic determinism and asserts that genes and DNA may be altered by a person’s beliefs. It is worth noting however, that information such as this is not widely offered in western medicine textbooks or histology. Lipton’s book *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles* (2006) asserts that the field of epigenetics in new biology may offer significant insights on the way mind and matter are connected. This was a best-selling book which demonstrates a current towards a more holistic view but which is not yet integrated or accepted as not controversial by the western medicine world and therefore it has not been researched, reviewed or expanded enough to date. The traditional anatomic perspective offers analysis of the physiological dimension of the cell only limiting the inquiry into this field to

states and potential expression the arrangement of the phospholipid blocks and protein conformation reflect. In Figure 8 scheme A, for example there is an equal amount of attention inward and outward offering a 'balanced' state of being, one which is both responsive and attentive to the world around as much as it is grounded and protective of the inner needs.

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Figure 8. The Cell Membrane Lipid Bilayer by M. Taylor (full citation not available), scheme offered as part of handout notes during SME course in December 2008 suggesting a further interpretation of the schemes as images of the 'mind' of the cell.

The significance of this concept for the SBMC is reflected in merchandise such as stamped t-shirts with the image of a 'balanced cell' produced by the BMCA. (Please see Figure 9 and Figure 10 for an image of the t-shirt) Although the commodification of this principle is of interest, it is not the point of this argument. The focus here is on offering a representation of some of the values and meanings pertaining BMC® as a social movement. The stamp in Figure 9 and Figure 10 signifies more a fundamental and shared value amongst BMC® participants and practitioners and a suggestion of an optimum way-of-being-in-the-world. It represents an agreement of the community of the significance of

sources often marginalized by the scientific community whilst at times, like in this case, embraced by a growing number of the population. However, current trends in science begin to acknowledge this interface and explore the dimension of human consciousness from an interdisciplinary perspective.

the process of embodying the cell in the method, but also may act as a reminder of the sensorial experiences explored during the particular process of embodiment.

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Figure 9.

Figure 10.

3.5. Tools of Practice and Qualities of Attention in BMC®

In his construction of a paradigm of embodiment for anthropology (discussed in Chapter 2), Csordas offered a working definition of the concept of somatic modes of attention. To repeat it here, he states: “Somatic modes of attention are culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others” (1993: 138). He elaborates stating: “Because attention implies both sensory engagement and an object, we must emphasize that our working definition refers both to attending ‘with’ and attending ‘to’ the body. To a certain extent it *must* be both. To attend to bodily sensation is not to attend to the body as an isolated object, but to attend to the body’s situation in the world” (1993: 138). As indicated in the previous chapter, as a cultural practice, BMC® introduces to a particular somatic mode of attention and a distinct view of embodiment that has informed the way embodiment is becoming approached in the contemporary dance world. To build on from this point, Bainbridge Cohen describes the experience of being embodied through the lens of BMC® as follows:

Embodiment is, in a way, separating out. It's feeling the force that is in this body. But in order to embody ourselves, we need to know what is *not* ourselves. It's a relationship. A child that *only* embodies its hand, for instance, might be considered autistic. If it's carried too far there's self-absorption; there's a certain awareness that this is me, but not an awareness that you're you. If it's just about what's me and not what's *not* me then I don't think it works; there's no counterbalance, no definition. What I could call balanced embodiment would include 'This is the end of me; this is the beginning of something else.'

(Bainbridge Cohen, 1993: 63)

To put it in Csordas' terms, BMC® is a culturally constructed movement system that cultivates a distinct somatic mode of attention that involves 'listening', or else, attending to and reflecting on the body's anatomical structures. In the case of facilitating a dance session, an improvisation task or offering hands-on practice it also cultivates the skill of verbal guiding or touch that is grounded on attending to one's own embodiment. This was introduced in the previous chapter in relation to Sklar's nuanced methodological that involved the technique of *kinesthetic empathy*.

Besides the notion of embodying the anatomic systems, in the above quote Bainbridge Cohen illuminates the concept of a 'balanced embodiment' as perceived in BMC®. The differentiation between self and other that Bainbridge Cohen discusses happens through processing and through the development of a *mindful*⁵³ consciousness state that allows for perceiving differentiation or one's own physiological support in sensing, feeling or movement as described earlier in this chapter. Bainbridge Cohen talks about and BMC® participants

⁵³ A rhetoric around mindfulness and mindful presence has burgeoned since the 80s together with the growth of influence of the Buddhist tradition and meditative practices in the western world. The notion of mindfulness is used in the field of meditation, but in the last few years is also being explored as of value to the field of psychotherapy, though with a somewhat modified definition in this field. It is also currently examined in its relevance and significance for mainstream education (See Pickert 2014 and Mindful Schools initiative in the USA 2010-2014 for evidence of the growth of popularity and trends in this field). With the spreading of meditation practices internationally, mindfulness is currently a widely adopted and used term encompassing a range of ideas and approaches. Siegel, Germer and Olendzki describe it as follows: "'Mindfulness', as used in ancient texts, is an English translation of the Pali word, *sati*, which connotes *awareness*, *attention*, and *remembering*. (Pali is the language in which the teachings of the Buddha were originally recorded.)" (in Didonna 2009: 18). The authors date the first dictionary translation of *sati* into 'mindfulness' in 1921.

engage with a distinct kind of attention and consciousness state also known as *witnessing*. This is a state in which the participant is observant of the sensory experience that underlies his or her movements, physical expression and patterns.

In the context of this section, I specifically discuss the notion of *witnessing* inner processes or oneself, rather than the principle of *witnessing* the other used in the practice of Authentic Movement, although the two are interrelated. As mentioned earlier, Authentic Movement is another somatic approach used in different fields and with varied applications. It was included in the BMC® SME training I took part in the UK and forms a fundamental part of Linda Hartley's 'Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy' Programme⁵⁴ also employing BMC® and Somatic Psychology. A distillation of the discipline is offered by Janet Adler (2002), a presiding voice in the field whose style of writing and language is also illustrative of an evolving discourse of practice of the somatic movement adopted by strands of the somatic movement. She explains:

The architecture of the discipline of Authentic Movement is based on the relationship between a mover and a witness, the ground form. For each, work is centered in the development of the inner witness, which is one way of understanding the development of consciousness. In this discipline the inner witness is externalized, embodied by a person who is called the outer witness. Another person, called the mover, embodies the moving self. The relationship evolves within the study of three interdependent realms of experience: the individual body, the collective body, and the conscious body.

(Adler, 2002: xvi)

As I have begun to indicate in section 2.6, the process of witnessing as cultivated through somatic approaches such as BMC®, Hartley's 'Integrative Bodywork and Movement-Therapy', Continuum Movement or other method enables the participant to observe/notice what emerges from movement or other embodied experiences in the form of thoughts, sensory information and

⁵⁴ Since 1990 when Hartley founded the Institute for Integrative Bodywork and Dance Movement Therapy, Diploma programmes were offered in North Norfolk (Britain) and Germany. More recently, the programmes are also taught in Vilnius (Lithuania) and Moscow (Russia).

the interconnection between movement and thinking patterns. To do so, the participant shifts her attention away from intention or expectation. Allowing the body's timing to manifest, this shift of attention also develops the capacity to wait for the body's responses and an understanding of the tissue's capacity to *heal*. A dimension or strands of the somatic movement is also related to a rhetoric around healing or holistic healing practices (also in some cases referred to as 'alternative medicine') which is a manifestation of a growing cultural and social movement that refutes or attempts to challenge western medicine practice and the view of the body as independent from the mind. Space here does not allow for an outline of what the field of holistic medicine might encompass. However, in the context of positioning BMC® practice, it is of relevance to note that it is a fast growing field with numerous approaches and applications⁵⁵.

In BMC®, the practice of meditation is a pre-requisite for the completion of a Core Programme (outlined below). As mentioned earlier, Buddhist or other Eastern philosophies, as related discourses, tend to play a complementing role and underpin the work of some somatic practitioners. The growing interest towards Buddhism in the west including Europe and the USA, and even more so from an intellectual élite or avant-garde artists⁵⁶, has also been partly the

⁵⁵ Homeopathy, Ayurveda or Ayurvedic medicine - the traditional Hindu system, TAO – the traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture and acupressure appear to have informed the growth of a myriad of new practices that define (and promote) themselves as holistic. Situated in a broad spectrum of discourses around *wellbeing* in the west, it is also true that following research and evidence some western medicine representatives begin currently to acknowledge the effectiveness of some 'alternative' as they call them methods, but tend to remain skeptical of the researchfulness and the scientific grownding of these methods. On the other hand holistic practitioners might be found to refer to ground breaking discoveries in western science that might connect findings regarding the connection between body and mind, between the body and the environment or on subjects such as consciousness as a means to legitimize their approaches. Discovering where traditional western medicine and holistic practices might overlap, intersect or cross-inform each other is an enormous project which remains to be seen as to the directions it will take in the coming years.

⁵⁶ Another example of the growing interest in specific tenets of philosophies coming from the 'orient' is Merce Cunningham's excitement with the discovery of the chinese 'book of changes' or 'Iching' and his engagement with Zen philosophy. For Cunningham, the 'Iching' was the most significant thing that happened the year he came across it (referring to the early 1950s). Both Cunningham and Cage, his lifelong companion in artistic explorations explored this creatively. (*Documentary on Cunnigham*, 2011) 'Post-modernism' in dance has been a significant period of experimentation. For John Cage, Merce Cunningham and other artists, Zen philosophy has been influential. D. T. Suzuki has been advocating Zen practice in the west for decades.

result of careful planning from the Buddhist community from the mid 20th century onwards⁵⁷.

The practice of *witnessing* as applied in BMC® has been strongly influenced by meditation, in particular Zen or Buddhist meditation. As it has already been indicated, a number of certified BMC® teachers are Buddhists or espouse a Buddhist or Zen philosophy. Some declare this openly and some imply their interest towards it. The interest to Zen and Buddhism will be further discussed in the following sections and Chapter. Witnessing is an aspect of mindfulness and both relate to what in the field of psychotherapy is called meta-awareness. The relation of these two concepts has also been examined by scholars who have been influenced by meditation practices in the field of psychotherapy. See, for example, Didonna 2009 for an overview of this field, and Hargus et al. (2010) for an investigation of the role of cultivation of meta-awareness in psychotherapy. To my knowledge, the ways with which somatic education or somatic-informed dance education impacts on the level of meta-awareness and its repercussions for the person has not been investigated. With somatics being an emerging professional field, I therefore briefly introduce this problematic here. The process of witnessing one's own internal experiences and awareness may be seen as a form of meta-awareness. The concept of meta-awareness refers to the capacity for making awareness the object of attention.

Somatic practitioners and somatically informed dance practitioners might at times gently invite participants to 'notice what they notice'. In this respect participants are guided to cultivate the capacity to attend to their own awareness as an object of observation. Depending on the practitioner they are invited to do so without the intention to alter the course of things. This is a

Additionally, for another view of the intense interest in Eastern philosophies from the artistic world in the USA at the time, Carl Olson's *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy* (2000) is a rich source in facts and courageous in the attempt to contrast a wide range of philosophers from both frames of thought.

⁵⁷ As argued by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000) in his keynote address at a seminar on "The Necessity for Promoting Buddhism in Europe," held on the first death anniversary of Mitirigala Dhammanisanthi Thera in Sri Lanka. This is a rich source that illustrates the planning undertaking for introducing Buddhism and some of its principles in the west.

powerful attribute developed through BMC® that may have numerous implications. Although a discussion of the repercussions of this aspect of the work is not the subject of this section, I argue, it is a topic that would require further investigation from the field of somatic practices.

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Figure 11. Bainbridge Cohen meditating in 2007 (Bainbridge Cohen, 2007).

The reflective process in BMC® is often integrated within a process of *sharing* experiences, thoughts, observations or insights that may have emerged through an exploration. *Sharing* is a fundamental tool both in a one-to-one session and in a group context. In the latter case, the group might be arranged in a circle in the beginning or before the end of a session, making use of the unifying, non-hierarchical nature of the circle. This is an approach offered to support the group in *integrating* re-patterning processes at the end of explorations, or in helping each member of the group to *ground* her attention in preparation for a

session and *transition* to a more mindful, engaging presence in the context of the workshop. Following *partner work*, *hands-on* practice (tools further discussed in Chapter 5) or movement explorations and witnessing, reflection and exchange may happen amongst the two people or small group directly involved with each other's process. In BMC®, this is also a useful method to help transition from a body oriented consciousness state to a more external focus through verbal communication, thereby balancing outer with inner attention. The method is also fundamental to the somatic approach to the body as mindful explorations with the body, such as in experiential anatomy, might invoke deep emotional processing and therefore a safe environment, grounded on acceptance and positive attention, is often aimed to be established.

To take this argument forward from the perspective of practice orientated inquiry, in the process of the newly discovered levels of experience, participants often become very much drawn into the sensing process reaching an 'introspective' level of attending consciously to sensory-motor experiences. In my experience, both as a practitioner and a participant, this tendency needs to be carefully monitored in order to integrate all dimensions of the individual into action. This has also been stressed by Bainbridge Cohen (1993: 63) who states that:

One of the things that I think is essential with sensing, is that we reach a point where we become conscious and then we let it go, so that the sensing itself is not a motivation; that our motivation is action, based on perception.

Arguably, this is a fundamental observation with significant repercussions for movement education that would need further critical dialogue amongst practitioners.

Perhaps the dimensions of this work have not been fully grasped due to a lack of integrated interdisciplinary knowledge. In my view, there may be an evolutionary significance for the reason this level of consciousness and self-awareness does not come naturally to us. However, educationally and in the

event of dysfunctions on a mental or physical level, the BMC® approach to the human body and mind may be found useful.

Movement and dance education, and/or rehabilitation may be usefully enhanced by the observation and analytic skills acquired through the professional accreditation programme in BMC®. Bainbridge Cohen has also elaborated on this matter discussing as an example the visual sense and our ability to perceive the action and process of seeing from the BMC® perspective. She asserts that

Evolutionary, the visual system was developed to *see*, not to be a receptor of *how* it sees. And if everything was working well, there probably wouldn't be any need for such self-consciousness. However, we have been given problems, and the ability to perceive them, which offers us the opportunity to transform this self-consciousness into self-knowledge. But without action (outer-looking) to balance the inner self-looking, this transformation cannot take place.

(Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 65)

Experiential anatomy as approached in BMC® and other embodiment processes opens up the space for reflection on habitual patterns, thereby expanding movement potential. As I will show in the following chapters, becoming aware and where possible overcoming habitual movement patterns gradually grew to become an objective of dance education over the past fifty years internationally as well as in Britain. This was because of the somatic approach's potentiality for injury prevention and for expanding the artist's or dancer's creativity. Through BMC®, dance and movement facilitation might be enhanced in numerous ways. The particular lens BMC® offers in movement observation and analysis and the kinds of feedback this raises for suggesting how one may more easily and in a more integrated way carry out a movement with a more sophisticated approach to the 'body-mind' offers multiple choices for the participant. These are valuable tools for movement education. Some of the principles and methodological tools employed from the dance world in the past five decades in Britain will be explored and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

3.6. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen: The Journey, Development of the Method and Influences

As indicated earlier, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen became involved in this work through dance and therapy (1993: 104). In a biographical note, in the official page of BMC®, Bainbridge Cohen's education background and influences are summarized as follows:

She has a B.S. in Occupational Therapy from The Ohio State University, where she also studied dance. Bonnie was certified as a Neurodevelopmental Therapist by Dr. and Mrs. Bobath in England, as a Laban Movement Analyst by the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies and a Kestenberg Movement Profiler by Dr. Judith Kestenberg in New York. Her other teachers have included Erick Hawkins in dance; Marion Chace in dance therapy; Andre Bernard and Barbara Clark in Neuromuscular Re-education; Yogi Ramira in yoga, Warren Lamb in Action Profiling, Haruchi Noguchi in Japan, founder of Katsugen Undo, a method of training the involuntary nervous system; Drs. John Upledger and Richard McDonald in Craniosacral Therapy; Dr. Fritz Smith in Zero Balancing; and Frank Lowen in Visceral Manipulation.

(The School for Body-Mind Centering®, 2014b)

The range of practices she has explored inevitably shows her reference points and the range of outlooks into the body BMC® encompasses. This section expands on the summary of influences mentioned in the biographical information quoted above.

In an encounter with practitioners in Kuypers, Andrien and Corin 2006, Bainbridge Cohen responds to questions about her journey in movement and the development of her method. She outlines the process of evolving her method and the predominant questions she became interested in during the decades. This story is offered here enriched where possible with more information derived from fieldwork and or other testimonies about how the method developed.

In 1958, at sixteen, Bainbridge Cohen began her studies in anatomy and explored dance and music with children with cerebral palsy. In her senior year

in high school, she participated in a scientific project where she studied the anatomy of a cat, specifically the muscles and the bones. She recalls this experience as one that ignited and informed her curiosity about anatomy. In the meantime, choosing to take dance lessons instead of partaking in physical education sessions gave her the chance to study dance five days a week. Bainbridge Cohen recalls her mother, who danced while pregnant with Bonnie with the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus, stating that Bainbridge Cohen danced before she walked. She explains to me (2015) that she began studying dance in private dance schools at age three and continued until she went to Ohio State University to study and then in New York. As Bainbridge Cohen describes (Johnson, 1997:15⁵⁸), after high-school she continued her dance studies at Ohio State University where she became an occupational therapist. In 1963, during an internship as Occupational Therapist, she offered dance as therapy in a small psychiatric hospital. She pursued her studies with Marion Chace, one of the founders of dance movement therapy, directly after her degree from OSU.

During the next seven years, in the 1960s, Bainbridge Cohen worked as an occupational therapist in rehabilitation in Ohio and New York. During the same period, she supervised Occupational Therapy students, explored dance therapy at a nursing home for women in their eighties and nineties and taught dance at various settings in New York whilst working with injured dancers. She taught dance at Hunter College and at the Erick Hawkins School of Dance whilst studying dance, yoga, martial arts, and voice work. Erick Hawkins was also her teacher. This was a period with significant developments in the dance scene in New York. She lived in Holland between 1968 and 1969 where she also studied with Pauline de Groot and Jim Tyler and worked with body-work and movement

⁵⁸ This is an informative resource edited by Don Hanlon Johnson, a researcher, practitioner and author, whose work has formed some of the first attempts to represent the diversity of somatics as a professional field with distinct foci and as a useful field providing a ground to understand experiential knowledge. He also advocates bodily experience as a means to further our understanding of holistic and bodywork and vice versa and has looked at embodiment through the lens of somatic work. He has edited a series of sources amongst which the above mentioned book and other listed in the references section of this thesis, and collections published by The Somatics Program of the California Institute of Integral Studies in collaboration with North Atlantic Books.

at the University of Amsterdam's Psychiatric Research Clinic (Johnson, 1997: 15). As seen in Figure 12 below, Bainbridge Cohen had participated in Tyler's work in 1967 in New York.

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Figure 12. Bainbridge Cohen in Jim Tyler's concert, New York 1967 (School for Body-Mind Centering® 1967)

During the 1960s Bainbridge Cohen, was also certified as neurodevelopmental therapist by Karl and Berta Bobath⁵⁹. Karl Bobath was a neurologist in England who worked with his wife with children with neurological problems. Bainbridge Cohen acknowledges the Bobath's influence in her handling of children and people. Berta Bobath was a physical therapist. As Bainbridge Cohen explains (2015), "Berta Bobath was the creator of Neurodevelopmental Therapy (NDT)" and was the person that taught them to look at the developmental processes underlying any movement difficulties. Bainbridge Cohen continues, "Dr. Karl Bobath researched to describe why [Berta Bobath's] approach was so miraculous." As Bainbridge Cohen clarifies, from Berta Bobath, she also learned

⁵⁹ The Bobath approach is still used today by physiotherapists and occupational therapists around the world to deal with neurodevelopmental problems.

that the practitioner should feel an immediate response under her hands or else she should do something else. She emphasized that it was “not a matter of repetition, but a total moment-by-moment dialogue between us and whomever we’re working with” (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993: 104).

As mentioned above, Bainbridge Cohen had hosted yogi Ramira at her apartment in America. In her encounter in France in 2004 (in Kuypers, Andrien and Corin 2006), she humorously recalls that at the time she thought she was doing him a favour, letting him use her home for his sessions only to discover later what a great influence he had in her journey. In this recording, Bainbridge Cohen talks about the evolution of her practice and clarifies that Yogi Ramira taught her a lot of the Yoga tradition. In the particular recorded interview in France, she had difficulty remembering what principles exactly she learnt from him. She could also not remember what postures/ashanas he worked with until a few years later, but she clarifies that: “as a dancer and improviser, I began exploring breathing in the organ, moving from the organ and sounding in the organ” (in Kuypers, Andrien and Corin 2006). She has also explained that the embodied knowledge and the questions that emerged from her engagement with Ramira remained evident in her explorations with movement. It is worth noting that Bainbridge Cohen slowly re-discovered yoga through her experiments with BMC®. It is notable that in the opening section of her book (1993), Bainbridge Cohen disclaims that BMC® is a western translation of the eastern yoga principles. She has interestingly disclaimed that every question she explored has come from her working with someone.

Bainbridge Cohen studied anatomy with André Bernard and Barbara Clark in Neuromuscular Re-education. A moment she reports as another shifting point in her understanding of human anatomy was the experience of holding a human pelvis in her hands and feeling the sitting bones during her studies with André Bernard. Following this she continued exploring anatomy on her own.

From the somatic world, Bainbridge Cohen studied with Irmgard Bartenieff⁶⁰ on and off for 19 years. Her emphasis on the fact that it took her two years to sense in herself how the hamstring can pull down the sitting bone, stressed and illuminated how in the 1950s the concept of sensing and of experiential anatomy as a means of educating was then unknown. Bainbridge Cohen clarifies that once she understood this principle in herself, she applied it to the rest of the body.

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Figure 13. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen on the right with Len Cohen (left) in exploration with participant (name not given) in early stages of development of the BMC® material in 1978. (Bainbridge Cohen, 1978)

After marrying to Len Cohen, in 1970, they travelled to Japan together where they spent two and a half years. In Japan, Bainbridge Cohen helped to establish a school for physical and occupational therapy. In her recorded interview in Kuypers, Andrien and Corin (2006) she appeared to remember mainly the writing process of the course which was then translated to Japanese. In the meantime, however she recalls studying dance with Mieko Fuji, Katsugen

⁶⁰ Irmgard Barternieff was deeply influenced by and ultimately taught a lot of the Laban movement analysis and education principles. She formed one of the first somatic methods known in the 20th century, Barternieff Fundamentals, which encompassed the Laban material and her own perspective into movement education and analysis. Her approach informed the work of numerous somatic practitioners to date including Bainbridge Cohen.

Undo⁶¹, a method of training the involuntary nervous system with its founder Haruchika Noguch and aikido at Hombu Dojo and with Michio Hikitsuchi. Bonnie and Len Cohen's first son was born in 1972 in Japan and in 1973 they returned to the USA when Len Cohen began his studies at Columbia College of Chiropractic and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen was certified as a Laban Movement Analyst by the Laban / Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies and studied voice work with Herbert Doussant. Cohen explains that during the same time she also taught dance at the Erick Hawkins School of Dance and founded the School for Body-Mind Centering® (SBMC).

Her husband Len Cohen has been an influential figure in her life and 'very much a part of [her] process' as she states (1993:54). In a question about her theoretical influences, Bainbridge Cohen asserted to me she was a poor reader (2010, in conversation with author in France) and therefore the theoretical underpinnings would not have been gained through books and reading. She also states so in a discussion with Emilie Conrad in Conrad (2010). However, she appears to have been a consumer of concepts and principles through engagement with people and methods in rather diverse settings and cultural contexts. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen could be considered as a great example of the ways with which a person might engage mostly experientially with concepts principles and understandings without direct reference to written sources. Len Cohen, a chiropractor, Aikido instructor / practitioner and BMC® practitioner, appears to have nourished her journey with his own references which included literature. Being entrenched in experiential work, Bainbridge Cohen's story forms an interesting example of the ways with which systems of thought and bodies of work become embodied, shape an individual and ultimately become the ground for the emergence of culture (as Csordas would argue 1994a) - in

⁶¹ This was a meditation method we were introduced to as part of the early morning 'Mind' classes during the Somatic Movement Educator course in Britain. These classes were mainly facilitated by Jens Johansen, who also affirmed Bainbridge Cohen's interest in and studies of the method. 'Mind' classes were considered essential in order to prepare participants for the intense process of the course and to introduce to the idea of the necessity of such activity for a professional in this field or of the necessity to understand the impact our thoughts and perceptions have in the way we live in the world and, therefore, experience our bodies and the world through them. Meditation also helped cultivate the ability to focus attention to sensory awareness and prepare us for further embodied processes.

this case for the emergence of a structured approach to movement (as opposed to a 'structured movement system' in Andrienne Kaeppler's terms). In an interview Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith conducted with Bonnie Bainbridge and Len Cohen, in the latter's house in Amherst on December 18th and 20th 1979, Len Cohen added that his and Bonnie's journey in Japan was partly with the intention to learn some of the non-mechanical aspects of human anatomy and physiology. It was in Japan that Len Cohen studied Aikido and where his question about 'what is health' was formulated. Len Cohen's clarification is useful here in that it illustrates the content of their research and influences drawn from different cultural contexts and traditions. The (still persistent) predominance of a mechanistic view of the body in traditional physiology as offered in the west could only cover one dimension of the work but was found insufficient to respond to or explain all that was being experienced.

In her own biographical introduction as part of Johnson's 1997 edition, Bainbridge Cohen describes a series of events that influenced her journey. After moving to Massachusetts in 1977, both her family and the SBMC continued to grow and she continued studying numerous methods. Amongst the personal events and her influences she identifies in Johnson's (1997) edition, she lists, Action Profiling with Warren Lamb and Ellen Goldman, Craniosacral Therapy with Drs. John Upledger and Richard McDonald, Zero Balancing with Dr. Fritz Smith, and Visceral Manipulation with Frank Lowen. She was also certified as a Kestenberg Movement Profiler by Dr. Judith Kestenberg. (Johnson 1997: 16) From that period on, she taught kinesiology in the Graduate Dance Therapy Program at Antioch College in Keene (New Hampshire) and lead workshops at Naropa, Esalen⁶² and Omega Institutes and the American

⁶² Esalen Institute is located at Big Sur, California, and was founded 1962 by Michael Murphy and Dick Price. In a characteristic promoting style introducing its history Esalen's official website states: "Esalen is the birthplace of the human potential movement. Where Freud gave us a portrait of the human condition based on pathology, Murphy and Price were inspired early on by Abraham Maslow's psychology of higher health and peak experiences. With the help of hundreds of workshop leaders drawn from many disciplines and with many practices, Esalen allows its visitors not just sanctuary from the urban hubbub, but an opportunity to push the envelopes of their own and society's existing limits." (Esalen Institute and Esalen Centre for Theory & Research, 2014) This is a space where numerous somatic practitioners, artists, scientists and other have met and offered workshops or explorations since its establishment.

Dance Festival. With a growing interest in the BMC® approach from participants of rather diverse professional and cultural backgrounds, since the formation of the first BMC® practitioner training course in the 80s, Bainbridge Bainbridge Cohen has travelled extensively throughout the US, Canada and Europe and Asia teaching BMC®. Until the mid 90s, she maintained a private practice with a predominant interest in working with infant and young children with neurological dysfunctions and young people developing scoliosis (Johnson, 1997: 16).

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Figure 14. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Len Cohen - photograph uploaded in the School's facebook page in celebration of the couple's 43rd anniversary. (The School for Body-Mind Centering, 2013a)

Naming of all the methods and teachers she has engaged with is offered here as an indication of the concepts, discourses and culture she has been a consumer and participant of and the broad range of knowledge base that has informed her work and the questions she explored as part of her journey towards developing her method. It is also offered as a snapshot of a network of methods which informed each other and which continued to emerge at the sides and in between the austere boundaries of the predominant western positivist paradigm out of which notions of health and our perceptions of body

and bodiliness emerged. This dialogue between methods, the shared places of interest of these fields demonstrate a social movement that was increasingly dissatisfied. It questioned the predominant perceptions but, to a large extent, still remains at best groundbreaking or at worst marginalized. The number of methods indicates the extent of this interest and the number of people engaged with such questions. Bainbridge Cohen's closing statement of the introductory section in Johnson's edition (1997), mentioned above, demonstrates both the permeability of the methods, the shared interests and values and the marginal position of the forms. She states:

Meeting together with Don Hanlon Johnson and the other friends in this book over the past ten years has enriched my life deeply and opened me to the reality that we are part of a worldwide healing community. Our time has come to emerge out of the shadows and to invite you into our dialogue, as we speak our words, dance our dance, touch with our hearts, and sing our songs.

(Bainbridge Cohen cited in Johnson 1997: 16)

Although the book was published in 1997 and a lot has shifted since, some of the concepts, or indeed, methods of working with bodywork or somatic work are often considered controversial in the western world. They are also often looked with skepticism by the medical world which is only recently beginning to appreciate or understand consciousness in a manner that is accepted in this paradigm. Increasing findings on this topic are beginning to develop a tolerance, if not an embracing attitude, towards more holistic approaches.

The somatic approach as a social movement has also raised significant questions about the prevailing perceptions and trends in western education systems. For example, it has criticized the existing hierarchical position of the teacher and a top-to-bottom *delivery* of information and acquisition of knowledge. It has also criticised the evident emphasis on ability and competition. BMC® practitioners tend to advocate a democratic way of engaging with information. The democratic (or not) values of somatic work may be analysed from a more critical perspective. I refer here to what practitioners tended to claim following discussions with a number of BMC® training

participants during fieldwork. In my experience the practice, and depending on the practitioner, the approach to the BMC® material and the teaching methods have varied and often involve a hierarchical position of the teacher. For the purposes of this research, the democratic philosophy underpinning dance practice will be further discussed in the following chapter in relation to the conceptual ground that the interface between dance and somatics took place.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter offered synoptically an overview of the practice of BMC®. Examined as part of the somatic movement, this overview serves as an illustration of a cultural form that may emerge out of a broader social movement that is interested in embodiment and subjectivity. The chapter has worked to situate the evolution of the method over the past four decades with reference to its lineage and influences. In doing so, it has indicated the way BMC® emerged as an experiential approach to movement education and a socially constructed movement system that grew together with other systems of thought and experience. The reference to its stages of development and influences was supported by historic data.

To summarise, BMC® is an approach to movement re-education and repatterning (Aposhyan, 2004:17). With a recent update in its official website the School for Body Mind Centering® states that,

Body-Mind Centering® is an integrated and embodied approach to movement, the body and consciousness... it is an experiential study based on the embodiment and application of anatomical, physiological, psychophysical and developmental principles, utilizing movement, touch, voice and mind. Its uniqueness lies in the specificity with which each of the body systems can be personally embodied and integrated, the fundamental groundwork of developmental repatterning, and the utilization of a body-based language to describe movement and body-mind relationships.

The study of Body-Mind Centering® is a creative process in which embodiment of the material is explored in the context of self-discovery and openness. Each person is both the student and the subject matter

and the underlying goal is to discover the ease that underlies transformation.

(School for Body-Mind Centering®, 2013b – earlier version of this quote was offered earlier in this thesis)

The SBMC claims that the method has an almost unlimited number of areas of application. Some of the fields it is currently applied in include movement and dance education and creative work, somatic work, yoga, psychotherapy, physical and occupational therapy, child development, sports and athletics, art, music, meditation and other disciplines with a focus or interest towards body and mind integration and its impact for participants. It's broad applicability, I argue, is grounded on the fact that it addresses and works with and on embodiment, a fundamental human dimension. It affects and stimulates change both at the material and the intangible (physical and mental) levels of existence. Susan Aposhyan argues that "the BMC® approach is well suited to application in psychology in that it is so centrally focused on how the body and the mind work together to produce functional behavior" (2004: xi).

In an interview regarding BMC®, Bainbridge Cohen (1993: 11) argues that having this kind of personal relationship to the inside of our body might be new in our time,

but yoga to have developed, somebody somewhere must have had the awareness that one could initiate from all of the various organs. And in the martial arts, people speak of points or centers [sic], and I think it must be internal organic energy they are talking about. I don't feel that what we're doing is new; what I feel we're offering is some kind of translation into Western vocabulary.

For this translation to happen, BMC® appears to have encapsulated concepts and outlooks from the analytic lenses available to the western world as experienced by Bainbridge Cohen, her participants and colleagues who contributed in the development of this cultural form. The analytic lenses from which they borrowed were situated, amongst other, in both positivist (such as physiology and anatomy) and interpretive paradigms (phenomenology). This to me is another demonstration of the emergent and living nature of culturally

constructed movement systems such as BMC®. It combines conceptual frameworks such as physiology and anatomy with eastern mappings of the body. It also fuses these mappings with mental processes analysed in phenomenology such as the focus on perception and movement pedagogy. As a method that has blended principles, outlooks and understandings of the living person from diverse traditions and paradigms, its analysis unveils unresolved epistemological tensions.

The chapter serves as an example of a practice that was generated out of its inventor's embodied history, her exchange with multiple and diverse reference points that transcend cultural, paradigmatic and geographic boundaries and the experiments of participants who took part in her sessions including numerous dancers. Every question Bainbridge Cohen explored, as she has stated, came from her encounter with a person. As she clarifies in interviews, "this could not have happened in a vacuum" while at the back-cover of her 1993 introductory book to BMC® refers to forty different teachers she had over the years. The chapter has illustrated some of the ways Bainbridge Cohen together with her participants explored the anatomy and physiology of the body through embodiment processes with the aim to 'center' the body and mind, or in other words, with the aim to heighten embodiment as central to their existence and practice. Thus, the role embodiment has played in the emergence of the method and the way the concept is approached by BMC® has been emphasized and elaborated. This was evident, for example, in the way Bainbridge Cohen has explored concepts and the physiology of the body through conscious embodiment processes, such as in the 'discovery of the ligaments as specialized fascia' discussed in this chapter. Bainbridge Cohen and participants that have contributed in the evolution of this practice have explored concepts and mappings of the body with and through their bodies. To do so they have used a number of principles and tools such as vocalization, somatization, hands-on work, movement improvisation and other principles and tools introduced in this chapter.

The presentation of the different anatomic systems through the prism of BMC® and the discussion offered in section 3.5 has also begun to illustrate the way practice proposes and cultivates the possibility for amplification of sensed experiences through the shift of attention by means of conscious bodily and mental explorations. As shown, BMC® cultivates the ability to *witness* and reflect upon sensed experience. The way attention and reflection is used was discussed in light of the concept of 'meta-awareness'. The reflective process participants are engaged in during experiential explorations has significant implications for a person's reconfiguration of dualist assumptions. Through attending to phenomenal experiences of the body and movement the presence of the body becomes heightened and gradually embodiment becomes central to being. As Bainbridge Cohen (2001) explains in her definition of embodiment offered in the introduction of this thesis, "embodiment is a being process not a doing process". The witnessing process elevates each body structure to our awareness and therefore our embodied nature is brought to the forefront, we can move with an awareness of the body. Then the witnessing process is no longer necessary and the dualist divide between the analytical or perceptual and the biological realms of existence, in some respects, appears to dissolve. The inquiry into the way notions of dualism may be challenged will be addressed in Chapter 6. Through embodiment processes, awareness of the sensed / lived body and the phenomenal experience of the self as a whole in the moment is being developed. To be embodied as referred to in BMC® describes this experience.

All the above, that is: the tools used to facilitate embodiment processes, the way the anatomy and physiology of the body is approached, and the principles underlying practice form an illustration of the nature of the method. A fundamental interest driving this inquiry has been to further elaborate on the way the concept of embodiment is perceived in BMC® and BMC® informed dance practice and the role this human condition played in the emergence of the somatic movement; how it formed out of the lived experiences and bodily experimentations of individuals and communities. The distinctive way

embodiment is experienced in BMC® and, by extension, in aspects of contemporary dance raises the need for a further investigation into the nature of dance practices that have been informed through the somatic approach.

The nuanced approach to the body and embodiment that BMC® explores sheds new light to the proposition Csordas' volume makes suggesting that embodiment and experience forms the existential basis for the emergence of culture (and self). BMC® emerged out of the embodied explorations of its inventor, teachers and of numerous participants. As this chapter has begun to show it encompassed concepts and principles from diverse systems of thought. Practitioners and participants experimented with these experientially with and through their bodies. The dynamic growth and expansion of this community raised a discourse of practice and movement system that was socially constructed. Conversely, the permeable and emergent nature of "socially constructed movement systems" (Grau, 1993), as rising from embodiment and experience also becomes illuminated through this chapter.

Viewing Bainbridge Cohen as an embodied self that explores concepts through her body my understanding of the body as culturally situated and its role in culture formation becomes enriched. The lived body begins to be understood 'holistically' as a biological, feeling, thinking, sensate self. The exploration into lineage begins to show a malleability and permeability of the body. To draw from Sahlins' (1985) view of history construction mentioned in chapter 2, by situating the practice in the way offered in this chapter a 'synchronic' dimension of the history of the somatic movement is introduced. The synchronic investigation indicates diachronic factors in the emergence of structured movement systems such as the role embodiment and experience plays in this process.

The potentiality of the emphasis on embodiment offered through a somatic approach and the availability of endless tools for creative exploration in the field of somatics became, gradually, increasingly embraced by the dance world in

dance education and creative work. In Britain, shifts in the ways dance was practiced were particularly evident during the 70s. This was a time that in the western world dance as an art form was becoming re-defined. As it will be shown in the chapters that follow New Dance artists in Britain and later Independent Dance sought to heighten the nature of dance as a kinesthetic art form. Although, they did not originally articulate it as such, they sought to make the subjective experience of the body and movement as central to the experience and practice of dance. To do so, they reached to other body-based methods, including somatics, and conceptual frameworks that have informed the way aspects of contemporary dance is perceived and practiced today. It could be argued that practices that focused on or heightened embodiment became natural companions to dance. To further unpack this exchange, Chapters 4 will situate developments in New and Independent dance in historical and theoretical context and Chapter 5 will examine the interface between somatics and New and Independent Dance in Britain. That way the emphasis on embodiment has impacted on British New and Independent Dance pedagogy will be examined with particular emphasis on the processes at work that enable a shift in the experience of embodiment and movement.

4. The Somatic Movement and New and Independent Dance in Britain from 1970s and Beyond: Situating Practices and Unveiling Shared Themes

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(Clarke, Cramer and Müller 2011: 215)

4.1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, a new generation of somatic practitioners who had been exploring independently established their methods of inquiry into movement re-education and the *soma*. The experimentation of dance artists with BMC® and the numerous artists they collaborated with and trained over the past decades portray an exchange of ideas and principles between the particular somatic method and dance practice. This exchange begins to be discussed more closely in this chapter and developed in the chapters that follow.

In a context of experimentation and re-definition of their art form since roughly the 1970s, dance artists internationally and in Britain, shifted their attention to discovering something fundamental about human nature. They became intrigued by the experience of what they were discovering on a sensorial and motor level. Embodiment processes gradually became a part of the dance practice in educational or more creative contexts. These were introduced as a means to: a. heighten the kinesthetic nature and experience of movement, b. develop an awareness of embodiment which could inform one's performance, c. educate dancers in claiming the ownership of their bodies in training and, d. help dancers reflect on practices that led to an objectification of the body. This chapter begins to provide some evidence for the conceptual ground on which a

shift of strands of the dance world took place that involved moving away from objectification and towards 'subjectification' (Fortin and Vanasse 2011) of the dancer.

As I have begun to show in the introduction of this thesis, the examination of the interface between somatic methods and the New Dance era, the Independent dance sector and aspects of western contemporary dance theatre and pedagogy in England and beyond currently receives burgeoning attention from the international dance scholarly community. Shifts in dancers' education and performance training evident in current dance practice have been discussed in a number of accounts. Indicative sources include: articles such as Fortin, Long, Lord (2002); Sara Reed's doctoral thesis (2011) which examines the influence of somatic work in HE dance training in Britain; Martha Eddy's historical overview of the development of somatic practices published in the first issue of the *Journal for Dance and Somatic Practices* in 2009 and revised later in 2015; and numerous others including Clarke, Cramer and Müller (2011), Sieben (2011), Brodie and Lobel (2012). Aesthetic shifts in dance-making and creative processes, as informed by somatic work, are addressed in Garrett-Brown (2007), Bales and Netti-Fiol's (2008), Clarke, Cramer and Müller (2011) and Meehan (2011) all of which provide evidence for this development.

Although authors referred to here are situated in different geographic contexts they address issues, ideas and concepts relevant to diverse applications and topics around the interface between dance and somatic practices. For example, Fortin's research is situated mainly in Montreal, Quebec, Bales and Netti-Fiol address aspects of somatic informed contemporary dance creative and pedagogic practice as encountered in the US and Eddy, while based in the US, offers a brief overview of the history of somatics and looks to some developments in Europe. Meanwhile Clarke, Cramer and Müller write of a research project that took place in Germany.

This chapter discusses the interaction between the field of somatics, with particular reference (but not limited) to BMC®, and New and, more recently, Independent Dance in Britain since the 70s. This interface has not yet been investigated in the perspective employed in this project. With the aim to further situate practices through identification of legacies and lineage (objective 1.1 shown in the introduction of this thesis), the chapter examines aspects of the legacy of a network of artists that contributed in re-imagining and re-defining dance practice in Britain since the 70s. A growing network of practitioners begins to be illustrated through identifying and introducing some artists that either have employed a somatic approach in their work or that have played a role in this shift of dance practice. This network of practitioners is also illustrated through pictures (figures 11-14 in this chapter & Appendix 8) taken in the field that show connections between people and legacies some practitioners have drawn from. Together with Chapter 5, they provide evidence of the dialogue between the fields of dance and somatics and the emergence of a distinct body of praxis that is characteristic to somatic-informed contemporary dance.

Continuing on from earlier discussions, this chapter begins to locate the interface between somatics and dance in a cultural and conceptual context. It looks to identify some of the theories that artists who eventually drew from somatic practices lived and understood through their bodies. It introduces some of the sources New Dancers drew from, what they read and the kinds of initial interests that led to seeking alternative forms of dance education and practice. In other words, it works to identify the reference points and theoretical grounds on which leading figures, such as the X6 collective in the UK, based their explorations. While engaging with a methodological question around labeling of historic periods of dance practice, in section 4.2, the chapter sketches the strands of contemporary dance that have evidently shown an exchange with the somatic approach. It works to illustrate what was happening in the dance world that formed the grounds on which the gradual progression from orthodox dance (or movement) training to a somatic informed dance pedagogy took place. In

doing so, it sets the ground for chapter 5 by contextualising the shifts in practice that will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Although the research speaks to shifts that were evident in Britain, the international demographic of artists that contributed in and were informed by this process is evident. The ongoing exchange between artists at the Dartington College of Arts, the X6 collective and Strider in London and the experimentation of artists that participated in companies such as Cycles Dance Company in the West Midlands and elsewhere led the way in advancing the art form into new territories and practice and, arguably, into a new professional position. Activities and explorations of artists emerged during a 'break-away' period (Whatley 2012) of contemporary dance in Britain in the 70s. That was a time that artists sought after independence from hegemonic institutions or structures such as London Contemporary Dance School. They did so with a desire to liberate the art-form from a regimentation of established and set techniques and to re-claim their subjectivity as dancers, bodies and artists. This chapter will begin to trace the changes that occurred in the practice of dance through an identification of indicative conceptual reference points. In doing so, it will also discuss primary aesthetic shifts.

The notion of "independence", occasionally emphasized by some practitioners who may implicitly wish to claim the originality of their approach, is worth some consideration in the context of this project. The work that was being developed was perhaps independent of an institution or of other practitioners' experiments, but not of social structures or bodies of thought. As it has already been shown, the way 'structured movement systems' reflect and emerge out of cultural systems and bodies of thought is of particular interest to this study. The Independent Dance sector, as found in Britain for example, has a clear body praxis, ethos and philosophy and distinct creative interests which are particular to and shaped by the socio-cultural context in which it evolved. In a globalized world, the socio-cultural context, as in this case, is shaped by diverse cultural and artistic references drawn from different parts of the world.

The diachronic role and emergent nature of culturally constructed movement systems as growing from within a socio-cultural context is associated with the metaphor of 'geology and the formation of rocks' suggested by Nancy Stark Smith in an analysis of the emergence of Contact Improvisation. In this case, the somatic movement and movements in dance such as New and Independent dance are viewed as fluid, permeable, inter-connected, growing and ever evolving formations with identifiable characteristics, rather than rigid systems.

This chapter is not attempting to be a historical survey, but has a historical dimension and reference to it. To trace the initial interests and conceptual shifts on which practice evolved since the 1970s, I draw from literature and other data available in the public domain (including sources such as scholarly and practice books and journals) relevant to the period and practices investigated. As explained in the introduction and Chapter 2 of this thesis, to look at journals and books as primary sources of data is informed by my anthropological perspective. This historical approach is followed given that as an ethnographer and practitioner I only had the privilege to experience first hand shifts in practice that took place in the past 15 years.

The chapter is not claiming to construct an exhaustive history or a story building account and will not focus on analyzing the style of work created, as previously done by dance critics such as Judith Mackrell (1992) or dance historians such as Stephanie Jordan (1992). The construction of this narrative of lineage is informed by the questions raised that are particular to this research, as grounded on an anthropological and practice-led inquiry. It is also grounded on the premise that a systematic investigation looking at a specific angle of practice opens up new spaces for understanding a particular period. Each piece of oral history offered in the interviews conducted as part of this research is filled with the subjective experiences of informants and adds to further sketching the time of interest. Practitioners and artists mentioned here and in chapter 5 have played a role in the development of and still inform somatic forms and contemporary dance in Britain today in different capacities. These

are some of the people (case studies) who form the social movement explored in this thesis.

4.2. Exploring Boundaries Between Terms and Eras: Tracing Primary Conceptual and Aesthetic Shifts

This section addresses issues regarding labeling of historic periods and the ways terms may define boundaries between eras examined in this study. While illustrating a methodological problem encountered in the historical perspective employed in this research, it works to locate practice conceptually and culturally. Historic accounts in the arts tend to label periods with interest in identifying characteristics of eras or in distinguishing between trends. In my approach to capturing this moment in the history of dance, I adopt Ruth Pethybridge's (2011) invitation to rethink labels and revise what we think the boundaries are between phases in dance history. This consideration is of relevance to this chapter that findings are found in differently termed periods of contemporary dance in Britain including the New, Independent and post-modern dance eras in Britain. These phases have been differentiated in historians' and critics' work such as Mackrell (1992), Jordan (1992), Banes (1987), but span across similar periods between the early 1970s and today. My engagement with BeeDocs Timeline 3D software and the methodological issues encountered during its use as outlined in Chapter 2, led me to embrace Pethybridge's suggestion.

The creative experiments that took place since the 70s in Britain culminated in what became known as the New Dance aesthetic, a term coined by X6 collective members as evident from the publication of the artist-led New Dance Magazine further discussed later on in this chapter. The experimental dance scene of the 70s and 80s gave rise to what is known today as the Independent Dance Community. Garrett-Brown (2007: 47) offers a useful broad outline of this sector as follows:

- Evolving from the activities of the New Dance Movement which originated in the mid 1970s and centred around the London based X6 Dance Collective and the dance forms being introduced at Dartington College of Arts under Mary Fulkerson.
- Making and performing dance within a particular framework in which
 - work is created on a project basis, without fixed term or even full funding
 - collaboration within a core group of dancers, composers and designers is more common than a structured full time company with a permanent base
 - the resulting dance works are shown at small or middle scale venues.

The term “Independent” is used by organisations such as Chisenhale Dance Space, the London successor of X6 and Dance UK who facilitate The Independent Dance Artists Network offering, email information groups, forums, debates and affordable professional dance classes.

The growth of New Dance during the 70s and 80s gave rise to the Independent Dance sector and developed the need for the creation of an organisation that would support this international community of artists. ‘Independent Dance’ has been the artist-led organisation that was established in 1990, but operated under that name and with that mission in 1992 for the first time. Since 2006, in partnership with Siobhan Davies it moved to Siobhan Davies Studios in London where it is still found. Artistic and intellectual activities offered by the organisation today are illustrative of the ethos, references and philosophy of practice and feeds new generations of professionals while informing their practice.⁶³

Developments in dance took place globally around the same period. ‘Post-modernism’ as a term has been used more loosely in Britain than in the USA. Mackrell positions post-modernism historically to extend from the 1960s onwards in line with Banes’ approach. There is, often, a prevailing implicit affinity regarding the praxis and evolution of currents in dance between Britain and the USA (as opposed to Britain and Europe)⁶⁴.

⁶³ For more information about the role of Independent Dance, characteristics of this sector, the cultural and geographic range of artists in this community and locus of their common ground, please see the organisation’s first publication by Bramley, 2007.

⁶⁴ Although as discussed earlier, some examples exist which refer to the latter. The ground for the choice of affinities or lineage to the USA in the documentation of British dance history has

Besides an exchange between British and American artists, practitioners from different parts of Europe, Japan, Australia or Taiwan and elsewhere traveled and explored. Dance communities became increasingly multi-multicultural over the years. As a result, developments in the ways contemporary dance is practiced today, including the influence of somatics, are not isolated in Britain or America. Cross-fertilisation has led to affinities between principles applied globally in a pedagogic or creative context although there is differentiation on some levels such as focus, thematic interest and style of contemporary dance that has emerged in different parts of the world. The European contemporary dance scene and the New Dance movement in Holland that evolved around the same time as in Britain developed distinct trajectories. Exchange took place between Dutch, other European, American and British artists at the School for New Dance Development (SNDO) in Amsterdam. The SNDO was founded in 1975 in Amsterdam with a similar vision to British artists: to discover 'new' ways of what dance is or could be. American, British as well as artists from other parts of Europe visited and taught at SNDO. For example, Sue McLennan⁶⁵ recalls (2012) that herself and John Roland, an American artist who had made an impression on her through his approach to release work, taught at SNDO in the 80s.

Also artists from Greece, for example, have travelled to the US or have trained there since the 70s and early 80s and therefore some ideas have transmigrated to this part of Europe as much as in many other places. My interest here is not to engage in some form of obsolete ethnographic argumentation around ethnic origin of cultural practices concealing a nationalist agenda – a topic addressed at length in ethnography and folklore studies in the past decades. My interest is

been discussed by Grau and Jordan (2000) in the introductory section outlining the scope of the edited "Europe Dancing: Perspective on Theatre, Dance and Cultural Identity".

⁶⁵ Sue McLennan is a British performer and choreographer, currently Head of Postgraduate Choreographic Studies at the London Contemporary Dance School. She was a long standing member of the Rosemary Buthcer Dance Company and became particularly respected and known for her improvisatory work. She has also choreographed numerous works. Having initially studied at Dartington College of Arts she has been present and active during the shifts in dance practice analysed in this thesis. She was generous to narrate her experiences in an interview, parts of which are referred to later in this thesis.

to further illustrate the fact that in the context of globalisation ideas transmigrate and it appears to me illusive to consider practices as sealed from influences and developments confined to specific geographical context. Therefore, some of the sources I draw from, for this chapter, speak to the shifts in dance practice that took place in other parts of the world.

In dance scholarly work, the definition of what constituted post-modern dance in the USA, although debated, has been largely grounded on Sally Banes' (1987, 2003) analysis of the period which I espouse. Burt (2007) has usefully contributed in navigating the connection between post-modern currents in the USA and Britain whilst maintaining an interest in differentiating the focus and approach between the two countries.

Burt's interest in differentiation is also evident in a public discussion (2012) between himself, Jonathan Burrows and dance artists. This was a panel discussion, part of a series of three evening events titled *Remembering British New Dance* that took place in different settings in London in June 2012. The series explored three aspects of British New Dance in the 1970s and 1980s and considered its legacy today. It included explorations on *New Dance and the Visual Arts*, *New Dance and Feminism* and *New Dance and Somatics*. During each event, dance historian Ramsay Burt and former editor of "New Dance" magazine initially introduced the focus of the discussion and evenings continued with a panel discussion with invited guest artists and chaired by choreographer Jonathan Burrows. The event on "New Dance and Somatics" took place at Chisenhale Dance Space on 20th June 2012 aspects of which are discussed further in this chapter. This series of events is reflective of a growing recognition of and an interest in the legacy of the New Dance era and the Independent dance sector. All three events are available on podcasts at Siobhan Davies Replay website (Whatley, Varney and Bennett 2009) and thus contribute to the sector's own understanding of its history and identity. Amongst the dance artists that formed the panel were Siobhan Davies and Miranda Tufnell who experienced and partly shaped the New Dance and

Independent dance movements in Britain and whose impact continues until present. Not much detail was offered in the particular event as to what was different between Britain and the US.

With an interest to identify what was distinctive in the British dance scene's explorations in New Dance, Burrows and Burt referred to its particular emphasis in political issues. However, American post-modern dance artists some of who informed the developments in Britain aimed to make various political and social points too. In another public discussion that took place in the USA, Nancy Stark Smith discusses with a man from the audience as follows:

MAN 4: In the '60s and '70s, many people who made art thought that it could help change society; there was great optimism that another world was possible. You said that Steve made a distinction between CI and the hippie/free-love thing. For you personally, how much was it something that had to do with utopia, a hope or desire, larger than life or society—consciously or unconsciously? And how has that changed?

NANCY: I didn't conceive of contact. I happened to be lucky enough to be there when Steve was conceiving it.

I imagine that my enthusiasm and participation helped to support and develop it. But Steve was a radical thinker, and there were political, social, and human values embedded in the work. It hit me at a very particular age—I was 19, and I wasn't rebelling against much yet (except a materialistic suburban upbringing). I was a teenager in the late '60s, so I was riding that wave.

Cynthia Novack, an anthropologist and dancer, wrote her dissertation (now the book *Sharing the Dance*) on contact as a subculture, about what else was going on politically, socially, and artistically in America around the time that CI was born. The values of that period were somehow built into the practice. It's like geology and the formation of rocks—when something forms, it takes into its structure the forces that are in the environment at the time. I think contact has a lot of the values of that period. Contact carries them and teaches them—even to people not already predisposed to them. You have to relax to a certain degree to have the dance work well. You have to feel your weight, notice your sensation. You have to listen. You have to bring yourself to it. You can't over-control, but you can't be too passive either. Contact encourages people to discover and invent; to cooperate, challenge, create within their limits. Did I mention generosity? There are a lot of people, myself included, who feel like it is peace work. But it can also be many different things, depending on what you emphasize in your practice.

(Stark Smith 2006)

In the above exchange, Nancy Stark Smith identifies and explains some of the values inherent in the practice, but also demonstrates the ways with which research itself informed artists' understanding of their approach. Indeed Novack's (1990) ethnographic history of Contact Improvisation, investigates the way historical, cultural and political dimensions are reflected in Contact Improvisation. For example she states, "Contact Improvisation also formed part of social experiments in egalitarianism and communality occurring in many kinds of social and political organizations" (Novack 1990: 3). Quoting Paxton, she explains that egalitarianism did not mean that there were no hierarchical structures (1990: 207). Both Stark Smith and Paxton have repeatedly taught in Britain since the 1970s.

From another perspective, a difference that was noted by British artists during a task set by Bales and Netti-Fiol in the Conference of Dance and Somatic Practices in Coventry 2013 was that they perhaps were not as engaged with the process of branding their approaches as much as the Americans. At the time this comment occurred, it appeared to conceal both a realisation of perhaps moments of British artists' history and tradition potentially lost or forgotten, but also a politically critical observation that related to the strong capitalist culture that informed US artists.

Attempting to identify what was different between New Dance in Britain and experiments that were taking place in the USA, for example, uncovers artists' view of their world (in Geertz's 1974 terms). It begins to sketch the ambience of an era but also illustrates that, as Burt (2012) suggested in the public discussion, the differences between different cultural contexts may not be as palpable. Conversely, the differentiation between historic periods or categories is not always explicit or clearly defined. Labeling a historic moment offers a general reference point, but does not differentiate between trends or currents of thought within that period. For example, Mackrell's illuminating reference to the term 'post-modern' below and her differentiation between what is post-modern

and what is New Dance demonstrates the methodological issue of labeling.

According to Mackrell (1992: 148) the term 'post-modern' is

often used loosely to describe experimental art from the 1960s onwards, but it is more strictly applied to any art which challenges traditional definitions of itself. This challenge may either come from using a variety of different styles within a single work (the term was first coined to describe buildings that employed an eclectic mix of architectural styles) or by mixing different art forms. In dance the term usually refers to choreography which doesn't follow a strict technique, but may employ everyday movement, martial arts, contact etc.; and to performances that may involve, dance, film, acting, singing, manipulation of props and so on. The other characteristics of post-modern work is that it rarely has an obvious story-line of logical progressions: dancers may take on different characters, as in *Bösendorfer Waltzes* or Laurie Booth's *Animal Parts*; objects may stand for one thing and then another; snatches of music may give way to speech and then to film; and the dancing itself may often be disrupted by other kinds of activity.

'Post-modern' is a term that clearly applies to most of the work associated with the New Dance movement, although post-modernism does not necessarily embrace the political views that were central to the evolution to the New Dance.

Mackrell (1992) outlines the political perspective that informed the emergence of New Dance. The differentiation between 'post-modernism' and New Dance as described by Mackrell illustrates an ambience of the work created and raises a second point of relevance to this chapter. That is the political significance and perspectives of the New Dance movement which, as I will seek to illustrate in the following section, show an affinity with the underlying philosophy of the somatic movement.

Naturally we do not have enough distance from the events to be able to see where trends are essentially different dimensions of the same historical period or of the same social movement. However, the coincidental development of BMC® with release techniques, contact improvisation and New Dance, the nature of these practices and multiplication of artists who explored all of these forms and more portray a cross-pollination between the fields of dance and somatics that perhaps call for a re-examination of labels, as Pethybridge suggests (2011).

Without having adequate “historiographic hindsight” (Tucker 2009), it is arguably difficult to say whether we still experience and practice post-modernism today. Additionally, although this thesis looks particularly at New and Independent dance, it is worth noting that the somatic approach has not only informed this strand of contemporary dance in Britain. Somatic influences may also be evident in other, currently more mainstream, aspects of contemporary dance including large scale companies such as that of Russell Maliphant who is a certified Rolfing practitioner.

The aesthetic shifts that happened in the 70s in radical experiments in the arts internationally were also reflected in the character of the New Dance era. Disclaiming what New Dance was not, Fergus Early elaborately sketches the democratic and liberating nature of their approach stating:

New Dance is not: _baggy trousers, rolling about, chinese shoes, contact improvisation, ballet to rock music, release work, image work, outside performances, post-modern dance, martial arts, self indulgence, stillness, American, non-narrative... New dance does not exclude: formal choreography, tap, ballet class, baggy trousers, rolling about, chinese shoes, jazz shoes, no shoes, army boots, self-indulgence, contact improvisation, rock music, virtuosity, stillness, narrative...

(Early cited in Mackrell 1992: 1)

It appears that transition happens when there is a need for change, or else, when change is inevitable. The X6 collective, Dartington College of Arts and Strider needed and fostered that change in the 70s in the UK. Artists involved developed new principles of work relevant to their personal and embodied artistic histories and to the geographical, historical and cultural context they were living in. What they created is now in some respects becoming the convention for a new generation of dancers whom we are all training.

4.3. Setting the Scene: Meetings of Dance With the Somatic World

A number of BMC® informed practitioners have worked in England over the past four decades. Indicatively, amongst others these include Jacky Lansley, Lisa Nelson, Rahel Vonmoos, Steve Paxton, Katy Dymoke, Patricia Bardi, Linda Hartley, Clare Hayes, Kirstie Simson and Nancy Stark Smith. Bonnie Meekams focused on Dance and Movement Psychotherapy whilst Linda Hartley, taught at the Dartington Summer Schools (Platform) and Chisenhale Dance Space for a number of years prior to developing her own approach to Somatic Psychology. Other artists whose work was specifically informed by BMC® and who have practiced or taught in England at different times during the past four decades include: Mark Taylor, Joan Davis in Ireland, K. J. Holmes, Eva Karczag, Roseanne Spradlin, Trisha Bauman and Karin Fischer-Potisk. (Please note that identification of artists mentioned here is the result of a combination of literature and anecdotal references I have encountered in the field as part of discussions with practitioners).

Dance and somatic practices employed distinct methods of working and philosophy but share some values that carry a political and artistic significance. They opposed to elitism and social hegemony, or at least they claimed to do so. Artistically, each of these movements challenged pre-existing definitions and aesthetics of dance including who could partake in the form, thereby significantly altering the nature and experience of the art form for the participant or audience member. For example, the democratic egalitarian values which prevailed in New Dance in Britain and in the somatic movement emerged essentially around the same period as community dance.

Although speaking to the American story of evolution of dance practices and education, Bales and Netti-Fiol (2008: 32) offer an overview that is illustrative of shifts also evident in Britain. They usefully summarize the kinds of influence the

dance world sought after through engagement with somatic education. They state:

The desire to throw off the old and uncover something new or essentially human, or even universal, remains a continuing theme. Early moderns were throwing out and off anything that seemed too staid, over-cultivated or European. ... Part of the appeal of somatic education, whether in the early part of the twentieth or twenty-first centuries, stems from the rhetoric of healing, paring down to the essentially human or individual, offering a path to self-discovery or growth.

(Bales and Netti-Fiol 2008: 32)

The aims and foci Bales and Netti-Fiol offer are perhaps true of a large part of the New and Independent dance community that employed a somatic approach in their practice. However, the reasons behind participation in somatic approaches to movement education, besides it being an influential trend in contemporary dance, largely vary. In Britain, for example, some of the theories New Dance artists became engaged with informed the principles they sought after, endorsed or developed.

X6 collective member, choreographer, dance scholar and recently trained as Jungian psychotherapist, Emilyn Claid (2006) identifies the theoretical framework which informed the New Dance movement. She highlights the significance of Marxist feminism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism and minimalism in shaping their work as artists and creators, their approach to life, to Western culture and Western dance culture. Maoist philosophy was also one of the X6 collective's references. X6 members referred to the influence Maoist philosophy had at the time, during the "Big 30: X6 and Friends: Now and Then ⁶⁶" event which I attended at Chisenhale Dance Space in October 2013.

⁶⁶ The title of this event will be abbreviated from this point onwards in the thesis as 'X6 and Friends'. As part of this event a round table discussion between members of the X6 collective (Mary Prestidge, Jacky Lansley, Fergus Early and Emilyn Claid) and friends/artists who collaborated with them during the 70s took place. This was an event in celebration for the thirty years from the founding of Chisenhale Dance Space supported by its founders. With a small audience present, members of which included artists and associates of the X6 collective, discussions touched upon a variety of subjects and mainly focused in recounting moments and descriptions of the aesthetic nature of work and the philosophy of their journey as a collective. The event was also in support of Chisenhale Dance Space which has strived to maintain its artistic and political ethos and under the severe financial cuts in the arts in the past five years its

Claid sets the ground on which she outlines the processes at work that aimed to redefine dance practice and concepts of hierarchy fuelled by personal politics and a desire to raise consciousness on these matters. In an autobiographical tone, she notes: “We were living these theories directly, in practice, on and through our bodies” (Claid 2006: 78). Besides New Dancers’ interests, Claid’s statement is also illustrative of the role embodied experience played in the development of New Dance. Claid’s statement points to the way the New Dance movement emerged out of embodiment. It further supports the argument made in the previous chapter around the way the practice of BMC® evolved out of the embodied histories of its inventor and participants.

Claid’s analysis on the shifts in practice the New Dance collective introduced also refers to their critical approach to existing training methods. Her discussion elaborates Bales and Netti-Fiol’s (2008) quote offered above and states: “We found ourselves in a continuous process of interrogation and reappraisal, deconstruction and re-construction of the codified techniques. Our new tools with which to do this were body-mind centering [sic], Aikido, Alexander technique and release-based knowledges” (Claid 2006: 80).

As indicated in Chapter 3, Patricia Bardi, one of the first BMC® teachers to be certified by the SBMC after working with Bainbridge Cohen for over 7 years was one of the first BMC® teachers to teach in Britain in the 80s. Her work focused particularly on vocal work emerging from movement and initiation in the organs. As McLennan notes (2012, in conversation with author), Bardi’s approach was seen as radical by some artists, but numerous others participated in her workshops at Chisenhale Dance Space in the 80s. Vocalisation is an example of a tool drawn from BMC® that was explored by some dancers in Britain in the 80s. Indeed this may not have become a tool that is widely practiced, but it nevertheless informed some artists experience of their bodies at the time. Vocal work might still be considered controversial in a western cultural context, or for

sustaining became a challenge. (Please see Appendix 9 for the content of the announcement of the event.)

parts of the dance community that have a more traditional background or may be trained in a somatic discipline less based on experiential anatomy. This may be due to the fact that vocal sounding for some is viewed as ritualistic and socially inappropriate. It is a tool that may be encountered in chants, or better understood within a specific cultural practice such as yoga. However, through the use of sounding in experiential anatomy one learns to appreciate the value of the physical function of vocal sounds. In my experience of explorations with vocalization, the vibration the sound of the voice causes complements the use of hands-on work. It helps release holding and develop a sense of allowance for organs to find their space. In BMC® terms, it awakens cells that may be patterned or have the tendency to hold or condense.

New Dance's propositions and nuances involved a shift of interest in dancers' subjective experience of movement. For example, Fergus Early differentiated his approach from conventional ballet teaching that involved focusing on the form of movement. As he noted during the "X6 and Friends" gathering, in his ballet classes at Butler's Wharf in the early 70s, he was interested in guiding dancers sense or become attentive to the experience of getting to the *arabesque* as opposed to the accuracy of the shape. The ballet classes he taught shifted the focus from achieving the position of the *arabesque* to "how one could get there", as he stated. This means that pedagogically the focus shifted from ocularcentrism to the subjective experience of movement as analytically illustrated by Garrett-Brown (2007). It moved from emphasis on the end product to the process, and process in this case involved the phenomenal experience of movement and kinesthesia.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Kirsty Alexander⁶⁷ (2003), a dance artist trained in Skinner Releasing Technique, researcher and educator based in

⁶⁷ Kirsty Alexander is now co-director (artistic leadership) of Independent Dance together with Gitta Wigro (financial, administrative and operational leadership) in March 2013. She took over the role from Fiona Millward who was co-director with departed Gill Clarke for 18 years. Alexander has been associate editor of the Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices and a Ph.D. candidate at University of Stirling. Informed by her teaching and performance work and an interest in kinesthetic experience, her thesis aims to envisage education "as a process

Britain, notes dance's underdeveloped relationship with its kinesthetic nature. This is a useful testimony from an active and influential member of the somatically informed dance community that also demonstrates the fundamental ground on which the integration of dance training with somatic techniques was based. It appears that the New Dance world has alluded to this need since the 70s through the types of practices, such as BMC®, they drew from. Early's example is an illustration of the way the pedagogical interest shifted towards developing kinesthesia. As this study works to illustrate, the somatic training methods that Claid outlines in the above quote have contributed to heightening kinesthesia and embodied knowledge as a fundamental part of the dancer's or dance artist's experience of their body and movement practice. Explorations through somatically informed improvisation tasks became an inseparable part of movement training and creative work.

On another note, as indicated earlier, it has often been the case that artistic or cultural references the dance world drew from might not have been directly from the somatic world but rather through osmosis. Also, the socio-historical context in which the different movements have grown has led dancers to direct their attention towards references the somatic world might have had. A great deal of reference points appears in the field as shared. Artists exchanged, developed dialogues around the things that informed their experiments and discoveries. Exchange took place through their creative work, class, meetings or in written form through artist led magazines mentioned earlier.

An example of shared conceptual influences is the engagement of both somatic practitioners and dance artists with Eastern religious philosophies. As discussed in Chapter 3, BMC® drew from Buddhist philosophy. I have met BMC®

premised on a *priory* equality" (Alexander 2013). It is grounded on the possibility that her proposed shift in perspective might support individual students to realize their potential more effectively than under the current emphasis on difference as inequality. Alexander was Head of Undergraduate Studies at Laban Centre (2000-2004), when the Laban Research Conference took place in 2003 - which perhaps illustrates her influence in developing professional dialogue on dance and somatics. She was also assistant director of London Contemporary Dance School (2005-2010).

practitioners influenced both from the Tibetan or Zen Buddhist traditions. In a written reflection of a creative experiment hosted by the Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts (ResCen), Rosemary Lee⁶⁸ refers to Zen philosophy sources, to artists such as Sue McLennan who she collaborated with and to principles or concepts that informed her creative experiment (Lee, date unknown). This text also serves as an example of the types of reflections and language leading dance artists in the UK developed and now share. Shifts of interest may have been inspired through the strongly present growth of Buddhism or other theoretical frameworks from the 1960s till present in different expressions of western culture. It was also initiated through the exchange amongst dance artists and somatic practitioners who had already explored these conceptual avenues.

New Dance artists drew from diverse sources to develop a new approach to dance work. For example, Jordan (1992: 69) and artists that formed the X6 collective⁶⁹ have stressed the role techniques they employed from co-counselling techniques⁷⁰ played in the ways they shaped work. The reciprocal nature of co-counselling, cultivated the notion of *sharing*, their ability to listen and qualities of attention to another. This was a concept that became part of the workshop or creative process. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the notion of *sharing* also forms part of the praxis of somatic methods such as BMC®. It is a tool that aims to help participants to transition from somatic processing and witnessing to an integrated state and a process that helps digestion and integration of

⁶⁸ Rosemary Lee is a British choreographer who has taken part in artistic experiments since the 70s. She is viewed in this chapter as a member of the community of artists that drew from sources outside mainstream and traditional methods. She was also member of Cycles Dance Company in the 70s and currently, besides creating large scale live work she is also a member of the Board of Directors at Chisenhale Dance Space.

⁶⁹ During “The Big 30: X6 and Friends – Now and Then”, event at Chisenhale October 2013.

⁷⁰ The method was initially developed in the 1950s in America by Harvey Jackins following his experiences with other counselling methods. It used peer-to-peer exchange and feedback and emerged amongst other methods working towards ‘personal growth’. Some aspects of it seem to have affinities with principles of the human potential movement. It aimed to ‘empower’ people of all ages and both sexes realise their potential, allowing exchange and the presence of emotions. As clarified in manuals of the method, this was an approach not suitable for individual’s feeling emotionally distressed. Although it aimed to establish a safe space and communities in which people can escape the confines of a ‘rigid society’ and be allowed to express emotions as well as their processes.

information. For BMC®, this is not a tool that is necessarily attributed to co-counselling. Rather, it's roots may be traced in the developments in psychology in the latter half of the 20th century and the human development movement.

Fergus Early's recounts, during 'X6 and Friends' event, also demonstrated the pedagogic ethos he contributed to the movement. In the 'X6 and Friends' gathering he explains that he wished to establish an ethos of approval / acceptance in teaching. To do so, he introduced a sharing circle at the end of the ballet class he offered at Butler's Wharf where people could reflect on their own work and appreciate each other's effort. As he humorously states: "That was unheard of in a ballet class until then". The egalitarian processes and embracing pedagogic methods that may now be considered standard practice in some fields in the dance world and particularly in contemporary dance were gradually introduced since the 70s.

The orientation on process in creative activity was present in many other fields that also focused on experimentation around the same time. For example, it was a fundamental aspect of the Community Dance movement which was also growing and radically re-shaping the possibilities for making dance accessible to all body types and community groups since the 70s. Process-led creative work has been discussed in detail in Jordan (1992), Mackrell (1992) and in Garrett-Brown (2007).

The heightened emphasis on *process* observed since the 70s during creative work has also developed a particular kind of sharing amongst participants and artists. Together with the growth of the concept of 'emergent form', an emphasis on process also increased the variety of tasks used to initiate creation of choreographic or other performance work. Task setting allowed for diverse embodied experiences to take place making the body the source for performance. For example, the importance of task setting was emphasized by Emilyn Claid when I studied Dance Making with her as part of my MA in Dance Studies at Surrey University (2001-2002). As a process of generating material

for composition, task setting grew to involve a number of pedagogic tools some of which will be identified and discussed in the following chapter.

For the purposes of this chapter that looks to identify the conceptual ground of New Dance, Anna Furse, one of the founding members of Chisenhale Dance Space together with the X6 collective and currently Head of Department of Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths University in London took part in “X6 and Friends” through an e-mail correspondence⁷¹. She jokingly recounted moments when the collective and artists participating in workshops they led interrupted the creative process or explorations to stand by or support a person who was experiencing an emotional *process* due to tasks set.

Furse’s illustrative statement speaks of the communal ethos prevailing early experiments in re-discovering dance in the 70s. A person-centred interest is prevalent here besides exploration of radical art expression. A laugh was shared amongst artists and audience members present in the event with an implicit acceptance of the idealist character of their choices at the time. However, the gesture and agreement between the collective and associates to interrupt the creative process to *hold* and support an individual when an exploration invoked emotional processing, to me, is suggestive also of their political positioning. The ‘productive’ process was not seen to be endangered by an interest to the person, as increasingly tends to be the case in western, capitalist communities, thereby marginalising the person who might not be solely goal oriented or focused on continuing production.⁷² To me, in this gesture, the relation between notions of time and productivity are questioned. An economy based on mutual support and personal growth was therefore fostered. Although this gesture may demonstrate how egalitarian values

⁷¹ Furse’s e-mail was read by Jacky Lansley during “X6 and Friends” event in place of her presence.

⁷² As part of her engagement with moral philosophy and what appears as a lifelong project of development of humanist pedagogy, Nussbaum (1988) deploys the notion of “fragility of goodness” in a series of philosophical discussions. Although not directly speaking of a political stance, I contend, her discussion of the moral dilemmas we are placed in western society, alludes to political repercussions of a different existential positioning other than one based on goal orientation.

informed New Dance, I argue, that whether this approach might have its root to Marxist and Maoist philosophy would need to be further explored in conversation with artists, but it appears to be the result of their engagement with co-counselling as well as political ideologies. The claim that somatic-informed dance may foster social change has been examined by Albright 2009, Fortin 2008b and Ginot 2011 from different lenses.

Besides referring to the productive phase, the term *process* has deeper connotations for the somatic or somatic informed dance practitioners. According to Sally Metcalf (2004),

Process, in the Skinner Releasing Technique, is an ever-deepening unfolding. It is awakened and set in motion when one encounters the transformative imagery and graphics characteristic of Releasing classes. These teachings might be diametrically opposed to one's prior experience with movement training. And yet, intuitively, the practice feels right somehow. So, one takes a leap of faith to see where the Releasing process leads.

Metcalf talks here of a meaning of process that is particular to Skinner Releasing Technique. However, the notion of 'being in' or 'having a process' as a 'deepening unfolding' may be found to be shared amongst somatic practitioners in different approaches including BMC®. A brief reference to the way 'a process' was regarded in BMC® in the 80s is offered in Appendix 6.

Adding to Early's descriptions, a declaration offered in New Dance Magazine is also illustrative of the nature of the New Dance movement and its emphasis.

Claid (1977) states:

There is no one way of working or type of dance that can be labelled New Dance. New Dance is about making connections to the environment, to the social context, to the city, to the financial context, to the world...Each individual, whether learning, performing, teaching, criticising, dancing, writing about dance or supporting dance can have a unique method of making the connections.

Claid's own references were evident in her teaching of dance making processes during my education as part of an MA degree at Surrey University. The shift

from orthodox approaches (also referred to in the field as traditional or mainstream) was evident, for example, in the use of language, the approach to the human body and the imagery she used. In the introductory workshop to dance making, as part of the MA in Dance Studies in October 2001, Claid invited us to stand in a circle. We began our warm-up with a body-check and an invitation to loosen in the hip-joints while moving. The image of the pelvis as a bowl filled with warm water was offered which allowed for more effortless movement, a greater sense of groundedness in the transference of weight and the possibility for more articulation of the legs. It is worth noting here that these analytic observations on sensory experiences are made possible through and informed by my current knowledge and somatic awareness. At the time, phenomenal experiences of this sort were mainly pre-reflective. Somatic training cultivated further the skill of attending to them consciously and finding a language to describe or analyse them through.

In the dance making session, few images were offered that initiated the transition to a more creative experience and application of the body in the context of a creative workshop. The use of imagery and the kinds of metaphor used here demonstrates a basic body-based language introduced in creative work. It illustrates the shift of focus towards experience of the body on which creative task setting was grounded. The phenomenal experience of the body is now often the starting point in a creative process.

As Bales and Netti-Fiol indicate, dimensions of somatic work are connected to a rhetoric around *healing* self or society, or to a rhetoric around well-being. Bottiglieri, Ginot, and Salvatierra (2012) located in France and Fortin located in Montreal (2008b) also speak to the latter concept. Examining the notion of well-being as encountered in the somatic community is a deeply complex issue, which although acknowledged here, requires a focused study that exceeds the parameters of this thesis. However, it is a topic I consider pertinent to be addressed by the field of research in somatics.

The New Dance approach also involved finding ways to re-acquaint dancers and spectators with what Emilyn Claid calls the 'real body'. Discussing how the perception of the performer's body changed in New Dance, Claid explains that approaching the performer moved from the conventional seductive illusion of ballet to a reversal of roles between performer and spectator. She analyses the seductive relations in ballet conventions that work through an oscillating play between the illusive image and the real body of the performer's presence. She states:

The illusion (the technically formed geometric body) engages spectators by the suggestion of the real, teasing without revealing, evoking possible meanings for the spectator while the real identity of the performer remains a secret. The desire to search the illusive surface for the meaning of the secret on the part of the spectator and the performer's skill in presenting a surface appearance as a secret that never reveals its contents, sets the scene for ballet's seductive hold over its patrons.
(Claid, 2006: 91)

With a background in ballet during her early dance experiences, the legacy of which was gradually questioned, and a political stance, Claid's own personal dancing history is illustrative of, and in part fostered, the shifts the New Dance movement brought to our current perception of dance. She clarifies that the seductive interplay between performer and audience member is reversed in New Dance.

New dance switches seductive relations between performer and spectator into reverse mode whereby the spectator remembers, and simultaneously rejects the illusion, which becomes an absence on the real body of the performer. The work initiates an era in dance when knowledge of convention informs the absence of convention in the work.
(Claid 2006: 91)

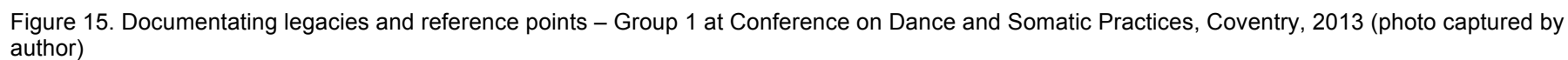
In this short section, Claid unravels a significant aspect of the shift in the creative approach which was initiated by New Dance identifying an element of the essence in the relation between performer and spectator. Particularly interesting is the emphasis she places in the existent knowledge of conventions needed in order to recognize the artistic significance of the work in which performers and spectators are involved.

Conscious, explicit cultural and historical positioning and legacy statements or awareness are often overlooked in the artistic world, but are increasingly becoming a topic of interest following developments in dance scholarly work. For example Eddy's, and Bales and Netti-Fiol's keynote speeches and activities in the international Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices at Coventry University in July 2013 offer evidence of this interest. Speeches and tasks were offered with a view towards raising awareness of the importance of legacies in artists and teachers' approaches and their significance for historical research and documentation.

Towards the end of the conference Bales and Netti-Fiol invited delegates who were researchers and artists from different parts of the world to gather in small groups and discuss their own legacies and reference points and write names, practices or concepts on a large piece of paper. From the position of an ethnographer researching and practitioner situated in this field, I include below examples of images of what participants registered in this task in Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 17 and in Appendix 8. A similar invitation was offered by Martha Eddy and Bales to all conference members. Delegates were requested to write on a white board names, references and links to their practices (image shown in Figure 18). With a close look at the photos, one could notice how the interests of the artists taking part informed their choices towards methods and approaches that appear to have common grounds. The meandering nature of people's influences is naturally impossible to illustrate in a linear fashion. Influential figures that delegates identified in this task include both somatic practitioners and dance artists presenting in this way a network and community of practitioners that shaped this shift towards somatic-informed dance pedagogy and creative work.

With a close look, these figures illustrate the exchange between artists through listing and mapping connections between numerous artists some of who are discussed in this and the following chapter. Figures below also highlight some

principles of practice that artists employed or developed as a result of their influences. For example, in Figure 15, an artist notes “in [and] out, yield [and] push – reach [and] pull” all of which are principles introduced in the developmental work of BMC®, specifically in the course of Basic Neurocellular Patterns. Artists and scholars also noted ideas that emerged out of their own lineage. For example, someone else notes “ways to self-knowledge, integrating, finding space, communication, explorations”. In Figure 16, one of the delegates links the realization of “the psychosomatic nature of what we do” with Irmgard Bartenieff referred to in the introduction of this thesis and to Peggy Hackney, a somatic informed dance artist whom she has been influenced by. Finally, another delegate links the invitation to “spend more time for self to be embodied” with her own influence.



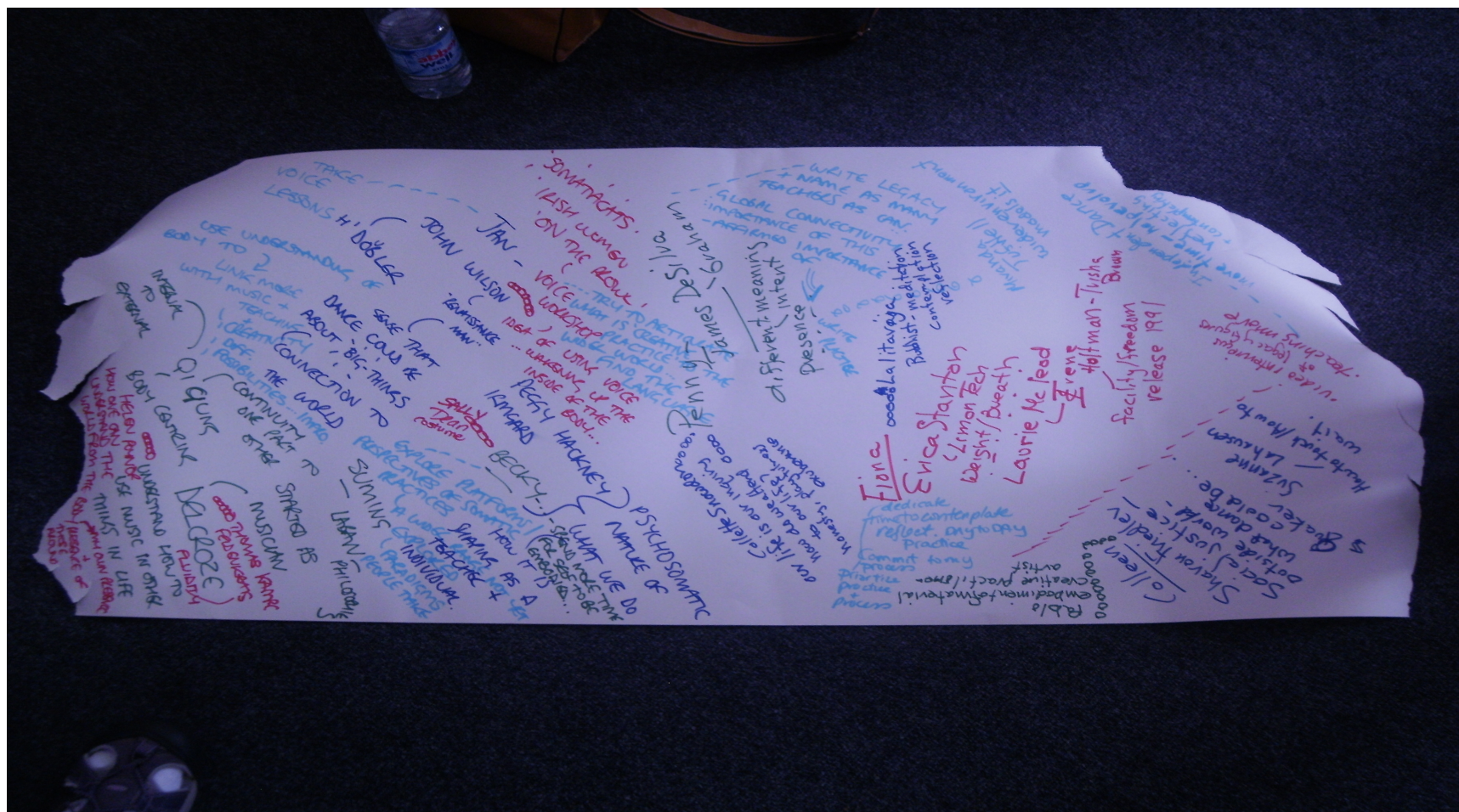


Figure 16. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 3 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013 (photo captured by author)

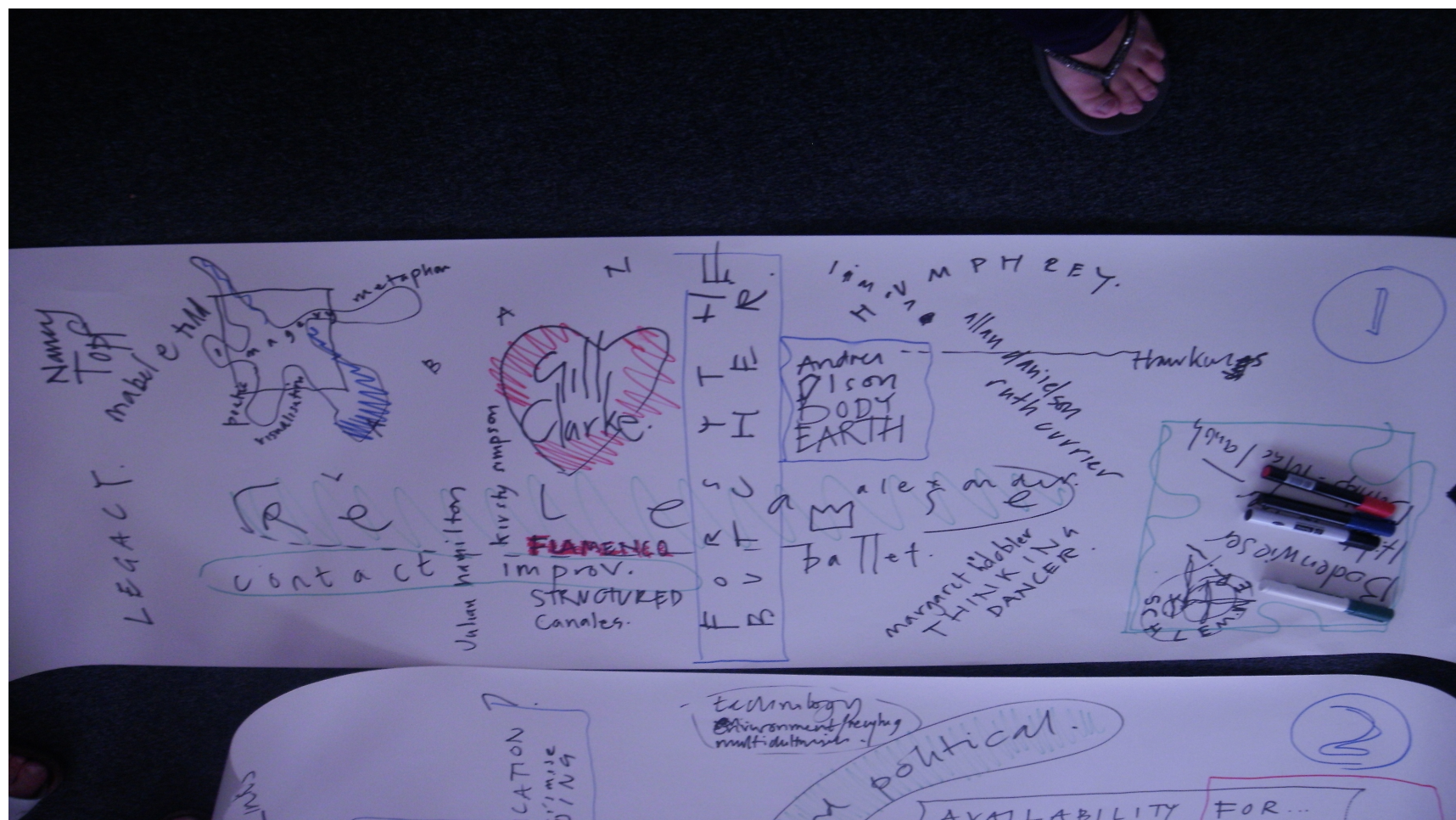


Figure 17. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 2 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013 (photo captured by author). Please see more of these illustrations in Appendix 8.

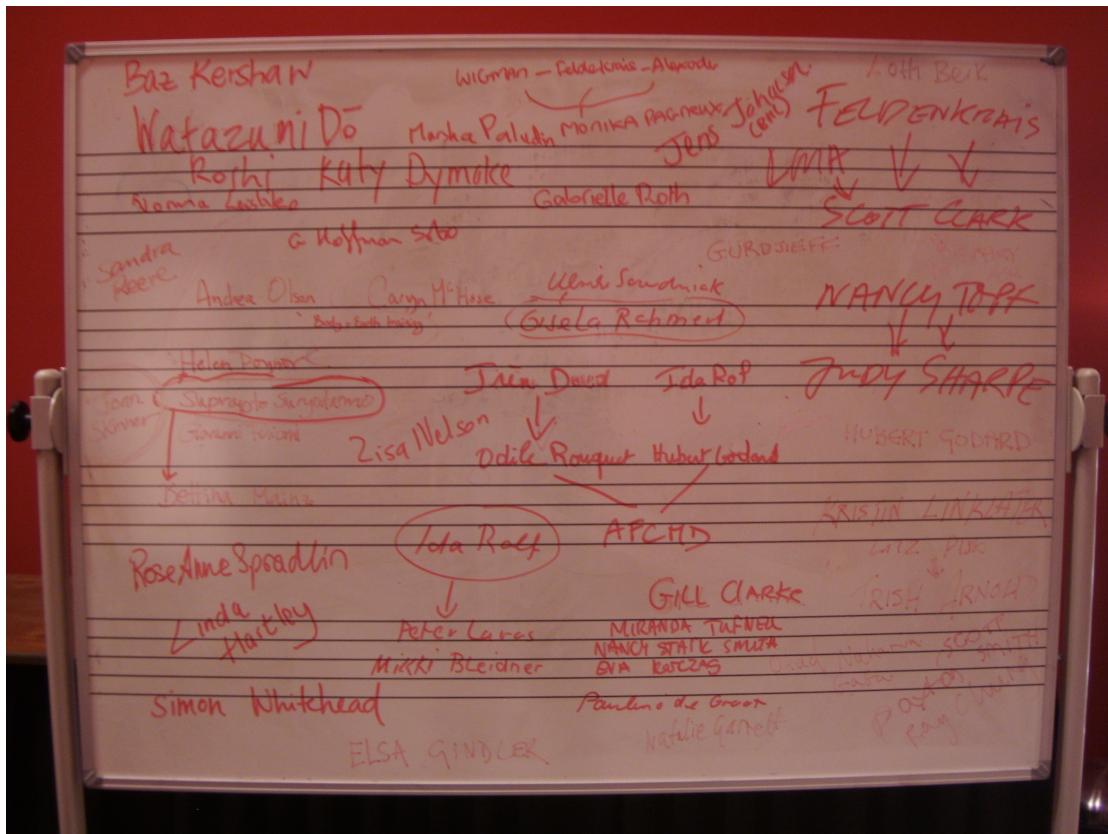


Figure 18. Mapping Connections and Registering Legacies on Whiteboard, at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013 (photo captured by author).

The figures above illustrate the intricacy of this network of practitioners that now form the somatic-informed dance world, but also begin to demonstrate the type of language practitioners share.

Testimonies and publications that demonstrate some of the shared themes and principles amongst dance training (and/or making) and somatic education include: existing histories of the somatic movement, of New or Independent Dance (Jordan 1992, Claid 2006, Burt 2007, Eddy 2009, Mangione 1993 and Bales, Netti-Fiol, 2008), as well as books and practice sources exploring interconnections between language and movement or embodied processes. Diehl and Lampert 2011 offer explicit reference to the ways somatic practices have informed the somatic influence in some dance artists' approach. The latter offer guidance and support for movement explorations as, for example, did the

work of Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay (2004⁷³ and 1993 - first published in 1990) and Franklin's 1996 *Dynamic Alignment Through Imagery*. Grounded on a rhetoric of bodily wisdom⁷⁴ the book titled *The Wise Body* was edited by Jacky Lansley and Fergus Early in 2011. It demonstrates the sustained interests of members of the X6 collective. Publications demonstrating an interest to this approach to practice are indicative of the focus of this community of the dance world.

The themes the New Dance community explored also shaped the artist-led publication of the *New Dance Magazine* (1977-1987). This was not the only artist-led magazine published in the 70s. American post-modern dance artists driven mainly by discoveries in Contact Improvisation and Release Technique sought to experiment with non-conventional methods that would allow them to deepen their explorations into their physicality and movement. *Contact Quarterly* is a magazine that was first published in 1975 and aimed to function as a platform for artists to voice thoughts and exchange ideas, concerns or developments as well as outlining a philosophy and ethos of practice. Both these publications were collective in nature and are illustrative of the need for visibility of experimental art-forms and the desire to place the artist at the centre of the practice. In 1985, a similar journal was published in Australia titled *Writings on Dance*. This aimed to offer analysis, commentary and theory of the moving body while supporting alternative practices and other arts. Indicatively, its' first issue was focused on 'Ideokinesis and Dancemaking'.

Theory drawn from somatic practices is very often featured in these sources. For example, as I have shown earlier in the thesis, following invitations and discussions with Nancy Stark Smith and Lisa Nelson, both editors of *Contact Quarterly*, Bainbridge Cohen published a series of articles in the magazine

⁷³ In this text Miranda Tufnell offers a short biographical note and introduces the reader in a poetic and illustrative book that became an influential source for New Dance and Independent artists in Britain and beyond. Please see Appendix 12 for an excerpt from Tufnell's biographical note that illustrates her eloquence, her body-based language and the some of the influences she had from the field of somatic.

⁷⁴ Hartley's *The Wisdom of the Body Moving* was a similar conceptualization of the body.

which in 1993 became the first distillation of BMC® in the form of a book. Other practice focused journals have been published by somatic practitioners at different stages during the past four decades. *Currents* is the Journal of the BMCA first published in the Summer 1998 still in print today. *A Moving Journal* is an example of a source focused on Authentic Movement published between 1994 and 2006. Dance artists like Eva Karzcag who have employed Authentic Movement practice in their creative or educational work have been interviewed or may have contributed to these journals.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has begun to unpack the particular strand of somatic-informed contemporary dance practice I investigate as part of this research. It did so in the following ways. First it located it historically, culturally and conceptually through a critical discussion on historical labelling that pointed to common ground between New Dance and post-modern dance. In doing so, Ruth Pethybridge's invitation to rethink labelling was endorsed while also pointing to the porousness of practices. Through a discussion around the commonalities and differences in the shift of practice between British and American radical artists, I pointed to a global connectivity that informed the emergence of New and Independent Dance as somatic-informed dance practice. I thereby introduced to my view of cultural boundaries as permeable.

This chapter has begun to show reasons why to connect cultural and/or artistic trends or social movements with a restrictive geographic specificity would be perhaps based on a false impression. This is perhaps particularly true in the socio-political and economic context of the latter half of the 20th century, post World War II. In the age of globalization and information, ideas may be instantly shared worldwide, people transmigrate and distances become illusive. The idea of cultural confinement within specific geographic boundaries might also be illusive. On this ground, exchange between USA and Britain is seen as inevitable and reflective of the global situation. In an investigation of lineage as in this study, reference to experimentations of American artists is, therefore,

also offered in this chapter given the ongoing dialogue between the British and the American radical dance scene throughout these decades. The identification of connections between practices and situating them in cultural context is a process undertaken with the aim to contribute towards re-illuminating a historic moment in the development of contemporary dance and current practice.

The chapter also began to identify the political and conceptual base on which some of the shifts were grounded. For example, the recounts of New Dance artists such as Fergus Early and Anna Furse (during “X6 and Friends event”) pointed to the fact that radical changes in the way dance was practiced was also underpinned by egalitarian, democratic and non-hierarchical values. Process-oriented work, the practice of *sharing* Early introduced in the ballet classes he taught at Butler’s Wharf and a person-centered approach in creative processes highlighted by Furse’s examples point to these values. Emily Claid’s (2006) analysis also identified philosophical frameworks such as feminism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism and Maoism. Drawing from a reflective note by Rosemary Lee, eastern religious philosophy was also identified as a conceptual frame that informed the emergence of New and Independent Dance.

The emphasis on the body and the process of moving, liberation from stylization or other forms of political liberation, fostering individuality/subjectivity and emphasis on the value of the autobiographical, pluralism and diversity were all values of the New Dance movement. The radical political nature of some parts of the arts world was evident in the 1970s and has been discussed in a number of accounts such as Jordan 1992, Mackrell 1992, Claid 2006, Burt 2007 and throughout the documentations of the New Dance Magazine. It has also been discussed in relation to events in this chapter such as *The Big 30: X6 and Friends – Now and Then* event at Chisenhale Dance Space in October 2013 and in *New Dance and Somatics* event convened by Ramsay Burt and Jonathan Burrows in June 2012.

The second part of this chapter began to identify BMC® informed dance artists who practiced in Britain over the past four decades. Through reference to Fergus Early's pedagogic focus on shifting the attention from achieving the *arabesque* to 'how one could get there', New Dance artists interest in developing dancers' kinesthetic sense was introduced. The second part of this chapter also identified some sources that distilled artists' radical approaches such as a number of artist-led magazines. It presented a series of pictures taken in the field (Dance and Somatic Practices Conference, Coventry 2013) from an exercise that looked to capture lineage and to raise awareness around the importance of naming influences. This offered a visual representation of a global network of artists and their lineage (including somatic practitioners and somatic-informed dance artists) that influenced the work of current somatic-informed dance artists and scholars.

It may be argued, therefore, that the developments and interests of parts of the contemporary dance world in the late 60s - 70s and the shifts in dance practice since then suggests that somatics might be a social movement that is not confined in a field containing only the numerous somatic methods. Rather, if we consider it as a current of thought and an approach to experiencing the body we could argue that aspects of contemporary dance, namely New and Independent dance were informed but also perhaps helped shape the movement further. In other words somatic-informed dance practitioners could be argued to be part of the somatic movement. To attempt a definitive identification of the boundaries of a social movement would probably be an illusive undertaking and therefore I will avoid doing so here. (The definition of such boundaries may be more possible through professional and scholarly dialogue and in a few years time when a historical distance from the events allows for reflection).

Dance artists' experiments since the 70s and the different sources outlined in this chapter have contributed in developing a discourse of practice that overcomes the boundaries of orthodox dance pedagogy. Though not

necessarily cohesive or homogenous, the voices of the artists represented through artist-led journals or other publications written by artists illustrate the growth of improvisatory and creative work that is grounded on a rhetoric of corporeal intelligence and knowledge, kinesthesia and embodiment. The shift of interest towards the subjectivity of the dancer since the late 60s - early 70s was accompanied with focusing on the lived body and the sensed experience of movement. While demonstrating the complexity of identifying lineage in this chapter, discussions and figures have shown that the sources artists drew on to evolve their approaches included somatic practices. Changes in dance were made possible with the development of a discourse of practice that entails distinct principles, values and tools of working with artists and bodies, currently known as somatic-informed dance practice. As indicated in the introduction of this thesis, the gap in knowledge around the values and principles pertaining to somatic informed performance practice and the need for further research in this area has been stressed amongst others in Schiphort 2010. It is to the distinct character of the principles and ways of working that the following chapter speaks.

This chapter endorsed Nancy Stark Smith's metaphor of 'geology and the formation of rocks' in the sense that it recognizes the emergence of somatic-informed dance as a socially constructed movement system shaped by the forces of the environment around it (conceptual, cultural and practical factors). The chapter that follows takes this argument forward grounded on the understanding that for the somatic-informed dance field to form, artists lived theories in practice on and through their bodies, as Claid suggests. In this respect, it pursues the argument initiated in Chapter 3 around the role exploration of theories through the body played in the shaping of BMC®. Chapter 5 will work to show that it was dance artists' engagement with somatic principles and tools that fostered a sense of embodiment that further gave rise to practice and trends. It will also offer indicative examples of the way this shift was manifested in practice. Additionally, as I will move on to discuss, looking at the notion of permeability and the concept of embodiment through the prism of

somatic informed dance practice more closely may lead to a further understanding of the role embodiment and lived experience might play in the development of a sense of self and the emergence of culturally constructed movement systems.

5. Exploring Permeable Boundaries: The Influence of Somatics on Aspects of Contemporary Dance in Britain from a Historical Perspective

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter began to situate the interface between dance and somatic practices in conceptual, historical and cultural context. It did so while beginning to demonstrate the complexity of a historiographic task that works to show lineage and influences from different bodies of thought and the role these play in the emergence of a culturally constructed movement system such as New and independent dance. In light of a methodological concern around historic labelling, it provided some evidence that pointed to a permeability and porousness of boundaries between historic phases in dance. It also began to indicate a global connectivity amongst radical dance and somatic practices since the 70s. In doing so, it claimed that to examine an approach to practice as defined by the geographic boundaries where research is taking place is perhaps an illusive undertaking. It thereby implicitly justified the reason why examples of practitioners' work are not only drawn from Britain. The chapter made reference to aesthetic shifts and begun illustrating the initial interests and the conceptual ground on which a shift in practice emerged during a 'break-away' period in contemporary dance in Britain. As discussed, that was a time that artists sought for an independence of practice. They refuted hegemonic institutions with a desire to liberate the art-form from a regimentation of established and set techniques.

To re-claim their subjectivity as dancers and bodies, dance artists internationally and in Britain, shifted their attention to discovering something fundamental about human nature, namely their embodiment. This was initiated through processes that helped them to re-connect with the "real body" that Claid (2006)

spoke of in the previous chapter. This involved exploring 'natural' movement that was freed from movement vocabulary drawn from codified techniques. The X6 collective and numerous artists they collaborated with became intrigued by the experience of what they were discovering on a sensory-motor level. As I will show in this section, New Dance artists' interest was in re-discovering the body as freed from regimentation, re-imagining what dance practice might be and how new movement options and material may emerge out of the body. To achieve this they reached to practices that offered an array of pedagogic tools that supported guidance in embodiment processes. This chapter will pursue the investigation into lineage further examining the way the interest in embodiment is portrayed in the development of a discourse of practice that includes, principles and pedagogic tools that dance artists have borrowed from the field of somatics, amongst other sources. I also refer to values inherent in the somatic approach (particularly in section 5.1.1 with Schiphorst's (2009) distillation) as principles. In this chapter I analyse a discourse of practice while continuing to engage with notions of lineage. I, therefore, present principles and tools found in practice through discussion of sources that have contributed towards this analysis and through introducing to the work of different somatic-informed practitioners and moments of their journeys. Only a selection of principles are discussed as relevant to the main focus of this thesis and as prescribed by the confines of this research project. The discussion of principles in this light works to trace the initial stages of shifts in dance practice while maintaining an understanding of the way these changes are manifest in today's somatic-informed contemporary dance practice.

Tools dance artists discovered during experimentation allowed them to explore what later became understood and widely known as notions of *kinesthesia* and embodiment. The current awareness and use of these terms is also arguably attributed to the growing knowledge base around the body that was becoming available during the same time (as discussed in earlier sections in this thesis).

Pedagogical or creative tools⁷⁵ employed such as *somatisation*, *experiential anatomy* and *partner work* are now encapsulated in practitioners' workshops. The deep detailed anatomical and physiological focus of BMC® and the philosophy of the practice has informed explicitly, but often also implicitly the approach of New Dance and experimental dance work. Influences have often permeated practices through osmosis rather than direct reference. Artists have been introduced to somatic concepts and have developed language and approaches to teaching or task setting in preparation for performance through other artists' work rather than being trained professionally in a particular somatic method. For example, Sue McLennan (Appendix 10) and Sarah Whatley (Appendix 11) have spoken to this in interviews I conducted with them in 2012. It is indicative to note Whatley's recounting of explorations of that period and as her thought deepens into memories, the ways she observes changes in the discourse and language of dance.

This section aims, in part, to further contribute to the process of situating practices in context, this time by examining the principles and tools adopted or shared between somatics and the dance world. I will work to argue that with some common ground on the philosophy of practice, these values, principles and tools became inevitably influential within a western globalised environment and in a fluid and permeable community of artists such as that of New Dance. I will mainly focus on illustrating how an emphasis on embodiment was shared amongst somatic and somatic-informed dance artists by looking at the principles and tools that made this emphasis possible. Informed by my anthropological perspective, principles and tools are viewed as cultural traits of the somatic movement. As I have begun to indicate earlier in the thesis, I see the connecting link between the somatic and the New and Independent dance world to be the emphasis on embodiment. My understanding of the term is informed by a somatic understanding and, specifically, by the approach to embodiment that BMC® proposes, as illustrated in Chapter 3. It is also

⁷⁵ Depending on the context these are applied, the same methods might be considered pedagogical, therapeutic or creative tools or tasks.

grounded on a conceptualization of embodiment drawn from the embodiment paradigm encountered in medical anthropology (Csordas 1990, 1994a & b), and employed in dance anthropology as seen in Ness 1992, 1996a&b, 2004, Novack 1990 and Sklar 1994, 1999, 2000, 2001a&b and others discussed in Chapter 2). The way the somatic and anthropological understandings of embodiment converse will be discussed in the following chapter in light of the discussion offered in this and the previous chapters.

Arguments offered in this chapter are informed by testimonies of practitioners such as Fulkerson (2005), Claid (2006) and Buckwalter (2010) and by evidence drawn from fieldwork and my own practice⁷⁶. Interviews I have conducted with artists such as Sue McLennan⁷⁷, Duncan Holt, Katy Dymoke, Sarah Whatley, Amy Voris, Penny Collinson, Natalie Garrett-Brown, Jens Johansen, Kerstin Wellhofer have informed my choice of principles and tools discussed in this section. In quoting interviewees in this chapter, I have purposefully allowed for intonations and emphasis placed by each individual to be present. I have done so in order to allow for the historical perspective employed to illustrate the vividness of memories that forms a history in the making – to allow for individuals oral narrations to emit the impact shifts in practice had on them.

In the panel discussion, referred to in Chapter 4, that was convened by choreographer Jonathan Burrows and Ramsay Burt in June 2012 with a focus towards New Dance and Somatics, a lack of reference to the pedagogic tools and principles that made explorations and discoveries possible since the 70s was apparent. The discussion as well as Burt's presentation begins to identify artists' shift of interest and presents examples of current application, but does not identify how classes, workshops and practice shifted which I consider

⁷⁶ In an analytic reflective manner, shifts in my own practice also demonstrate some of these changes. Educated in dance in Britain since 1997, I have been a 'consumer' of the shifts in dance practice and of the legacies the New and Independent dance eras have left.

⁷⁷With a generous spirit, McLennan's memories of the 70s and 80s and reflections on the way the somatic movement and aspects of contemporary dance grew together are particularly illuminating. A transcribed section from my interview with her is offered in Appendix 10. To this research, this is a piece of oral history encountered in fieldwork with great value demonstrating in a nutshell the aura of the early periods of experimentation and the kinds of fluid world and exchange artists in the 70s and 80s established.

significant from an analytic, historical, ethnographic and, importantly, pedagogical perspective. It is to this gap that this chapter responds to. The ethnographic historical perspective is therefore employed in order to provide with some evidence for this exchange. In employing a historical perspective the chapter aims to begin documenting and discussing an aspect of British contemporary dance history, arguably, not addressed enough to date. Finally, an inherent argument underlies the endeavour to identify shared principles and tools amongst dance and somatics. That is that the effectiveness and impact of the methods to participants is grounded on these tools' direct influence and focus on embodiment.

A limited specificity in identification of the tools and principles shared amongst dance and somatic practitioners was also an issue encountered during fieldwork. Artists interviewed often outlined their artistic, aesthetic or stylistic explorations and discoveries, without referring to the ways with which they reached to these conclusions. The emphasis on the aesthetic shifts is partly reflected in the historic accounts written to date examining that period. During the "X6 and Friends" event at Chisenhale Dance Space, the essence of the New Dance era was emitted through a wealth of memories and interactions between artists who are now clearly on individual paths. However, artists in the discussion seemed willing and ready to re-inspire for a political repositioning of the artistic world. As discussed in Chapter 4, from an artist's perspective, reference to the pedagogic shifts was touched upon by Fergus Early. As mentioned earlier, from another perspective, Garrett-Brown (2007), has explored some of the pedagogic principles in an inquiry on the ontological status of Western dance performance informed by somatic practices with an emphasis on exploring the level to which somatic-informed dance unveils or challenges ocularcentrism in dance studies.

Through examples of the ways somatics and dance may be interrelated, it is hoped that an ambience of a strand of contemporary dance is emitted. Practices, although distinct in nature are not looked in isolation to each other. Rather they are viewed as forming a continuum of exchange and a growing

voice in dance pedagogy. The chapter has emerged out of my interest in discussing common pedagogical tools employed by the dance world that originate in different somatic practices. The identification of these connections is enabled through the particular lens of BMC® as an approach situated in and reflective of the somatic movement. The connections I am discussing here are informed by my own engagement and experience of BMC® work. They are also informed by my participation in other somatic forms such as SRT and the Feldenkrais Method. Although I refer to some artists that may not acknowledge a BMC® influence in their work, through experience or participant observation I note affinities between their practice and the BMC® approach. This observation is suggestive of the osmosis that was taking place while practice was being negotiated during radical eras in British contemporary dance. Additionally, it may be indicative of similarities in the tools and principles used by different somatic practices especially, for example, in the way embodied anatomy is explored. Besides BMC® informed dance artists, reference in this chapter is made to artists that may have endorsed tools from different somatic practices including Alexander Technique, the Feldenkrais Method, Klein Technique, Skinner Releasing Technique and other. It is my engagement with the BMC® approach, its lineage and focus and research on embodiment that allows for the identification of connections between these methods.

Examined as cultural traits and, in a way, customs of a social group, principles applied in practice are also seen to conceal cultural meaning for the somatically informed approach to dance pedagogy. The anthropological documentation and interpretation of the principles allow for an understanding of the impact of the somatically informed approach to participants. Principles and tools discussed emanate both the underpinning philosophical ground and ethos of the work as well as aspects of its cultural predicament (Clifford 1988, Ness 2007). Naming and tracing historically the roots and the context some of the principles we now almost unquestionably use in the facilitation of dance and movement explorations, in the particular way offered in this thesis has allowed for the documentation and analysis of practice.

5.1.1. A Practitioner-researcher Perspective: Identification of Values and Principles as Distillations of Practice

In an investigation of ‘first-person methodologies’ in which she includes somatics, Schiphorst (2009) depicts four principal values of practice. She argues that “in somatic practice meaning is constructed through self-observation, experience and the inter-connectedness of body and mind” (Schiphorst 2009: 86). Whilst raising the need for further investigation on this subject, the four values she identifies are as follows:

1. The value of the **self** as enactor of change, knowledge and transformation.
2. The value of **attention**, self-observation, awareness in relationship to the self.
3. The value of **experience** as a source of knowledge, through which language gains its integrity and ethical connection to knowing.
4. The value of **interconnectedness**, in relation to mind and body, self and world, subjective and objective, theory and practice.

(Schiphorst 2009: 86, emphasis in the original)

“These values”, she argues, “*define* the epistemologies of practice within somatics: how knowledge is accessed and constructed within the first-person techniques. Meaning *emerges* through the application of these values, and for somatics this meaning lies in the body” (Schiphorst 2009: 85, emphasis in the original). Her interpretation resonates with the outlook on which the discussion in this chapter is grounded.

From the perspective of Body-Mind Psychotherapy, BMC® trained Susan Aposhyan (2004: 15) offers an interesting distillation of six principles that she argues underlie body-mind integration and are applicable to any context. The principles are: respect, full participation, inclusivity, dialogue, sequencing, and development. A brief analysis of these principles is offered in the table below (Figure 19). Although writing from a psychotherapeutic frame, Aposhyan’s distillation of principles as offered in this figure is arguably applicable in dance pedagogy and creative process. The principles depicted here are not necessarily fully versed as such by BMC®-informed dance practitioners. However, I argue, depending on the practitioner, they may be implicitly evident in practice. Aposhyan’s principles complement the nine principles of the BMC®

approach outlined in Chapter 3 of this thesis following Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011).

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Figure 19. Six principles of body-mind integration as offered in Aposhyan (2004: 16).

In this chapter, I will work to illustrate the way principles and tools employed in current dance pedagogy identified as part of this chapter help to cultivate *kinesthesia* and through this a sense of embodiment for dancers as relevant to the broader emphasis of this thesis. As explained in section 2.6 of this thesis, I have been interested to explore the relationship between these two concepts that in the field are expressed with an implicit relationship. This is done with reference to the shifts in what constituted dance practice and explorations in the early stages of New Dance. I do so writing from the perspective of a practitioner who has experienced, and as people in the field would say, 'embodied' pedagogical and artistic shifts in my own journey, and as a learner and ethnographer who has witnessed the shifts in my field. As such, the principles and tools discussed in this chapter are one of the many possible formulations this analysis could take.

As indicated in the introduction of the thesis and in Chapter 2, my practice over the past few years has involved facilitating workshops for dancers that focused in preparing them for performance and composition through studio practice,

improvisation and composition classes. With an interest in interdisciplinary performance I have also taught interdisciplinary performers that included musicians and actors. Another aspect of my practice was driven by an interest in discovering what we know in somatic-informed dance education that can be useful for and applied to movement education for non-dancers. As discussed this aspect of practice particularly focused in supporting them in moving with greater ease and finding pleasure in movement and their body. (This latter curiosity is a life-long project which falls beyond the parameters of this thesis.) However, in the above applications of somatic-informed dance or movement pedagogy, I used a mixture of tools that are essentially grounded on the same principles and values. Some of these principles include those listed by Aposhyan (2004) above, Miller, Ethridge and Morgan (2011) offered in Chapter 3 and values distilled by Schiphorst (2009). Workshops or master-classes I have taught did not necessarily lead to a shared performance, but worked to cultivate certain performance attributes for the participants. In many ways the pedagogic practice has been for me a strong creative outlet as I have always considered creative work to be an integral part of the workshops I have facilitated with this focus. As a result, examples of principles selected in this chapter are also illustrative of those I have employed from a somatic approach to movement pedagogy. Therefore, discussion of each is representative of reflections that emerged and tensions I have attempted to resolve through practice.

5.2. Somatic-informed Contemporary Dance: A View Into a Discourse of Practice

The exchange between the dance and the somatic world is reinstated by BMC® Teacher, Jens Johansen. During an introduction to the Primitive Reflexes, Righting Reactions, Equilibrium Responses course hosted by Edge Hill University (August 2009), Johansen recalls:

In Body-Mind Centering® the reflex work, the work with the reflexes, came through Bonnie's work with children with problems. She used to work as an occupational therapist in an institution and was very

successful with these children with severe problems. And the med she was working under said to her 'you must find out why you are so successful'. And the research was/is BMC... and the people that researched with her were dancers. So in the 60s, when she came up with these ideas of exploring movement from organs, the endocrine system, the nervous system, it was still a little bit crazy in the movement world or dance world. But there were these new developments in Contact Improv. Started in the 60s, I think, and post-modern dance started.... New developments of rolling in the floor started and release techniques. This whole world of more sensitive ways of exploring our bodies, kind of grew and the people that were really interested in changing the dance world heard of her and also said 'well, I'm definitely going to be part of that research if I can. So the first generation of BMC® students / teachers are from the seventies and they actually even started in the 60s I think.

Here Johansen points to the shift in the way dancers and somatic practitioners came together through an interest in exploring more sensitive ways of moving, sensing and understanding their bodies. This extract from Johansen's introduction to the course 'Primitive Reflexes, Righting Reactions and Equilibrium Responses' of the SME programme (Liverpool 2009) is offered here as a moment of oral history, a piece of fieldwork data and an example of the way the practice might be promoted. The BMC® approach to the reflexes has often been employed by Contact Improvisation artists. The connections between Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Lisa Nelson and Nancy Stark Smith have also been shown in the previous chapter. Additionally, articles by both artists and somatic practitioners were featured in artist-led magazines such as Contact Quarterly which developed dialogue and fuelled experimentation. For example, in "Fall after Newton", Paxton et al. (2006) address the function of reflexes in the body and the way they informed explorations in Contact Improvisation, particularly in studies into standing. Nancy Stark Smith, Paxton's lasting partner in movement exploration and co-editor of Contact Quarterly, emphasizes the importance of the reflexes in order to ensure safety in contact improvisation. In the learning of the form, she states, "once you get a clear feel for the basic premise, develop a few safety skills, and get your reflexes primed and ready, then you're off. You learn by doing" (Stark Smith 2006). Developmental

movement patterns such as “yielding and pushing”, or “reaching and pulling”⁷⁸, due to their relational nature, are also often explored in partnering work. As indicated in Chapter 4, these patterns were noted by a delegate in Figure 15.

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Figure 20. A Baby yielding on Len Cohen, courtesy of the SBMC archive (Bainbridge Cohen, 2013)

Lineage and cross-fertilisation between somatic work and New and Independent dance work is also evident in the use of language shared amongst practitioners and used to facilitate training, preparation for performance and creative processes. A number of principles of practice such as imagery, the process of somatisation and reciprocal methods of delivery are shared between somatic practice and experimental dance work such as that taking place in New and Independent dance.

⁷⁸ Explored as part of the Basic Neurocellular Patterns course in the SME Programme of BMC®. For an analysis of the approach BMC® takes to these patterns, please see Bainbridge Cohen (1993), Hartley (1994) and Aposhyan (2004).

Examples of methods such as *sharing* (discussed in Chapter 4) demonstrate shared values and approach between the New Dance and somatic movements, illustrating their parallel, interweaved and cross-pollinating growth and not necessarily a causal relationship. In New Dance, emphasis was placed on democratic values and non-hierarchical processes of creation and production. In somatic work, such as BMC®, a “bottom-up” education is encouraged as opposed to the traditional didactic process of “top to bottom”. Bainbridge Cohen clarifies that the school focuses on diversity and not an ideal teacher to deliver the subject/syllabus. (Kuypers, Andrien and Corin 2006) The focus on the empowerment of the individual and emphasis on subjective bodily experience has been evident in both New and, more recently, Independent dance work as well as somatic practices. These interests and the philosophical and political ground of practices were situated. They emerged within and reflect a wider socio-political and cultural shift of a part of the western world that seemed to resist a rigid society and production system and appeared to aim to explore and propose alternate ways of being in and connecting to the world.

Reflective practice is considered essential in somatic-informed contemporary dance practice in order to *integrate* information, and to make sensations and observations on embodiment conscious and therefore available for future embodied research. In a rich distillation of Gill Clarke’s (1957-2011) approach to artist education, Clarke, Cramer and Müller (in Diehl and Lampert 2011) register the importance Clarke placed on reflection in the educational process of a dancer or performer.

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Figure 21. Gill Clarke (Dance UK, 2011)

A greatly influential and inspiring figure in contemporary dance in Britain and beyond, Clarke was a founder-member of the Siobhan Davies Dance Company. She collaborated with many other choreographers including Rosemary Butcher, Rosemary Lee and Janet Smith. She taught internationally, was director of performance studies at the Laban Centre in London between 2000 and 2006 and co-director of Independent Dance - the organization established to support independent dance artist in Britain. The depth of her insights on movement and performance were mainly informed by the somatic approaches of Alexander Technique and Klein Technique. *Minding Motion* was the title of a series of intense workshops that Gill Clarke taught in 2009 in Berlin as part of the Tanzplan Research project which explored contemporary dance teaching methods⁷⁹. Although Clarke did not shape her approach into a 'closed' or 'set' method, in Clarke, Cramer and Müller (2011) the phrase *Minding Motion* is used as a shorthand of Gill Clarke's pedagogical approaches employed in the particular context. She was a most inspiring teacher with great depth of knowledge in the body, movement and dance.

Clarke's approach to a performer's education, as outlined in this text, was shaped through her professional and pedagogical *parcours*, and "was influenced by cultural shifts and her encounters with current thinking in

⁷⁹ Findings of this project are offered in Diehl and Lampert 2011.

disciplines within and beyond the arts” (Clarke, Cramer and Müller 2011: 209). Clarke, Cramer and Müller offer a reading list of some of Clarke’s theoretical reference points beyond dance and other artists (Clarke, Cramer and Müller 2011: 229). The schematic reference to Clarke’s influences in this volume (shown in Figure 22), demonstrates the growing interest on legacy and socio-historical or cultural positioning of approaches to dance in dance scholarly research. It also lists a number of practitioners that have been influential in the development of contemporary dance in Britain, not only through their influence to Clarke but through their exchange with and teaching of numerous dance artists. The outline of Clarke’s approach includes a lesson structure (221-226) that is strongly illustrative of the distinct nature of somatic informed dance training and a representative example of this strand of contemporary dance training that is growing internationally as well as in the UK. The lesson structure demonstrates Clarke’s deep thinking, reflection and knowledge around facilitating a learning environment that is not effect-driven, segregative or wishing to transmit notions of right or wrong. Rather, Clarke’s Minding Motion as distilled in Clarke, Cramer and Müller aims to develop a dancer’s embodied understanding and awareness of their own movement. That is to develop an awareness of the dance artist’s “physiological and anatomic structure that will be the basis of movement generation and understanding” (Clarke, Cramer and Müller 2011: 217). It also offers an informative discussion of principles that underpinned her approach that are most relevant and, perhaps, complementary to this chapter’s focus.

Responding to a question regarding what Clarke felt important in her teaching of her work she stated:

I am trying to create an environment that can facilitate learning. That is also about using different tools to encourage this state of openness, readiness. Using drawing or automatic writing or partner work, or making sound. So even if I am not dealing with improvisation, I am concerned with an improvisational mind. How can we be in a state of mind and body in readiness? To be open to new experience, to new sensation? The German word *stimmen* (to tune) feels useful in relation to how we work with our body, like tuning a stringed instrument.

What feels important to the learning, for me, is immersion over an intensive period because the information accumulates within the body. And it needs time for new information to first arrive in the body as sensation or awareness, and then to be applied and tested in practice, and then to allow another layer of information to come in, in relationship to this. To do really thorough partner work and swap over takes sometimes more than an hour – and then you want to put this into movement and practice. That is not to say that one then continually needs so long. Once the information has been embodied, then one can access it more quickly, more readily. But if it is only ever met superficially, then it is only going to be an idea in the head, not experiential knowledge thought through the body.

(Clarke interviewed by Boxberger in Diehl and Lampert 2011: 202)

Clarke's descriptions of the "state of readiness" and the openness to new experience and sensation she worked to cultivate indicate a state of being-in-the-world that in the first instance requires attunement of the body and mind. She noted the usefulness of the German word *stimmen* to describe the way she worked with the body. It's like tuning a stringed instrument, she clarifies. Besides the knowledge of the body and the guidance through specific tools, to facilitate such a quality requires an environment that is grounded on allowance and acceptance of the self. An understanding of the timing of the body is also required.

Notable here is the depth of understanding of how embodied learning may be facilitated and how information may become embodied through partner work. The understanding of the timing of the body that Clarke highlights resonates with Nancy Stark Smith's statement that the time of the body is slower. This kind of understanding of the process of 'becoming embodied' is characteristic to somatic work. Clarke's response is also illustrative of an interest in and distinct understanding of experiential and embodied learning processes that burgeoned with developments in New Dance. This focus is still growing today and is very present in literature, in debates around Higher Education dance pedagogy and in the Independent Dance sector of the contemporary dance world in the UK and beyond.

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Figure 22. A mapping of Gill Clarke's background and influences as offered in Diehl and Lampert (2011: 198).

It should be noted at this point that although I write from the perspective of a BMC® informed dance practitioner, I do by no means suggest that the New Dance movement borrowed principles from BMC® only. Rather, what I note again is the permeability of somatic practices as much as an exchange between the somatic and the dance world. So although one may not suggest any kind of uniformity between somatic approaches, some principles and concepts link them together as a social movement. A fundamental link I identify is perhaps the emphasis on embodiment and, for some methods, experiential anatomy.

For example, in a deeply inspiring two-day course during Decoda 2011⁸⁰, Alexander and Klein technique trained Gill Clarke in collaboration with Alexander Technique teacher Lucia Walker began their workshops with images and an introduction to the skeleton which led to movement explorations grounded on the descriptions and comments offered. As a BMC® trained practitioner, I found there would be very little I could distinguish as not BMC® work in this part of the workshop. This is not to say that the artists had references that were not made explicit. In making this point I wish to illustrate that there is common conceptual ground between certain somatic practices, which is where the dance world has attended to and drawn from.

Traditionally, anatomy and physiology was perhaps taught on an introductory level through textbooks in dance degree programmes. New and Independent dancers sought for an understanding of their anatomy that was experiential, applicable and perhaps even grounded on their artistic practice. As shown in Chapter 3, BMC® incorporates explorations of many different systems in human physiology, including systems other than the skeleton, muscles and the nervous system. In western movement traditions the skeleton, muscles and the nervous system are generally considered as the generators or the locus of movement and felt sense. BMC® therefore deepens an understanding and cultivates conscious awareness of structures less acknowledged in western

⁸⁰ Decoda is a biannual dance festival directed by Katye Coe and hosted by the Dance Department at Coventry University. It is an event that appears to have re-generated the New Dance Festivals organized mainly by Sarah Whatley in the 90s.

movement traditions for their impact in human movement. It is grounded on the premise that through embodiment processes one can be guided to become aware of the experience of body systems traditionally considered as not. This controversial proposition may have significant implications for existential analysis and a phenomenological understanding of embodiment.

Dancers and dance artists sought after tools and information that could deepen their processes as creators. The fields they found these were not singular or isolated. By being introduced to a somatic form through fellow artists, one was also becoming introduced to a discourse that encompassed the legacies of other practitioners and had lineage to diverse but relevant conceptual frameworks discussed in this thesis. The somatic movement had grown with numerous individuals being interested in similar topics. As Sieben notes, somatic practitioners were interested in common themes: kinetic intelligence; gravity; avoiding wear and tear through economy; coordination; and facility (2011: 137).

Diehl and Lampert (2011), have edited a rich source presenting examples of aspects of the current status of dance education. Techniques they refer to offer an illustration of developments in the European contemporary dance scene over the past few decades. To me, Gill Clarke's approach, as outlined in this text encapsulates developments in contemporary dance and 'artist-education' in Britain. Through a distillation of Clarke's practice, this refined account introduces concepts encountered in the dance world today. In a number of contexts in Britain, as a learner, artist and researcher, I have been introduced and have explored many of the concepts outlined and depicted in the summary of Clarke's work offered in Diehl and Lampert (2011). It is a text filled with the richness and body-based language Clarke used in courses or sessions she taught, a language full of imagery, experiences and insights on the body and movement and its emergence. In a question around the ways Clarke saw the different worlds of training in the UK, she responded:

Training in the UK developed very strongly in the late 1970s and 80s. The Graham work came a bit earlier, and then Cunningham took over, and still those techniques are taught now. Release Technique is also a strong strand. But that is a confusing term that needs clarifying. It is not Skinner Releasing technique developed by Joan Skinner, although that is also popular in the UK, but usually indicates a formal training influenced by somatic approaches in the same sense that what becomes important is the sensing experience of the dancer, and not only the form and the line. So there is a lot of that work happening in the UK, which I would say is enriching the UK dancing. It is enabling audiences to enjoy dance as playing out of the intelligence of the body, beyond the disciplined imprint of a technique or style.

I feel these two worlds that I once saw as so separate have now been bridged. There was a complexity of articulation offered through more technical approaches (although sometimes the muscular tension remained a little monochrome in its tone quality), and then the quality-shifts and individuality and textures that this other work has been exploring. Both have informed current work. So I think the bridge is an exciting place to be!

(Clarke interviewed by Boxberger in Diehl and Lampert 2011: 201)

Here Clarke not only speaks of a quality of movement and sensing of the body, but also clarifies the strands of dance education that have been bridged in Britain, that is the orthodox and the somatic approaches to dance practice. She elaborates on the way the somatic approach added to performers' education the possibility for quality shifts in movement, of texture and individuality. She contrasts this to what she calls a "monochrome" tone quality of muscular tension that, she implies, was the outcome of orthodox training.

Drawing from my understanding of BMC® to explain this, as shown in Chapter 3, through experiential anatomy one can learn to *source* from different body systems. This involves focusing attention to the body tissue through visualization and somatisation. In explorations of different tissues through movement improvisation, tonalities in the quality of movement vary. For example, in explorations of the cerebrospinal fluid⁸¹, I experienced a depth of silence, a sense of suspension and buoyancy in my movement. With a focus on the rhythm of the secretion and re-absorption of this fluid, my movement slowed

⁸¹ Please see an example of a hands-on exploration with a focus on the cerebrospinal fluid offered in Chapter 3.

down, it felt as if I was expanding up and out and then gathering in towards the centre of gravity with a sustained, peaceful, fluid movement. The expansion was not too big and the gathering in did not have a contracting sense, did not require muscular tension. It was an easeful, three-dimensional movement that rested the spirit. I could feel tension on my face release. Watching others move with this focus looked like an undirected Tai Chi dance. The knowledge that this fluid was there in my body allowed me to find a sense of support in this slow, expansion and gathering. Using muscular tension to sustain a slow movement in time and space has a very different result in movement. The difference is both visually perceivable as well as sensed. The performer's breath changes and her or his presence emits effort. Somatic-informed dance practitioners, might often make observations around tonalities in movement.

The use of *imagery* as a pedagogic method is widely used today in contemporary dance and movement education internationally. Poetic language and metaphors as imagery are distinct to the visualization process of *somatisation* employed in embodiment processes in BMC® (as explained in Chapter 3). However, metaphoric or poetic language is at times used during *somatisation*.

Poetic and anatomical Imagery was used extensively by Joan Skinner (founder of Skinner Releasing Technique) and Marsha Paludan (one of the founders of Anatomical Release Technique), Mary O'Donnell (Fulkerson), John Rolland, and Nancy Topf. Skinner Releasing and Anatomical Release Technique were among those somatic approaches that emerged in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s during the shift in the contemporary dance aesthetic away from highly stylized techniques of movement. These were approaches developed by dancers interested in creating ease in movement. They used imagery to suggest alternate and more functional pathways of movement in order to release excess effort. Joan Skinner had been a dancer with Martha Graham Dance Company but around the 70s sought after new 'released' ways of moving that were liberated from the restrictions and tension of modern

dance. Marsha Paludan had worked with Anna Halprin when they met while being appointed in different teaching roles at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Paludan's input in Skinner's groundbreaking sessions has been reported as invaluable (Buckwalter 2010: 97⁸²). When Skinner moved to Seattle, their pathways divided and each developed a distinct technique that uses imagery in different ways.

In referring to different approaches, I do not aim to suggest a kind of uniformity between somatic methods. However, the reference to multiple somatic forms is offered as an indication of the ways their common interest in heightening the felt sense of the body has evidently informed the work of contemporary dance practitioners and scholars who were interested in reinforcing or re-establishing the subjectivity of the dancer in their creative and pedagogic approaches. I, therefore, refer to other somatic forms driven by my interest in connections between practices and contexts as declared earlier in this thesis.

Depending on the artist's reference points imagery used varies in scope and content. The use of imagery, as a method for guiding dancers into a creative process, was employed by X6 collective members during their early experiments. Narrating her vivid memories of the things or experiences that led her inquiries and journey in dance, Sarah Whatley⁸³ recounts one of the first workshops she participated in that challenged the established 'orthodox' technique training as follows:

And I remember very strongly one day when Fergus came... we were lying on the floor, probably for a long time, which in itself was so unusual

⁸² Please see Buckwalter (2010: 97-98) for a useful introduction to the history and lineage that gave rise to these approaches and the distinct ways the use of imagery evolved.

⁸³ Sarah Whatley is currently Professor in dance at Coventry University and Director of the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRe) at Coventry. She has a long-standing presence in the shifts of what dance has come to be and contributed in many ways in advancing provision of the New Dance approach. In the 80s and 90s, she organized the New Dance Festival at Coventry (a poster of which is shown in Figure 23). Following her doctoral research on the work of Siobhan Davies, she developed a virtual archive of Davies' work, one of the first of its kind, which includes rich information on the work of numerous Independent Dance artists and some of who are somatic informed dance practitioners. (Please see Whatley, Varney and Bennett 2009).

for me to even just be still! ...He was asking us to... he was giving us images! Images! And we were able to imagine things! You know visualize things. And I remember...he gave us the image of tea-pot or tea-cups...I think it was around sort of feeling the vessels and then pouring and those sort of things. I remember sort of wrestling with my brain... with how much do you let that image in. You know, does the image stop the movement, stop the stillness even? And sort of wrestling at that time with very vivid sort of 'I can picture a vivid giant blue tea-pot, but that's not the point', the point is not the giant blue tea-pot... and so I was ...curious about 'what am I meant to be imagining?' 'what is that role of the image?'... so that was really interesting for me and I still remember that session. It was such a different world, thinking and just being in the studio. You know completely reformulated my experience of what the studio was. A studio that was still traditional... we still had mirrors on the wall, bars...which was completely home territory for me. And yet, there we were negating what was the home space. In a way it was culturally ...too. And that was really interesting too. Suddenly, I had to rethink my whole sense of where dance happens.

(Whatley 2012⁸⁴)

Whatley refers to a period during her undergraduate studies (1979-1982) at Leicester Polytechnic, currently De Montfort University, when New Dance artists such as Fergus Early, Maedee Dupree, Christine Juffs, Tony Thatcher and Gill Clarke, Mary Evelyn, Janet Smith were invited as guest teachers and the ways these workshops fed her journey and development as a dance artist.

Whatley's memories are particularly informative around the exchange amongst certain artists at the time. After a few years of involvement in this community of practitioners and during her first years as lecturer in dance at what was at the time Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts, Whatley organized a Festival of New Dance for ten years, poster of which is shown in Figure 23. Wishing to explore the shift in the focus and discourse of dance praxis, I asked Whatley whether artists were aware of the term 'embodiment' at the time. She responded:

No, God no... I mean it's so interesting how one's language molds and evolves and changes and emerges... I don't really know how much we talked about the word 'Body'! I mean certainly I wasn't anything like

⁸⁴ Part of this conversation is transcribed and offered in Appendix 11 as relevant to this chapter's theme.

somatic ... I don't know what the language was, but it wasn't the language of the body. And it wasn't because there was an anxiety about that or it wasn't because it was problematic. It just wasn't part of the discourse. I really don't remember [bringing] that kind of attention on interiority, you know of thinking from the inside out. And yes Mabel Todd, she was one of my first reference points, sort of finding a channel out of something I felt uncomfortable [talking of her technical training and patterning] and Margaret H'Doubler. I mean when I think about the early reading,... maybe that's useful, because maybe it was in my language and I don't remember it being. But I think my earliest sources for teaching differently in dance was H'Doubler in particular. And probably Humphrey a bit with 'The Art of Making Dances' as reference. But Mabel Todd...

... And Louise Steinman with 'The Knowing Body', that was an early text. It was before Tufnell and before Andrea Olsen and that sort of thing. I remember using [Louise Steinman] as a teaching resource. Not in a sort of experiential anatomy way, because I don't think I was even contemplating that as a teaching method. But purely as a...way of triggering ideas about image and body...well not body but about image and the knowing body. [That was around '76?] ...one of those early kind of alternative ...texts which brought image and poetry and alternative ...ways of looking at the world. I remember that being really important for me.

(Whatley 2012)

This narrative is offered here as an illustration of the shifts in language and focus that took place in the dance world at the time. Importantly, it is noted here as an example of the ways influences may impact unseemingly at first and gradually become an artistic or social movement. The sources Whatley refers to as well as somatic practices have played a role in shaping and molding the discourse shared amongst New Dance artists which was con-current with a growth in discourses around the body and embodiment in a number of theoretical fields over the past four decades or so. Sheets Johnstone (2009) has referred to this conceptual shift in different disciplines as 'The Corporeal Turn'. Although experiments in what is known today as the field of somatics had started earlier with practitioners such as Todd, Bartenieff and others referred to in the introduction of this thesis, Burt (2012) argues that Todd's book "The Thinking Body" (1934) did not take effect in the dance world until the late 60s or 70s. Whatley's narrative also appears to illustrate Burt's argument. It may be argued, therefore, that the experiential approach of dance or somatic informed dance practitioners gradually developed a distinct outlook to and understanding

of the body specific to the somatic movement and to the dance artists that embraced some of its premises.

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Figure 23. A poster of the New Dance Festival organised at the Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts featuring a picture of Lucia Walker.

Melinda Buckwalter (2012) discusses the deep interest in and emphasis on the body in an analysis of the evolution of release-based techniques since the 1960s. Her argument illustrates both the shift of interest in the 60s and aligns to the debate around terminology and labeling in the historic documentations discussed in Chapter 4. Buckwalter states:

Initially, in the 1960s, the pedestrianism of the Judson Dance Theater demanded a reimagining of the dancing body. Underneath was an interest in a natural, neutral, efficient body, unencumbered by the manners of ballet, the idiosyncrasies of the Modern mothers, and plain

old bad habit. It was this search for an underlying body—a naked body of raw reflex without layers of conditioning—that drove the investigations of Release Technique, as well as Contact Improvisation.

(Buckwalter 2012: page not available)

Although, she refers to applications in the USA, this is very much the case for developments in dance in Britain around the same period up until today. As Clarke explained, release-technique grew to form a strong aspect of contemporary dance practice in Britain today. Buckwalter's statement also shows affinities between release work and BMC® and reminds of Bainbridge Cohen's stated improvisational nature (referred to in Chapter 3). Her exchange with dance artists actively involved in release-based training was also referred to in the quote offered earlier of BMC® teacher, Jens Johansen.

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Figure 24. Bainbridge Cohen taught sessions for dancers involved in diverse dance styles including ballet. This is a picture from a class she taught at Amherst Ballet (Massachusetts, USA) in August 1980. Courtesy of the SBMC archive (Bainbridge Cohen, 1980)

The 'search for an underlying body', as Buckwalter describes it, and understanding the somatic basis of raw, unconditioned movement underpinned explorations and experiments in the New Dance movement. It set the ground

for a collective interest and emphasis on bodiliness, a holistic approach to the physiology of the body and the potential of the unregimented body in dance training and creative work which is strongly evident today. The emergence of the interest in the body, embodiment or the inside/out approach to the experience of movement was grounded on the gradually increasing dialogues between dancers and somatic practitioners since the early 20th century. The exchange between dance artists and somatic practitioners inevitably informed the further development of somatic forms and raised an interest in a body-based language and distinct approaches to human physiology as in BMC®. The potentiality and choice for exploring 'raw' movement, freed from the conditioning of established traditional techniques in dance-making was also introduced during the New Dance era in Britain. This approach was taken up both from the X6 collective and at Dartington College of Arts between which there was exchange of artists and ideas.

To consider the body as unconditioned has been the subject of long held debates in anthropology. Somatic informed contemporary dance artists and former New Dance artists often regard their work as having the potential to 'liberate' the body from deterministic techniques. However, the approaches that emerged may be also viewed as confining given the aesthetic, political and ontological structures that characterize them. Also, the notion of a 'natural', or 'neutral' to cultural conditioning body and the way it is viewed by the somatic movement is addressed by Fortin and Grau (2014) and critically explored in practice.

A number of artists in fieldwork and in interviews have referred to the influence Mary O'Donnell's⁸⁵ release-based classes had in shifting contemporary dance practice forward in Britain in the 70s. The impact of O'Donnell's approach is also noted in Jordan (1992: 37-38). She was an American artist who became a

⁸⁵ Mostly referred to as Mary Fulkerson by artists and authors examining the particular era. Here I use the name she uses at present.

dance tutor at Dartington College of Arts in 1973. Strider⁸⁶ member Nanette Hassall recommended O'Donnell to the company and to Dartington College of Arts. Stephanie Jordan notes: "It was Strider, in fact, that had originally been invited to Dartington as a company that would visit regularly and form the core of the dance work. They could not accept the offer, but, as an alternative, Hassall recommended Fulkerson as a full-time teacher and artist" (Jordan 1992: 37). Hassall and O'Donnell had met at the Cunningham Studio in New York. The aesthetic, focus and material explored at Strider as well as dance work offered at Dartington shifted significantly with O'Donnell's influence. Characteristically, Jordan quotes O'Donnell to have said that it was as if the company 'went from upright to horizontal' (Jordan 1992: 37). Here the artist appears to refer to the shift of the dance pedagogy and creative work to deeper sensory awareness, a released sense of gravity and floor work that allowed for such explorations. O'Donnell also introduced the group and Dartington students to Contact Improvisation and other approaches drawn from experimentations in the post-modern dance scene in the USA and in Judson Church. Release work, also referred to as release-based work or Release Technique has taken many forms since the 70s and, indeed, as Sue McLennan notes (Appendix 10), it may mean different things to different people.

The somatic basis of explorations is also evident in experiments by dance artists in the USA who in the 70s taught their approaches in England. Besides artists involved in the Judson era, this was evident in the Contact Improvisation community. Recalling a moment from the early history of the contact

⁸⁶ Strider was an experimental, 'independent' and radical for the time dance collective that formed in 1972 at London Contemporary Dance School and existed until 1975. While it was Richard Alston's 'brainchild' (Jordan, 1992: 35), artists who took part in Strider led the way to experimentation in dance making and pedagogy. Besides Alston, these included, Christopher Banner, BMC® informed Jacky Lansley and Wendy Levett (a dancer with an interest in T'ai Chi) and, in its early stages, volunteer students of LCDS Dennis Greenwood, Diana Davies and Sally Potter. Later Eva Karzag joined the group together with dancers from different backgrounds, a number of who had been trained in the Cunningham Studio in New York. For more information see Jordan (1992).

improvisation movement, Nancy Stark Smith (2006⁸⁷) recounts:

In 1972, the Grand Union was invited to Oberlin College for the month-long January residency. Each company member taught a technique-type class in the morning and a performance class in the afternoon. Steve's morning class was at 7 a.m., and it was dark and cold. He called it the "Soft Class." We would come into a beautiful old wooden men's gymnasium, and there would be a chair at the door with a box of Kleenex and a little plate of cut-up fruit. You took a tissue and a piece of fruit and came into the gym. Steve led us in standing still, the small dance, while we kind of fell asleep and woke up, and also did some yoga-like breathing exercises. Then you'd blow your nose and eat the fruit, and after an hour, the sun came up and that was the end of the class. My mind was definitely opening. I had no idea what we were doing but I was curious and somehow very moved.

As evident in Stark Smith's brief story, contrary to traditional forms or techniques, experiments during those radical times also necessitated the need to slow down, move with more awareness, mindfully. Guiding participants' attention to the body was a form of meditative practice essential for consciously engaging with kinesthetic experiences involving physical laws such as gravity, lines of forces and momentum. For contact improvisation, this process was cast as essential. Stark Smith (2006, page not available) explains the reason for this:

At that first Reunion tour in 1975, we started to hear about people who had seen us previously and were now practicing contact. We also heard of some injuries...a few pretty serious. In our group, we had had bruises but nothing more serious than that. The safety issue really concerned us. There was some theorizing that our training —especially things like the small dance and the subtle sensing work—was keeping the bigger, more dangerous interactions balanced and safe. But people who just saw a performance would try the bigger, flashier moves without the other training.

In this illustrative talk, Nancy Stark Smith, points to a significant element of contact improvisation, and I add, release-based dance training currently widely taught in dance training courses. That is the innate and instantaneous ability (or

⁸⁷ This was a talk given by Nancy Stark Smith at the International Contact Festival Freiburg in Freiburg, Germany, August 2005 reprinted from *Contact Quarterly*. The talk was transcribed with the initiative of Andrea Olsen who was guest editor for the particular issue of *Contact Quarterly*.

skill) to be a responsive, articulate body, able to sense subtle changes and shifts⁸⁸ in the body and, potentially, at the same time, witness consciously what is happening. These abilities are developed through somatic work. Developing the ability for subtle sensing proves to be fundamental in injury prevention. I argue, that notions of an articulate, responsive body, of a mindful presence and the cultivation of an awareness that is able to sense subtle changes in the body are now integrated into current somatically informed contemporary dance practice. The level to which these attributes are developed or focused upon depends, however, on the practitioner.

Nancy Stark Smith (2006) clarifies the lack of a set pedagogy for Contact Improvisation and emphasizes an acceleration of knowledge (for the facilitator) during the teaching process. Incorporating material from other work and discovering through this, she explains, is common. The use of related material, she states “can sometimes cause confusion for students: how is contact distinct from Body-Mind Centering, or yoga, or other partnering forms, or release technique?” (Stark Smith 2006) And yet, the forms are distinct. But besides the charisma, research and creativity of their inventors, their evolution was also based on cross-pollination between forms and interest in similar conceptual reference points. Arguably, it is the commonalities in the praxis and the shared discourse that develops a confusion.

Eva Karczag, also a Strider member and involved in experimental and ground-breaking work in the 70s in Britain states:

I had been involved with Release Technique since 1973, first as a student, then later teaching classes. In a Release Technique class, students are given verbal imagery while resting in receptive stillness. When moving is invited to begin, it is fed by the clarity and intensity of the experienced imagery, and it emerges as highly personal expressions of internal, transformative states. Moving generally begins with eyes

⁸⁸ Cynthia Bull (Novack) also notes how her experiences with contact improvisation heightened her ability to sense minimal changes of weight and the smallest movement of her joints (Novack, 1990: 152).

closed, then can continue with eyes open. The teacher acts as witness and guide.

(Karczag 2006: 7⁸⁹)

Eva Karczag is a dancer, dance maker and educator. She is also an Alexander and T'ai Chi teacher. Following Aileen Crow's suggestion, together with Paula Sager, Karczag discovered the practice of Authentic Movement in the early 1990s. A number of artists currently practicing in Britain, other parts of Europe, Australia and USA have trained or have collaborated with her at different times since the 70s. As explained in Chapter 3, Authentic Movement is a distinct somatic method that depending on the practitioners' influences may be used in BMC® practice, but does not form part of the curriculum. During the SME training I attended in the UK two teachers chose to include it in their sessions.

In the same interview, Karczag outlines the ways with which Authentic Movement fit naturally to her approach in movement and the ways this became embedded in her dance practice, improvisation, dancing and teaching. She states:

One of the things Authentic Movement has brought me back to, over and over again, is the need to shift away from the performer's desire to "perform" in order for the moving to be truly "honest". Good improvisors have this quality. It has drawn me to improvisation from the first time I watched dancers like Steve Paxton, Lisa Nelson, and Danny Lepkoff perform. It is that quality of being present to each moment, unstintingly – embodiment.

This quality becomes more accessible to me through awareness of my body and the physical reality of my movement: knowledge of weight, a sense of breath, an understanding of anatomy. Just as important is a state of listening and allowing that is innate, yet often needs to be unearthed or tracked down with quiet precision. The combination of body awareness and listening creates and charges a sacred state, which is at the same time profoundly ordinary. This is what I search for in my making and performing, this extraordinary ordinariness, this charged presence, this state of grace. The practice of Authentic Movement gives me

⁸⁹ This is a rich source illustrating the language, understandings, approach and focus of dance artists who have been entrenched in an exploration of the body from within since the 70s. Eva Karczag has collaborated with other leading figures in dance in Britain such as Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay whilst travelling and practicing in different parts of the world. To me, she is a bright example of the ways somatic explorations through movement and dance improvisation have become a widespread global phenomenon in parts of the contemporary dance world.

conscious access to something that has been driving my dancing ever since I can remember.

(Karczag 2006: 8)

Karczag's descriptions of a good improviser speak of the value of embodiment and illustrate the type of qualities a somatic-informed approach to creative work may look for. She uses the term embodiment to clarify the quality that 'honest' improvisors have, their ability to be present to each moment.

Karczag's language is indicative of the poetic, body based discourse that shaped and evolved in the New and Independent Dance fields. It is also illustrative of a world of corporeal knowledge that grew to become knowledge about the body. This type of knowledge is particular to the somatic movement and somatic-informed contemporary dance practice. I argue, that it is the uniqueness of this approach to sensing and knowing that may offer valuable data for existential analysis as understood in the phenomenological perspective and which requires further research. Karczag's reference to the practice of Authentic Movement is also another example of the things New Dance artists drew from in the quest for re-defining performance.

Similar shifts in the praxis of dance to those emerging in Britain were also encountered in other parts of Europe. This was facilitated by an exchange of dance artists. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 4 the School for New Dance Development was founded in the Netherlands in 1975. Additionally, in the 90s the ArtEZ School of Dance shifted from an emphasis on orthodox or classical forms to a more contemporary focus. Mary O'Donnell's (2005) outline of the release dance curriculum she offered at ArtEZ School of Dance in the Netherlands in 2005-6 demonstrates her extensive analysis on release-based practice and the place where explorations of a rather influential figure in the development of New Dance have arrived after four decades of practice. It shows the kinds of skills considered as part of a curriculum for dance with this basis and approach and points to potential references such as experiential anatomy.

Although the term 'somatics' has been defined since the 70s (see Hanna 1970), reference to 'somatic' practices, the extensive use of the term or indeed the characterization of influences as 'somatic' are still not recognized widely by the dance world involved, particularly by artists active in the 70s, 80s and beyond. In fact the term did not become as widely used and applied as in the last 10 years in the dance world in Britain. However, somatic practices were evolving and growing and have become much more widely accessible internationally over the past 10 years. As shown in Appendix 2 for example, this is particularly true of the BMC® programmes.

There is a differentiation between dance artists who refuse and others who accept a somatic influence in their work implying a negative or positive outlook to this way of working. This may be the result of the vast range of somatic methods, a diversity of trends within the somatic community and multiple applications in dance and other fields that may vary in quality of application. Arguably, somatic approaches range from professional and monitored applications in educational or therapeutic settings to trends found in the field that are critically associated with a form of cult culture. Additionally in some cases, for artists not actively involved in a particular somatic method, the umbrella term 'somatics' has been associated with a praxis focusing on deep or introspective processing not representative of their creative approach.

There are voices of artists in the field that object to associating New Dance with somatic practices refuting as, they argue, the prevailing emphasis of somatic forms on 're-pairing' the body. This is a recent and underdeveloped debate that, based on anecdotal evidence from the field, appears to be based on a reductive understanding of the field of somatics and of the potential nature cross-pollination might have taken place between dance and the somatic movement. The analysis of influences in this thesis offers a view of the nature of the interface between the two fields. Although an emphasis on 're-pairing', 're-educating' or 're-patterning' might be true for a number of somatic methods including BMC®, the level to which this aspect of the work is foregrounded

varies largely between practitioners as well as between methods. However, I argue, that it is perhaps both the growth of the somatic movement and research into developments in contemporary dance that has begun to raise an awareness of the cross-pollination between fields and debates around the impact influences had in the way dance is practiced today.

Claid (2006), quoted in Chapter 4, has referred to BMC® as one of the 'knowledges' the New Dance movement drew upon, but has refused the influence of 'somatics' in a short conversation with the author after the end of "X6 and Friends" round table discussion at Chisenhale Dance Space (October 2013). A tension between acknowledgement and criticism of the somatic approach, and its aesthetic and artistic potential, from some artists, is also present today. This was an issue that was also encountered by Natalie Garrett-Brown (2013) during the doctoral research and has remained an issue in the present research project. The scholarly examination of somatic practices and their inclusion in professional training institutions and HE dance courses, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, is rapidly shifting this perception. However, there is still a need for clarifying the diversity of approaches and applications of the somatic work in order to settle misinterpretations. This research project hopes to contribute to both of these issues. However, as part of the process of capturing a moment in the history of contemporary dance in Britain, this project works to document the tension and not necessarily to resolve it.

With regards to the exchange between New Dance and somatic practices, Jacky Lansley⁹⁰ (2013), another X6 member, takes a less critical position than Claid. Lansley's continued interest in the enrichment of her practice with BMC® led her to travel to the USA to take part in a series of courses from the BMC® training programme at the SBMC and to stay with Steve Paxton and Lisa

⁹⁰ Jacky Lansley was an X6 collective member with a long-standing presence in experimentation in dance. Co-author of "The Wise Body" (2011), she founded the Dance Research Studio in 2002. She has developed two professional development programmes for artists: "The Speaking Dancer: Interdisciplinary Performance Training" and "The Interdisciplinary Performer".

Nelson in their shared Madbrook farm in Vermont. In a report for the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund written in 2006 following her visit, Lansley wrote:

The School for Body-Mind Centering USA programme was based at the historic women's university Smiths College in Northampton, Massachusetts. I stayed in 'the dorm', which apart from poor cooking facilities was comfortable. I enjoyed the absolute focus on one area of research, it felt a luxury to give myself time to be a student again and work with teachers for whom I had complete respect. I was there for nearly four weeks and participated in the following courses: ***Senses and Perceptions 1; Basic Neurological Patterns; Reflexes, Righting Reactions & Equilibrium Responses***. The work was very demanding in the sense that it is multi layered and deeply informed anatomically. I had some knowledge as I had worked on BMC approaches to voice and movement with Pat Bardi in the 80s, and attended workshops with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen in London also in the 80s. Over the last 20 years I have been working with actors and dancers and have begun to formulate a training programme for the interdisciplinary performer. The profound work that BMC™⁹¹ explores with voice, movement and breath is something I wanted to re-visit to support my own research. I also wanted to work at a deeper physical level for myself, and to take further my work with emotional embodiment. I found the teaching excellent, and the sessions that we had with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (she does not teach as much now) were illuminating, particularly observing her work with children.

(Lansley 2006)

Lansley had worked with Patricia Bardi⁹² when the latter BMC® trained vocal and dance artist taught at Chisenhale Dance Space in the 80s. She refers to the contribution of BMC® and the visualisation of the organs as a radically new discovery of the time which X6 members as well as numerous artists with them explored. In her report, Lansley also shows her appreciation of Bainbridge Cohen's approach to leadership and *holding* of a group. She states:

Soon after my arrival on the 7th July the London bomb attacks happened. I was the only Londoner and Bonnie, very appropriately, invited me to share my feelings with the whole group. The situation became an opportunity for everyone to explore their response to what had happened

⁹¹ Please note that the branding of BMC changed in 2014 from being a trademark (BMC™) to BMC®.

⁹² Bardi's website forms a useful source of evidence of the kinds of developments her work has undergone over the years and the focus of her approach (Bardi, 2013).

which was very helpful to us all. This was an example of Bonnie's fine and brave leadership. I made some good friends and professional contacts, while learning much. My own experience, too, was validated; on several occasions my knowledge of more creative and playful workshop processes was useful and liberating for the group, and gave me insight into the integration of BMC into my own work and practice.
(Lansley 2006)

Lansley's report is an overt testimony of cross-pollination between BMC® and dance. As she states her 'more creative and playful workshop processes' were found useful and liberating for the group. As mentioned previously a freedom in the ways one may deliver BMC® material is encouraged by the SBMC and therefore the experiences one may have with the material differ. Dance artists, as shown in Lansley's report, may often employ embodiment processes in their own creative or performance approaches.

Additionally, the particular approach to *holding* an individual and a group and *meeting a person where they are* demonstrates for me a significant quality in pedagogical practice. In this example, Bainbridge Cohen's stance shows the possibility for acknowledging individuals and their particular circumstances, thereby heightening sentience, compassion, *empathy* and care amongst the group, and cultivating a sensitivity and awareness towards political events that may scar subjects and societies.

A distinct teacher-learner relationship is developed that may be associated with a person-centred, humanist pedagogic approach. In my practice, *meeting a person where she or he is*, to a large extent, presupposes the person's physical and emotional state as of priority. It recognises that through the process of *releasing* deep learning and personal growth may be achieved. It is also grounded on an economy that recognises learning, and even more so embodiment experiences, somatic and dance education, as experiences that involve the whole being and is not syllabus orientated.

Meeting a person where she is with compassion is fundamental in allowing the learner to feel *contained*, at ease and in a safe environment where he or she

could gradually release tension and shift attention to the topic learned. To my understanding, practitioners in Butler's Wharf that interrupted the creative exploration to attend to a person's process, as in the case recalled by Anna Furse that was discussed in the previous chapter, practiced this principle of meeting a person where she is. The concept may also be evidently understood through the relationship between a person offering and one receiving *touch*. Based on an understanding of bodily intelligence and bodily tissue as responsive, it is often emphasised in BMC® that touching a tensed body part does not require touch that resists the condition of the tissue such as stretching or pulling away held parts. Rather, tissue may become much more responsive to touch that complements gently the direction of the holding. I have encountered the benefits of this principle a number of times during practice in dancers and non-dancers.

The notion of *meeting a participant where she or he is* also relates to the practitioner's and informs the learner's self definition. Depending on the practitioner and his or her positioning to the world, this example of a principle evident in some artists' approach in the field, potentially cultivates a political and social awareness, a topic often mentioned by New Dance, Independent Dance artists and somatic practitioners.

From another perspective, the quality of *meeting* an emotion, that is accepting not resisting to it develops a different sensorial experience that may inform movement material emerging from an exploration based on this approach. Similarly, for example, not resisting to gravity creates less conflict with the ground or a supporting surface such as another body. Also, the qualities of interactions and movement between people working in group-work differ evidently when accepting or responding to momentary or accidental touch rather than reacting to it. This is a theme I have explored often in practice with a number of observations emerging from it, but which may only be briefly addressed in the interests of this chapter. It is also a concept that seemed to fit or develop a value around relating to people I held from my own cultural background and which has informed my way of engaging with people outside

the studio space. The principles of *meeting a person where she or he is* and *sharing*, discussed in Chapter 4, develop a culture of acceptance and allowance to be fully oneself. They cultivate gentle ways of communicating and embracing self and other.

BMC® may arguably offer to dance education unique pedagogical tools for exploring the natural process of movement patterning and tools with which to improve movement qualities. The distinct focus of BMC® may enhance a student's ability to direct her or his consciousness in ways that may alter the sensorial experience of movement itself and increase possibilities for movement thereby offering choices found beyond habitual movement patterns. In order to develop choice in movement, it uses *experiential anatomy* in a manner that allows multiple consciousness states to be experienced and reflected upon.

Experiential anatomy is an established term for what the school for Body-Mind Centering currently calls *embodied anatomy*. In its Facebook page, SBMC sets the question and responds to 'what is embodied anatomy'. It states:

Embodied Anatomy is a deep, internal study of the body which goes beyond intellectual and experiential approaches. Movement is explored through the direct experience of our own body systems, tissues and cells. The learning process takes place not just in the mind, but in the body itself and the experience is integrated at the cellular level.

The principles of Embodied Anatomy can be applied to any type of movement, bodywork, therapy or other body-mind discipline. It is currently being used by dancers, yoga practitioners, bodyworkers, occupational and physical therapists, psychotherapists, educators and others.

(SBMC 2013)

BMC® claims that embodiment processes focusing on physiological structures, as experienced through its approach, guide the person to experience the 'raw', un-conditioned or un-regimented body that links to the earlier discussion around the 70s interest in introducing to 'raw' movement. And yet through this conscious process, BMC® suggests, the person is able to reflect on his or her

own conditioning and discover his or her own subjectivity⁹³, thereby choosing the patterns he or she might want to retain. It claims that it allows the participant to reach and reflect on what in a non-somatic informed domain in life would be considered pre-reflective. As mentioned previously, this in turn cultivates a relationship to oneself or a cultivation of a sense of self that has shown to unravel the individual's creative potential and the artist's blocked creativity. It also views the body and embodied experience as a resourceful place on which to ground explorations.

Through practice, I have observed that in dance education the practice of BMC® may offer the facilitator a particular to the method skill to analytically observe movement, its place of initiation and therefore expand the ways one can help a student move safely in ways that may prevent injury. As a dimension of the practice, its analytical outlook has been further mentioned in Chapter 3. The analytical perspective of BMC® may also support with developing qualities of movement in performance contexts.

BMC® may also offer to dance education unique pedagogical tools for exploring the natural process of movement patterning, improving movement qualities. Sylvie Fortin, in an introduction to a DVD exploring the connections between somatic work and creative processes argues:

The teacher has many ways of applying somatic education, thanks to a variety of pedagogical tools, including touch. In order to develop proprioception, that is feeling, the sense of touch will be used, also visualisation, imagination, as well as factual information like anatomy. So different means are available in order to develop physical sensitivity and act in the world. The goal is always to gain multiple uses of oneself, that is to develop different personal options in order to act as efficiently as possible in the world.

(Fortin in Recherche en Mouvement 2009)

Here Fortin, eminent scholar in the field of dance and somatic practices and Feldenkrais practitioner, based at the Dance Department at the University of

⁹³ Suggestions of this sort by the somatic world have also been affirmed by Fortin and Grau 2014.

Quebec in Montreal, points to the different types of tools employed in dance education for deepening understanding and therefore, embodied experiences. In this quote and for the purposes of an accessible introduction to somatics, Fortin refers to the notion of proprioception, an aspect of embodiment that somatic or somatic informed dance practitioners claim to work with⁹⁴. From my experience, the tools used and the emphasis on proprioception as experientially addressed in BMC® might offer a gentle non-intrusive approach to relieving pain. To fully examine this proposition would need further collaborative research amongst somatic practitioners and physicians, but there are useful indications from fieldwork that allow such a claim.

Fortin played a leading role in developing a curriculum where traditional and somatic dance pedagogies would be integrated in undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes offered at University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada. In her role as Head of the Dance Department at Liverpool John Moores University, certified Skinner Releasing Technique practitioner Manny Emslie, in an exchange with Fortin, visited the University of Quebec in 2006 to witness and, to an extent, consult regarding a number of issues she encountered in her effort to integrate somatics in the dance curriculum. Emslie considered the dance programme offered in Quebec as a prime example of the integration of traditional and somatic approaches to dance pedagogy (Emslie, 2009a). This is not to suggest that Emslie's view was reflective of what other British practitioners might have thought. As shown in the introduction of this thesis, numerous other HE programmes have included the somatic approach in their curriculum over the past decades. Fortin's exchange with Emslie and other British scholars has been ongoing over the past decade. For example, the former was specially invited keynote speaker in the Laban Research Conference in 2003 and in the Palatine event hosted at LJMU in 2008 exploring the application of somatics in dance education. This exchange is offered here as an example of the permeability of cultural contexts and the shared ground

⁹⁴ Albright in course she offered at the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu (April 2012) and numerous practitioners in the field in the UK including BMC® teachers.

amongst dance scholars who are also somatic informed dance practitioners. Somatic informed dance practitioners and scholars, through research and practice inform the development of these fields and directly influence the emergence of the twenty first century dance artist and performer.

One of the re-current topics around the possibility of integrating somatic approaches in dance programmes has been course design and challenges in application and implementation of the somatic approach in HE institutions. As mentioned previously, Fortin also stresses the benefit of somatic education in increasing movement potential and range. There appears to be a consensus around this objective amongst dance practitioners informed by diverse somatic methods. She states: "Being more aware of corporeal organisation, you acquire more movement options. You are no longer victim to your physical habits, but you develop a fine-tuned awareness that increases your unused potentials" (Fortin 2009).

Somatic education as approached in BMC® develops an understanding of the way the physicality of the body manifests itself at the level of the mind. It offers an understating of the way the lived experience of a bodily part taps into a dimension of personality which, if stripped of its cultural dimensions (culturally defined perceptions of what constitutes or what should constitute myself), it would unravel a level of my being that I may not have discovered. This has implications for the cultivation of a sense-of self somatic informed dance practitioners claim to foster, a topic that will be further addressed beyond completion of this thesis.

Through training in BMC®, practitioners or educators' sensitivity to their bodies is heightened and naturally develops into an "increased sensitivity to observing the nonverbal experiences of others" (Aposhyan, 2004: 14) from a particular lens as described above. Although writing from a therapist's perspective, I argue, Aposhyan's observations are also applicable in dance or movement pedagogy. Even though the focus or objective in movement education or

therapy might differ, the principles on which the work is grounded and the tools used, in many occasions, might be essentially the same. It may be argued, therefore, that the impact or effectiveness of body-based practices such as BMC® in education is based on the distinct outlook towards the body and self and the pedagogical tools employed. These may lead to deep processing and therefore, the therapeutic dimension comes to the forefront. Conversely, I argue, the presence of both therapeutic and educative dimensions in BMC® practice call for further critical debate in this professional field. This appears to relate to Schiphorst's (2009) analysis of the value of 'interconnectedness' which is further illustrated in dance pedagogy through *partner work*.

5.3. Partner Work and Touch: Cultivating Embodiment and 'Interconnectedness'

As mentioned by Clarke earlier, *partner work* has emerged to be a fundamental part of somatic-informed dance artists education or creative process. The way partner work is offered by a dance practitioner differs and is arguably dependent upon the somatic practice (or practices) the artists have drawn from. *Partner work* and *touch* have become pedagogical tools that enable a deepening of sensed experience and knowledge and anatomical information to become embodied. The process involves an exchange between a person that offers and a person that receives *touch* or *hands-on work* and exchange of reflections between participants. In some cases, partner work may also take the form of Authentic Movement explorations (for example, as it is introduced in BMC®, or 'Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy'). As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, Authentic Movement is a distinct practice with identifiable underlying values that involves a process of attentive witnessing and observation of a person moving.

Hands-on work in a dance context is a pedagogic tool offered as a means to introduce a movement or physiology related theme that the facilitator may have identified as useful for the particular group of participants. It is offered as a means to make information available on a sensory level, and through that, to

awareness and consciousness. In somatic approaches, such as BMC®, Andrea Olsen's approach to Experiential Anatomy, Linda Hartley's Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy programme, that focus on *experiential* or, as the SBMC now calls it, *embodied anatomy, hands-on work* supports the embodiment process. It offers support and sensory stimulus in an exploration of an anatomic structure or a movement related theme. When the information is sensed and reflected upon, depending on the practitioner, it may be taken into practice and explored in relation to a movement phrase or other movement based activity. Following her influences by Ideokinesis, Klein and Alexander Technique, touch and partnering work was a tool Gill Clarke used widely in her approach. She has also emphasized its potency for dance education. To repeat a statement offered earlier, Clarke noted temporal differences in this pedagogical method that are specific to the notion of experiential and embodied learning. She states:

it needs time for new information to first arrive in the body as sensation or awareness, and then to be applied and tested in practice, and then to allow another layer of information to come in, in relationship to this. To do really thorough partner work and swap over takes sometimes more than an hour – and then you want to put this into movement and practice.

(Clarke, Cramer and Müller 2011: 222)

Clarke's observations are grounded on her extensive experience. They are also illustrative of a level of understanding of embodiment, the learning process and layering of information that her particular somatic informed approach in dance and her deep reflections have enabled. To me, the observations offered here are also illustrative of the distinct knowledge about learning and the person that could be acquired through a somatic informed dance approach.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Bainbridge Cohen developed her approach to the body through involvement in diverse practices and through work with people with severe disabilities. Touch, or else hands-on work was one of the tools she developed. It was through her work with a man who could not move his arm after a stroke that Bainbridge Cohen realized she needed to find ways to work with touch. As she recounts, she wanted to feel everything even on a molecular

level such as the mitochondria. She discovered that the way she could do this is by sensing it in herself and then resonate that to the person she is working with.

Offering hands-on work to and receiving hands-on from someone in BMC® requires a shift of perception of the dynamics of this interaction. The offering is grounded on the premise that there forms a relationship of exchange and dialogue between the person offering and receiving thereby, to an extent, subjectifying the receiver and re-positioning possible perceptions of power for the person offering. It involves avoiding intentionality and heightening an intuitive connection and ability to respond to bodily and sensed cues. The practice suggests an approach to tissues as healthy and invites for, at least a momentary, disregard of perceptions conditioned to think or relate to one's body with an identification of symptoms or illness. Besides a pleasurable experience, this can be an empowering process and is aimed to also re-pattern perceptions such as the objectification which patients undergo in a medicalised western culture. In remembering the initial stages of the development of this method, Bainbridge Cohen explains another fundamental premise. That is, offering hands-on work needs to start from an embodied place. The presence of the person offering needs to be both gently attentive to their own subjectivity and condition, sensing the part or tissue in themselves while touching another person.

Here is how Bainbridge Cohen describes what happens during a hands-on session:

All living organisms respond to touch and movement in a palpable way. Changing the quality of touch in subtle ways can elicit different and equally subtle responses. The awareness of these intricate and complex interactions involves the perceiving of delicate changes in breathing, the expanding and condensing of the membranes of the cells in the different layers of tissues, and the flow between the cells. These activities establish the pathways of the micromovements throughout the body that create the blueprint for the movements of our body through space.

(Bainbridge Cohen in Johnson 1997: 19)

One of the first dance artists to be trained as BMC® teachers in the UK is Katy Dymoke. Currently the co-director of the BMC® programmes offered in Britain,

she is a founding member of Embody-Move Association⁹⁵ licensed to run BMC® training in England and the leading figure in this development. She is a certified teacher and practitioner in BMC® from Manchester and has been teaching BMC® in England since 1997. Dymoke is the director of Touchdown Dance, a professional touring company integrating visually impaired and sighted dancers. Touchdown Dance was established in 1986 at Dartington College of Arts by Steve Paxton and Anne Kilcoyne and moved to the North West when Dymoke took over in 1994. A contact improviser with a wide reaching performance background, Dymoke has taught and collaborated with dance artists for decades in the UK and internationally. She has also worked extensively with touch with dancers with visual impairment and is currently in the finishing stages of her PhD thesis examining the impact of touch in Movement Psychotherapy. Driven also by a background in the National Health System in Britain, in an edition around the potentiality of dance in the health sector, Dymoke states:

When I work with touch I notice how the sensing process awakens many aspects of the self for people; memory, feelings, desire for relationship with others (separate from any particular agendas), the simple need for reassurance, security and comfort. Above all, I notice that people rediscover their present need for touch – touch for the sake of touch rather than anything else. Very often there is a feel-good factor connected with using touch intensively, with focus and in safe conditions. Touch and movement are integral to learning, health and wellbeing for people of all ages and all abilities.

(Dymoke in Greenland 2000: 84)

Dymoke addresses the multiple levels of the self impacted on by touch. In the last phrase of this quote, she also summarises a fundamental premise upheld by BMC® and BMC® informed dance practitioners. This demonstrates both a shared value amongst the somatic movement and a vision of a strand of the dance sector that encompasses rather than marginalizes these fundamentally human functions. Her interests in the therapeutic impact of touch at the time of the publication of the particular edition is clarified in the following statement:

⁹⁵ Embody-Move Association in collaboration with Edge Hill University designed an MA programme on Dance Movement Psychotherapy which amongst other content involved BMC® courses. This run only between 2013 and 2014.

I have come to realise how touch and movement are therapeutic in their own right, as well as important starting points for developing our sense of health and wellbeing” (Dymoke in Greenland 2000:83) “My work is not intended as ‘therapy’ but the experience is most definitely therapeutic; by taking two aspects of life that are surrounded in difficulty – dance and touch – and putting them together in a safe and enjoyable framework, there is almost bound to be an increased sense of liberation, catharsis and wellbeing.

(Dymoke in Greenland 2000: 83)

In the somatic world, often a prolonged hug amongst participants offered with tenderness could mean a number of things besides the caring connotations of the gesture. Amongst other things and depending on the individual involved the meaning could entail a need, participants might share enjoyment and appreciation of a context that allows for this kind of interaction. Also, in this act of hugging there appears to be an inherent, underlying contrast to a touch depriving or inhibiting western culture and an expression of valuing egalitarian values and depth of connection with peer participants. Novack 1994, and following her Sklar 2000, have referred to a ‘touchy-feely’ ambience of the era when Contact Improvisation evolved. Perhaps it could be argued that the ambience Novack and Sklar mention has reached its present form through the evolution and expansion of these social movements.

5.4. Conclusion

A clear shift in dance practice took place since the 70s within a frame that sought to question dominant views of the dancing body. The third person perspective, or else, the objectification of the body that tended to be cultivated by codified techniques was rejected. In the process of discovering or perhaps re-discovering “what a class might be, what a workshop might be”, as Sue McLennan noted (2012), practitioners since the New Dance era have reached to alternative methods of education or training. They have explored diverse tools that enable a deeper sensory motor awareness of the dancer and participant, tools that allow them to explore more dimensions of the intricacies of their physicality and mind inherent in movement. Dance artists who took part in these explorations sought to liberate the dancer from the disciplinarian top to

bottom education that did not allow for a cultivation of the sense of ownership of their own bodies.

Interviews I have referred to as part of this chapter (with Sarah Whatley and Sue McLennan) have shown that explorations of what might constitute a class or workshop since the late 70s and 80s entailed various references. However implicit, influences informed the development of a current of practice which gradually grew from New Dance to Independent Dance. The influences where radical artists drew from and the New Dance approach shaped our perception of dance and the way dance is practiced today. As Judith Mackrell has argued, "...the New Dance phenomenon...has profoundly affected not only the current British Dance scene, but also the way we view, practise and think about dance" (1992, back cover).

This chapter contributes towards an understanding of the tools (mainly of a pedagogic nature) introduced in dance practice since the early experimentations of artists, both in the UK and in the USA, which informed the way dance grew to become practiced today. *Embodied knowledge* and *kinesthesia*, *attunement* or the notion of the body as experienced from within are arguably regarded by some somatic-informed dance practitioners as virtues that are acquired through tools such as *experiential* or *embodied anatomy*, *sharing processes*, *partner work*, *touch or hands-on work*, *somatisation*, *reflective practice* and other. The list of tools offered here is only indicative and the ones that each practitioner employs differ depending on her own influences, interests and intent.

With the growth of the somatic movement and scholarly dance interest in the field of somatics, the focus on dancers' embodiment has developed into an effort to understand how somatic experiences may lead to experiencing all dimensions of the self on a physical or spiritual, mental and emotional level. Addressing a main aim of this thesis, as a progression of Chapter 4, this chapter has explored the way the somatic approach to embodiment has

impacted on the nature of New and Independent dance pedagogy in Britain through an examination of principles and tools characteristic to a somatic approach in movement education. I argue that these principles and tools illustrate the shift of interest towards an 'embodied' performer, towards embodiment in the dance practice context. Other principles I have referred to as part of this chapter include: sensitive ways of seeing the body; reflective practice; the quality of the learning environment which Gill Clarke described as "not effect driven, segregative or wishing to transmit notions of right or wrong"; the notion of release of holding patterns and the way ease of movement connects with an economy of movement; the *felt sense of the body, imagery* and other. It may be argued that these principles sketch the way the body and the lived experience of movement are perceived in the somatic approach to dance practice. They also contribute to sketching the way dance is practiced today in this context.

The movement, language and practice of the strand of the British dance scene that has employed a somatic approach emerged as a discourse that bares cultural significance. The discourse of dance that was developed gradually grew to become a 'language of the body' as Sarah Whatley suggests or 'a body-based language' to use BMC® terms. Although the somatic approaches dance artists draw from are distinct, the pedagogical methods they select are aimed to cultivate *embodiment* as a virtue and attribute for the contemporary dance performer. The analysis offered in this chapter and the parallel growth of the somatic movement with the embodiment paradigm suggests a diffusion of ideas and discourses amongst different disciplines and systems of thought. To me, it is also suggestive of the way this diffusion of ideas may inform the emergence of a social movement such as the somatic movement. If we consider Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's influences discussed in Chapter 3 and the interplay between practitioners referred to in this and the previous chapter, diverse fields of knowledge and dance practice appear to have cross-pollinated in ways that have illuminated embodiment as a lived condition. The cross-pollination informs the ways a wide and growing community of dance artists and somatic

practitioners experience their bodies, selves and their relationship with the people and the environment around them. To put it in phenomenological terms, it informs their way-of-being-in-the-world.

Emphasis is placed on this aspect of history as it is seen to contribute towards an understanding of the ways with which the increased interest in embodiment from diverse bodies of thought in western, capitalist societies informed the emergence of somatics as a social movement, thereby contributing towards meeting a main aim of this thesis. Experiential explorations of embodiment, I argue, have contributed to the growth of experimental dance forms, such as New and, more recently, Independent Dance as culturally constructed movement systems. New and Independent dance together with the somatic movement have been examined in this thesis as sharing an identifiable approach to the body reflected in the conceptual ground that underpins practice and a series of distinct values, principles and tools. The focus on this part of dance history also aims to contribute towards an understanding of the existential, ontological, cultural and educational significance of the main thrust of somatic and somatic informed dance forms, that is, of their focus on embodiment and bodily knowledge. This analysis helps to illustrate the permeability of artists and communities and the impact the environment or context had on the formation of somatics as a social movement. From an anthropological lens, this discussion aims to contribute towards an inquiry examining what the discoveries and explorations of the somatic informed dance world tell us about the concept of embodiment and its significance in being human. Conversely, approaching the interplay between somatics and dance through an anthropological study is viewed as enabling an understanding of dance as a tool for understanding human nature. Another argument could also be drawn from this understanding. It appears that the emphasis placed and the direct influence on a dimension of the self as fundamental as embodiment appears to be where the efficacy of the somatic approach to dance pedagogy is grounded.

To summarise, as this chapter has shown, the dialogue between dance and somatic practices is and has been of a dynamic, oscillating nature. With their participation, exploratory nature and creative involvement in diverse somatic approaches, dancers and dance practitioners influenced the development of the somatic movement while the somatic methods informed the dance practitioners' pedagogical approach and practice. In outlining indicative pedagogical tools, principles of practice, epistemological and ontological questions emerge. For example, if embodiment is the focus of somatic and somatic-informed dance education, what might be the repercussions of this approach to understanding differently the fact that we have bodies? I have often discussed with colleagues in the field who explicitly claim that the somatic approach to dance education challenges dualist perceptions. This is an assertion also made in Smith (2002), Garrett Brown (2007) and numerous authors whose articles have been included in the *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*. The following chapter unpacks and critically examines this claim, thereby addressing another objective of this thesis. To do so, I begin by reversing the claim into a question as follows. Is the somatic approach to dance pedagogy able to re-educate dualist perceptions and if so how? The interest in examining the problem of dualism is driven by an interest in the potentiality of the emphasis on embodiment and given the central role it has come to play in current somatic-informed contemporary dance practice and the burgeoning philosophical (Gallagher 2005) and scientific interest in the topic (Rosch, Thompson and Varela 1992).

6. On Dualism: Perspectives from Somatic Informed Dance Pedagogy

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have analysed evidence of a discourse of somatic informed contemporary dance practice that emerged since the 70s. Particular reference was made to the influence BMC® had on this development. As shown, praxis involved distinct principles, pedagogic tools and the evolution of a body-based language and exchange that was grounded on experimentation with embodiment. This chapter places understandings of the notion of embodiment as approached in BMC® and somatic informed dance pedagogy in dialogue with the embodiment paradigm as theorized by Csordas (1990, 1994a).

As I indicated in the previous chapter, discourses on embodiment and the somatic approach to moving and being tend to maintain that they challenge polarization of human existence. This section will begin to explore the ways with which embodiment processes, as offered through a somatically informed pedagogic approach in dance, converse with or challenge the philosophical problem of dualism. It will particularly focus on influences drawn from BMC®. An exploration of the problem of dualism as a philosophical issue is considered pertinent in deepening an understanding of the role the somatic approach to embodiment has played in shaping the nature of New and Independent dance pedagogy in Britain. The dialogue between theory and practice within this study has helped uncover tensions that may emerge in the different applications of the term embodiment and aims to contribute towards further clarification. The discussion on the ways the emphasis placed on embodiment may negate dualist perceptions is offered with the view to argue that the phenomenon of embodiment forms the ground on which transformation or impact of somatic or

somatic-informed dance practice becomes possible.

In this thesis, I have examined BMC® and the interface between somatics and the dance world as situated in a particular cultural and historical context. I have done so taking into account three fundamental premises of the embodiment paradigm as clarified by Csordas (1990, 1994a). Firstly, it acknowledges the physical dimension of being and experience as the ground on which culture is formed. Secondly, it involves an understanding of human existence as a whole rather than the sum of separately conceived dimensions. Thirdly, the embodiment paradigm involves examining subjects and cultural forms as situated and growing together. Up to this point, this thesis has investigated the situatedness of subjects and culturally constructed movement systems.

Through an examination of the processes that illustrate an interface between dance and somatics in Britain, it has alluded to the varied meanings the term embodiment might take in this context. Drawing from the embodiment paradigm, the investigation process undertaken in this thesis engages with an examination of the statement that 'embodiment and experience [is] the existential ground for culture and self' offered as title in Csordas' 1994a edited volume. In doing so, I work to shed a different light to our understanding of the notion of embodiment and the way culture and the sense of self emerge out of this lived phenomenon within somatic-informed education.

As already discussed, the late 80s and 90s saw a burgeoning scholarly interest on the polarity between the objectified and the subjectified body in fields such as cultural studies and critical theory. This was also evident in the field of dance studies where the problem of dualism was critically addressed with regards to the means the objectification of the dancing body is manifest both in the practice of dance and in scholarly accounts examining the art form. Dance scholars who have contributed on this topic include among others Ann Daly (2002), Sally Banes (2003, 1987), Susan Leigh Foster (1995), Judith Lynne Hanna (1999).

Thomas Csordas introduces the 1994a volume with an extended discussion on the multiple manifestations of dualism in diverse methodological approaches. Similarly, Scarry (1985), Crossley (2006) and Thomas (2003) discuss the matter each highlighting the topic's relevance to the growing literature on cultural theory. The issue of dualism also appears in dance scholarly writing. For example, in 1966, Maxine Sheets – Johnstone highlighted this theme in her investigations on a phenomenology of dance. More recently, Anna Pakes (2006), Sondra Horton Fraleigh (1987), Valerie Briginshaw (2001), Emilyn Claid (2006), Kathrin Lynn Geurts (2003) examine the problem of dualism as it relates to dance practice from diverse theoretical standpoints.

The interest in embodiment and a non-dualist way of being in the world has been accompanied with scholarly and practical explorations into kinesthesia. As I have indicated earlier in the thesis, I would argue that this is perhaps due to the potential a heightening of this sense offers for fostering subjectification in dance pedagogy and for initiating a sense of unity of the body and mind in time and space. This chapter will particularly focus on dualism with reference to the broader theoretical context of critical theory and the body. It will work to extend the debate on the topic acknowledging its relevance to both current dance practice and theory with a view towards clarifying the potentiality of the somatic-informed approach to dance practice.

6.2. Re-examining Critiques of Cartesian Dualism

Almost four centuries ago, Descartes, the philosopher whose name appears in much dance scholarly writing and critical theory texts as accountable for establishing a dichotomy between body and mind clarified:

It does not seem to me that the human mind is capable of forming a very distinct conception of both the distinction between the soul and the body and their union; for to do this it is necessary to conceive them as a single thing and at the same time to conceive them as two things; and this is absurd.

(Lokhorst 2013)

This insight was a response to the criticisms he received for not responding or completing his work on the relation between body and mind/soul. It appears in this discussion to be as relevant as it was in the 17th century. Informed by western epistemology, physicalism and rationalism, westerners have been conditioned to think in dualist terms. In my view, to follow Descartes statement, if one were to talk about a 'relationship' or 'dialogue' between the body and mind means he or she understands them as two separate entities that relate. Whereas, focusing on the phenomenal overcomes this analytic polarization. It could be argued therefore, that the undervaluing of phenomenological or somatic dimensions of experience in a broad spectrum of fields, including literary criticism, some strands of psychology or medicine, is a symptom of dualism.

As it has been shown earlier in the thesis, participants in the somatic movement attempt to refute such an understanding of the self through heightening awareness of sensed experience. This gradually develops experientially a sense of unity of body and mind/soul⁹⁶ and an appreciation of the importance of such conception, but not always reaches the level of understanding the person as a whole. This affects both attempts for self-definition and for defining others.

For example, the persistent dualist understanding may be encountered in a dialectical dualism present in dance scholarship and in the way some somatic practitioners and dance artists are expressed. Their interest in the lived body and the emphasis placed on the unity between body and mind is depicted in a series of terms used in the field such as *bodymind*, *body-mind* or *mind-body* to describe the subject of study. In an effort to refer to two of the dimensions of a living human being as a single unity authors have used the words *bodymind*, *body-mind*, *mind-body* interchangeably to denote the same thing and highlight their call for a holistic understanding of being. I argue that the word *body*, or else, *soma* would suffice if we conceived the material basis of intangible

⁹⁶ Here I note the dialectic difference between current western scholarly language generally disregarding concepts such as the soul and Descartes use of the term.

concepts such as a thought as part of a unity, the self. Life sciences argue for the way the mind is expressed on a tissue level and thus on the material nature of mind. Additionally, Shaun Gallagher (2005) in “How the Body Shapes the Mind” contributes further to this debate. However, the western academic, analytic and often dualistic approach to existence evokes terms which sustain the debate on the problem of a dualistic perspective into existence even in somatics and other paradigms that aim to unify our view of the person. I argue, therefore, that perhaps, terminology could be revisited in future accounts as we re-address and reflect on our dualist thinking patterns.

In the case of BMC®, the distinct conception of the union between the mind and the body which Descartes considers impossible may be found in the emphasis BMC® places on the way thought emerges from or is expressed/reflected in the function of body parts or anatomic systems. For example, this may be evident in the following statements Bainbridge Cohen makes that describe how BMC® approaches the relationship between body and mind. She states:

There is something in nature that forms patterns. We, as part of nature also form patterns. The mind is like the wind and the body is like the sand; if you want to know how the mind is blowing, you can look at the sand.
(Bainbridge Cohen 1993: 1)

In my explorations of this theme analytically and practically, I became witness of the ‘absurdity’ Descartes refers to. As I will argue, the exploration led me to concluding that indeed the analysis of the living person inevitably traps the analysant in a dualist frame. However, the experience of the unity on a practical level enables a distinct kind of conception that begins in a pre-reflective level and relates to kinesthesia. This is perhaps the reason why although dualism is considered a contested conception of being there is a range of understandings of dualism in the somatic community and, in my observations in the field, still appears to be a fairly unresolved problem. The lack of the resolution of this issue is also perhaps a consequence of the fact that different somatic practices have emerged in different period and cultural frames and thus manifest different relationships to dualist assumptions and practices.

Descartes' rationalism and his insistence on the objectification of the body have, by popular belief, constituted him accountable for the conceived separation between body and mind and the hierarchical position the mind took over the body in the western world and in knowledge making. Dance scholars writing on dance and the body such as Fraleigh (1987), Briginshaw (2001) and Susan Bordo (1987) encourage these ideas. Pakes, however, critiques Briginshaw and Fraleigh for referring to 'Cartesian Dualism' in a manner that does not examine "the nature of Descartes' problematic, the detail of his argument or the context in which it is formulated" (2006: 100).

6.3. Questioning Dualism? Perspectives from Dance Education

Writing from the perspective of dance education, Smith (2002) refers to the issue of dualism as expressed in movement practices. She converses with Ness's (1992: 6) claim that "U.S. culture bearers tend to think of themselves as individuals who have bodies." Smith adopts Ness's observations which point towards "a general tendency to assume that the mind of a human being is the same thing as its brain, that human intelligence lives and flourishes only inside the area of the cerebral cortex, and that human learning is a process that must necessarily involve the sense of sight or the sense of hearing, and the echoes of those senses that we call 'imagination', but preferably no others" (Ness 1992: 6). Smith notes how "alarmingly true" (124) she has found Ness's insight in her teaching experience of dance and movement improvisation for theatre courses. She characteristically highlights her students' tendency to 'disembodiment' stating:

I have been consistently amazed at how 'out of one's body' so many students are. I observed that their moving appeared tight and restrained. They were much more comfortable with modeling movement patterns rather than creating their own... I saw people moving with muscular tension holding patterns, minimum use of breath, and a general awkwardness at the very idea of moving.

(Smith 2002: 124)

In this perspective of movement analysis lies one of the reasons that might be

considered as justification for the inclusion of somatically informed dance practice within Higher Education dance curriculum and dancers' or performers' training in general. Smith's observations are indicative of the outlook towards the body and movement somatic informed dance practitioners with an interest in artist education have taken. This has been shown in a number of examples in the previous chapter including the approaches of Gill Clarke, Eva Karzag, Release technique teachers such as Mary O'Donnell and others. An illustration of this shift towards a released body freed from *holding* is offered in the discussion on Buckwalter's insights.

Smith explicitly problematizes the limited reference to the body as part of self and outlines the methods she used in order to develop a greater sense of *embodiment*. She takes pride of the participants' advancement to use language that increasingly referred to feelings, respiration and a more refined understanding of their bodies. (2002:124) Her approach denotes an educational agenda (or in educational terms, 'learning objectives') that aim to enhance students ability to '*hone into*' their bodies as a source of creativity and an access to a sense of self. Often, somatic movement educators appear as advocates of a 'holistic', non-dualist practice and sense of self. They proclaim that this is their aim. Smith explores the relevance of the embodiment paradigm to her pedagogical approach and states: "I found Ness's introductory statement about U.S. culture bearers' tendency toward dualistic perceptions of mind and body to be the case. As a result I am concerned to weave a theory into practice in the classroom which collapses this duality. The embodiment theory does just that" (Smith 2002: 124).

Fortin, Vieira and Tremblay (2009) write from an educational perspective informed by ethnographic research methodology and note the problem of distinction between 'soma' and 'body'. In a note clarifying a choice of language during an ethnographic investigation, they notably state that:

We hesitated between using the word 'body' or 'soma'. The latter refers to the body from a first person perception and encompasses the various

aspect of our living experience (physically, psychologically, socially, intellectually, spiritually, etc.). Although it better reflects our positioning, we hesitatingly decided to keep the former word of body to maintain consistency; it would have been clumsy and confusing to continually swap the word body in the context of the dominant dance discourse, with the word soma in the context of the somatic discourse. Experience is produced in languages and it is not an easy task to step away from a binary view of the human experience.

(Fortin, Vieira and Tremblay 2009: 48)

The authors' stated methodological decision resonates with my choice to propose a re-definition of the word 'body' to include physical and psychological/mental phenomena. Or at least, I should clarify that this is the way I have come to view the body as following this research.

In an earlier article, Fortin, Long and Lord (2002) discuss the attempts to overcome this binary view with a focus towards integrating somatic education within dance technique classes. Fortin, Long and Lord also refer to the concept of dualism as it is manifested in somatic movement practices. They note observations of students' habitual movement patterns and stress the kinds of bodily knowledge that may be acquired in somatic education.

Drawing examples from the practice of BMC® as a somatic method informing the practice of dance artists and educationalists, problematizes our perception which places the 'co-existence' of body and mind in a causal arrangement. Writing with the capacity of a dance movement psychotherapist, experienced dance and BMC® practitioner, Linda Hartley wrote one of the first accounts aiming to introduce readers to the practice of BMC® and to the relationship between body and mind as explored by BMC® in 1995. This shows an interesting chronological parallel between fields of interest in embodiment. In her introductory pages, Hartley suggests that the link between physical and mental / psychological expression

is not necessarily or purely causal, with bodily activity creating psychological patterns or the psyche determining physical functioning. While they mutually influence each other, they might be seen as

intimately related expressions of who we are and how we each have journeyed through this life.

(Hartley 1995: xxxiii)

Hartley's suggestion is backed up with detailed evidence by Gallagher (2005) and Sheets-Johnstone (1999).

In a foreword, to the first edition (1993) of *Sensing, Feeling and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering*, Susan Aposhyan states: "By watching the movement of the body, we can see the movement of the mind. The 'mind' of a physical form is the moving quality of that form, its inherent intelligence down to a cellular level" (in Bainbridge Cohen, 1993: vii). This emphasis is further illuminated in Cohen's metaphoric statement cited above interpreting the mind like the wind and the body like the sand. This premise appears to have significant implications for movement education or 're-education'. The method of BMC® has offered to dance education unique pedagogical tools for exploring the natural process of movement patterning, which may help improve movement qualities. The distinct focus of BMC® may enhance a student's ability to direct her or his consciousness in ways which may alter the sensorial experience of movement itself. It can also offer the teacher a particular to BMC® skill to analytically observe movement, its place of initiation. Therefore, it can expand the ways one can help a student move safely in ways that may prevent injury. The analytical perspective of BMC® to movement may also support with developing qualities of movement for performance contexts. As Bales and Netti-Fiol (2008) and Garrett-Brown (2007) have argued, the somatic approach has offered very interesting tools for advancing creative practice, enhancing one's performance work, cultivating virtuosity, extending the boundaries of creativity and even allowing for the emergence of a sense of identity and style in artistic work.

A dance scholar and somatic-informed dance artist⁹⁷ trained in Skinner Releasing Technique that I have worked with has been quite explicit in the use of words and the way she sees the quality of embodiment to relate to performance. She stated that she aimed to cultivate “embodied performers”. This quality, she claimed, helped dancers “to inhabit the space” during performance. She implicitly connected this capacity with their ability to be more responsive during performance particularly in works that involved semi-structured improvisation. Endorsing her claims, I note that the person who will feel ‘at home’ in their bodies/self will have the potential to act spontaneously, creatively, genuinely, will possibly have a clarity in assessing a situation and an easeful attention.

In a workshop I taught as part of a series of master-classes at the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu in Greece to which I referred to earlier, I led participants in an exploration of the spine. I guided them to sense the range of motion in their vertebral column, imagining that each vertebrae gently levers through to the next, and the next to the next and so on until the movement reaches the extremities (in this case, head, hands, feet, tail) through the skeleton and extends out in the space. I invited participants to gently explore the spaces between each vertebrae as if in a dance between the vertebrae and as if the spaces between contained warm oil. This was followed by an exploration of ‘navel radiation’ - a developmental movement pattern as approached in BMC®. As a warm-up, an emphasis was placed on integrating body parts and discovering range of motion for a number of reasons relevant to the performative/educational needs of the particular group. As explained earlier in the thesis, this was a group of performers in different fields (actors, musicians, dancers, a singer), some amateur and some professional performers.

⁹⁷ Please note that as explained in Chapter 2, this is one of the cases of professionals that are anonymized for ethical reasons.

Below are the comments / responses of some participants offered as part of the closing sharing of the session that point to the diversity of experiences and interpretations an experiential exploration of embodiment, in this case of the spine, may lead to:

Participant 1 stated: “I feel the absolute awareness of my being. I feel fully centred and every cell of my body connected”. She described this with an ease in her breathing and groundedness while being connected and content to have discovered such a sensation.

Participant 2

I have some thoughts about loneliness. I feel complete as one, on my own. And yet I feel as part of a whole team/group. Like the dance between the vertebrae you guided us through. Each vertebra is whole in its own right but it is part of a whole. That was so beautiful. I feel fully on my own, but I am connected with every other part of the group. The same with every part of my body.

A few hours later, a third participant searched me on social media, feeling the need to thank me. She sent me a message that stated, “Gina thank you very much for today, I feel something very substantial happened in my body during this workshop. I began to feel my presence, to feel here for me.”

Participant 4 mentioned that she felt like pain was leaving her body. She explained,

I had scoliosis and had worn a brace for five years which was a very restrictive and unpleasant experience. For the first time today, I felt as if I am restarting with my back. As if I can begin to sense this place and move with it.

Participant 5 described “how the whole experience reminded her of how much needed physical touch is”.

Participant 6, a psychologist who I also collaborated artistically with, witnessed a discovery of a sense of self and stressed that he found the work could support

him in improving his bad relationship with his body. All these responses illustrate the way the felt sense of the body as developed through somatic-informed dance practice may develop an integrated sense of self. Particularly Participant's 2 reflection may point to the way the lived experience of a sense of integration on the level of the body may inform the way one perceives the way they connect to the people around them. To me, participants' responses shared here also show how reflection may arise from embodied experience within a learning environment that facilitates both embodied processes and reflection within a frame of acceptance of individuality.

The emphasis placed on embodiment, in the somatic world is often attributed to the significance of physicality and lived experience. This could be viewed as an existential need emerging through the search for an equilibrium between the different senses of self and the different "dimensions of existence" (Van Deurzen, 2010) in a culture which restricted such manifestations. Although the somatic movement contends this has been the case for western culture, this is an argument which has also been criticized. The counter-argument upholds that the belief that western culture is focused mainly on the mind has been amplified in literature because it is intellectuals who developed such perception. In this perspective, Bakhtin and Augustine are seen to demonstrate a much more carnal practice of western culture and Bourdieu's theory is also considered to explain the reason why this is the case (Bakhtin 1941, Sporton in e-mail exchange). However, it is dualism, where present, that the somatic movement and work on embodiment aims to address, the perceptions that lead a person to experience the body as an addition to their identity (Bordo 1995). Augustine's "Confessions" is a particularly interesting example of a man admitting, and yet troubled by, his materiality and mortality.

In somatics and much of the somatic-informed dance I have experienced, there appears to be an almost tactic emphasis on embodiment processes as a means to balance the focus on mind over body dualism. As it has been shown, somatics suggest an optimum way-of-being-in-the-world and moving which

often refutes a dualistic approach. In release-based techniques or in Gill Clarke's, Eva Karzag's and other Independent Dance artists' practice, this way of moving entails *suppleness*, *effortlessness* and an integrated sense of the body (*soma*). Suppleness and effortlessness in movement and the integrated sense of the body is seen to relate with an economy of energy and effort that organically connects the body with its surroundings. A sense of integration in the body is regarded as fundamental to injury prevention and is a concept grounded on the belief of inner 'healing' properties of the body. The value of this concept is evident in the significance BMC® practitioners place in the integrated ways children begin to develop basic movement patterns around the time they begin to walk. This aspect of the work is evident in the BMC® approach to developmental movement patterns introduced in Chapter 3. A number of somatic practitioners in diverse somatic forms emphasise the mechanics of *effective* or *efficient* movement. Depending on the practitioner, there is diversity in how much this 'ideal' is implied or how much the participants are guided to find their own optimum ways of moving. All these qualities of movement are seen in the field to be the result of embodied (and therefore non-dualist) movement practice.

6.4. The Experience and Analysis of Embodiment: The Somatic Approach through the Lens of Phenomenology

As it has been shown in Chapter 3, Somatic Movement Education training as offered by the SBMC begins to cultivate the ability to observe and discern the anatomical basis of movement. It develops an understanding of what it feels like and what, therefore, might look like to *source* or to *find support* from different body tissues or parts such as a cell, the lymph, the skeleton or an organ. Participants' 2 and 4 responses above could be seen as examples of what might feel like to *source* from the spine for different people.

Phenomenology as a field appears to have opened up the space for articulating, legitimizing and further understanding qualia as a subject of

scholarly investigation. The ability to consciously reflect and understand qualia is in some ways the aim of somatic informed dance pedagogy. The way each person *sources* from the body and therefore moves, I argue, is culturally and genetically conditioned, highly individual and is grounded on complex patterning at all dimensions of existence. An experienced BMC® informed practitioner could discern the body tissue where an individual sources from. He or she could also identify the body parts that dancers of a particular movement/dance style might initiate from, thereby suggesting a collective experience of embodiment of a body part supporting movement. For example, as participant I have been guided to a sense of *groundedness* supporting African or some tribal forms of dance and perhaps the presence of an embodiment of the gut in this process.

Investigating aspects of 'bodiliness' through a paradigm of embodiment places the ethnographer and somatics/dance practitioner within a nexus of dualities (distilled by Csordas 1994a). It becomes essential for her to choose her position with respect to the relations between subjective and objectified, body and mind, self and other, being-in-the-world and representation, experience and textuality, phenomenology and semiotics, inside and outside. (A number of these dualities have been discussed in Chapter 2.) To return to Csordas, he supports that

the collective assertion of these terms define a critical moment in theorizing about the culture and self, and further that although none of these dualities is spurious, neither are the polar terms irreconcilably opposed... In this light our purpose is to identify the terrain on which opposed terms meet, whether they are understood to remain in tension or to collapse upon one another. That terrain is marked by the characteristic reflectiveness and the process of objectification that define human consciousness, giving substance to representation and specificity to being-in-the-world.

(Csordas 1994a: 20)

Csordas' (1994a) illuminating provocation highlights the relationships between those pairs rather than the distinctive properties that differentiate them. Notably, since the mid 1990s, he recommends an advancement in our methodological standpoints which dissolves the tension of opposition between the polar ends of each pair.

In a similar spirit, but without offering a solution to the problem of dualism, Pakes (2006) stresses that although dualism allows for an acknowledgement of the mental in its metaphysical picture and hypothesizes the causal efficacy of mental phenomena, it fails “to explain how two fundamentally different substances or sorts of properties (mental and physical) can interact with one another” (Pakes, 2006: 96).

Introduced in Chapter 2, Shaun Gallagher (2005) in his book *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, makes a significant contribution speaking to the nature of interaction between mental and physical phenomena. Even from its title the book appears to act as a statement aiming to contribute towards illuminating a causal arrangement considered impossible until then due to the established hierarchical position of the mind over the body. I would argue that it does not aim to reverse causality in favour of the body (as perhaps critics of the phenomenological tradition might argue), but instead it aims to heighten the importance of the body in epistemology offering an understanding of the interactions between physical and mental phenomena. Arguably, Gallagher’s emphasis coincides with that of many somatic practices including BMC® and of somatic informed dance pedagogy. The latter focus on balancing the disparity of importance placed to the mind in western culture rather than aiming to privilege the body over the mind. They substantiate the body in a manner that works to cultivate awareness and an embodied understanding of the way body and mind are one. This is opposed to a consideration of the brain or mind⁹⁸ as the only dimension capable of causing change, including movement to the body.

The shifting away from a preoccupation with causality is argued to be the radicality and benefit of phenomenology that allows for opening up the space of being-in-the-world to existential analysis (Csordas 1994a: 287). This is a salient

⁹⁸ Please note that the brain and the mind may be understood as distinct concepts. See Siegel (n.d.) for an analysis of this distinction.

insight on the potentiality of Csordas', emerging at the time, 'cultural phenomenology', a conceptual frame that as explained in Chapter 2 has informed my understanding of the relationship between embodiment and culture. The invention of cultural phenomenology as an analytical platform filling the gap between biologism and sociologism, Csordas argues, would cover the need to heighten the importance of the body and meet the need to address the pre-objective, existential bodily synthesis. The preobjective bodily synthesis involves a pre-reflective, existential experience of the 'lived body' in the sense that one *is* his or her body as opposed to one *has* or *possesses* a body. This is an understanding that may be cultivated through somatic work. As Toombs (1993: 51-52) analyzes following Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, at the pre-reflective level, one is not attentive of the physiological nature of movement, rather they are aware of the action itself whilst the body is an integral *non-thematized* part of the experience. Conversely and as it has been shown particularly in Chapter 3, the analytical, (self-) conscious witnessing perspective of embodiment processes in BMC®, I argue, is situated somewhere between phenomenology and (strangely enough, given the emphasis on refuting dualism and heightening embodiment) biologism. I suggest therefore that perhaps, in the moment of an embodied experience or process, BMC® and BMC® informed dance practice collapses binaries on top of each other. Developing the skill of being conscious of bodily tissues, such as having a sense of embodiment of the skeleton or a sense of initiation of movement through the organs is underlined by the characteristic reflectiveness and the process of objectification that define human consciousness and gives specificity to being-in-the-world (Csordas 1994a: 20). Arguably, this possibility depends on the practitioner's focus, background and engagement with questions around dualities and the level of ontological or epistemological clarity that underpins her or his work.

Following this line of thought, BMC® may form a manifestation of the phenomenological position. In the experience of the lived body in BMC®, during embodiment processes, one arrives at the pre-reflective place of unity between the body and mind, but becomes aware of his own patterning, of a 'pre-

reflective' (Csordas 1994a) *support* or place of initiation of movement (before BMC®). The embodiment process, at times, also leads to a consciousness state different to the pre-reflective in order to allow for observations and awareness of the place of movement initiation and the possibility of different kinds of *support* to emerge. As the SBMC declares, participants are involved in conscious explorations of anatomic structures. In moments when participants experience what in BMC® terms could be called "the embodiment of the skeleton", for example, they are guided to have sensorial information relating to their skeleton arrive to their awareness. In doing so, they are encouraged to reflect on aspects of being that in traditional forms of movement education or other cultural domains would remain as only pre-reflective. This insight could perhaps contribute in furthering aspects of phenomenology. BMC® therefore raises awareness of a level of experience that for the westerner who might not have the somatic background or cultural experience would be generally considered inaccessible or impossible to sense. The kind of awareness raised in this context is discussed in greater detail in section 3.5.

The suggestion that one can have a sensed awareness of their tibia might be found controversial from a biological view that explains that there are no sensory receptors on the bones. Similarly, the suggestion that one can cultivate a conscious awareness of their lung as initiator of movement appears controversial as the organ system is linked to the autonomic nervous system and is not physiologically considered as able to be consciously directed into action. However, through embodiment explorations, BMC® and BMC® informed dance participants appear to have similar experiences. The way this is actually possible remains to be investigated in an interdisciplinary manner and, I argue, could be a very fruitful and valuable for the field investigation.

For the purposes of this research, I argue that what initially shifts towards an experience of the pre-reflective is our attention and perception. The possibility of shifting attention and perception is offered within a cultural form that is grounded on specific principles. That is a culturally constructed movement

system that is also dynamically driven by diversity amongst BMC® teachers and practitioners maintaining a mixture of values or beliefs about the self, the body and collectivity but who are bounded into this system through its premises. The way this mental shift might be possible could perhaps be addressed by research in the field of cognitive science or consciousness, a topic I consider essential to inquire into⁹⁹. BMC® cultivates access to the phenomenal experience of this shift of attention or consciousness state and develops a language and principles to understand this by. In this respect, the practice allows for reflection on the pre-reflective nature of comportment.

It could therefore be argued that BMC® develops an ontologization of unity between the body and mind or holism while cultivating a new layer of witnessing and reflection (see section 3.5) on bodily phenomena broadly considered as pre-reflective. In this respect, it appears to work with a paradox. That is, it cultivates the capacity of reflection and objectification (which as Csordas maintains, defines human consciousness) of the subjective experience of embodiment of anatomic structures. And yet the subjective nature of reflection is analysed and reinforced through practice. This complex loop is further illustrated through the BMC® approach to the relation between the senses and perception discussed in section 3.3.9. The role of perception in the way one responds to somatic informed dance material as stimuli is also illuminated by Gallagher who states: “Although a good deal of the attuning process remains non-conscious, the intentional interests of the subject, in part, help to define that attunement” (2005: 142).

Besides his or her own perception, the participant’s embodiment and reflection is therefore informed by the culturally grounded context and guidance offered through the BMC® material. This shapes perception which directs the way he or she will attend to her body. It may be suggested therefore that impact in

⁹⁹ The growing scholarly interest into consciousness could be illuminated by this method. Also, discoveries in the field of Epigenetics in the latter quarter of the 20th century offer evidence of the ways with which human thought processes affect all the cells of the body. Bruce Lipton (2008), a cell biologist, describes the ways this happens, thereby demonstrating a link between mind and matter in lived processes or experiences.

somatic informed contemporary dance practice is made possible through attending to the body from a culturally specific approach to embodiment that refutes dualism but encompasses the complexities of theoretical analysis. The lived experience of unity between mind and body as experience through embodiment process in somatic informed dance work may be soothing and, for some, revelatory. However, the theoretical analysis of it is much more complex.

Placing embodied experience in analytical perspective with the aim to respond to dichotomies inevitably calls for a dialectical dualism and for equivocations between scientific fields critiqued by Csordas as discussed earlier but it also gives shape to the terrain where dualities meet. Analysing the human condition in the moment of an embodied experience is not necessarily representative of the experience of being-in-the-world in the moment. Analysis and cultivation of embodiment are processes serving different purposes and both valid endeavours. The first helps gain a cognitive appreciation of the human condition whereas the second aims to assist people gain an experiential understanding in order to live better in the moment in multiple manifestations including, for example, the moment of performance, preparation for performance and the creation of dance work.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that embodiment experiences as approached by BMC® may cultivate an awareness and attention to the phenomenal experience of the unity between body and mind. A critical examination of claims encountered in the field and in theory such as in Smith (2002) asserting that somatic education or somatic informed dance pedagogy refutes dualism has pointed to the complexity encountered in surpassing dualist perceptions. The discussion in this chapter involved a distinction between the potentiality of the experience of embodiment cultivated through somatic education and the outcome of existential analysis. As discussed in this chapter, in the moment one 'is embodied', as perceived by some members of the somatic community, he or

she acquires a sense of unity of his or her whole being that in somatic terms could be called a sense of 'integration'. The notion of integration may refer to a sense of connectedness between body parts but also between the body and mind. However, as discussion in this chapter showed, during analysis of living dimensions, and I add, or in a 'traditional' western approach to movement, one tends to differentiate between body and mind.

The perspective underpinning BMC® or in some cases somatic-informed dance practice draws from different epistemological standpoints including those which are shown as distinct in Csordas' analysis. In this perspective, as a socially constructed movement system initially shaped in the US and continually growing in its cultural references, BMC® reflects the different systems of thought and knowledge predominant or emerging from the mid 20th century onwards. It therefore encompasses conflicting paradigms that constitute it a complex method to analyse. As indicated in this chapter and discussed in Chapter 3, the practice of BMC® initiates an understanding of physiological structures and the way the mind manifests through them and vice versa. But in the experience of the embodied moment the analysis stays at the background while heightening the phenomenal experience or the sensed / lived body. The practice appears, thus, to encompass both a phenomenological approach as well as the dichotomising 'ontologization' (Csordas 1994a) dualism and causality has brought to western thinking. In other words, it appears to draw from biologism in its reference to physiology and anatomy, but combines it with eastern more holistic approaches to the body and a phenomenological understanding of the self. This is evident in its approach to perception and the relation between mind and body, self and other, body and environment.

Heightening the phenomenological dimensions of experience through embodied processes, as proposed through BMC® and somatic-informed dance practice may lead to a state of being-in-the-world where the sense of self encompasses the felt sense of the body. It may lead to an experience of *integration* of the body and different dimensions of being that does not require conscious thinking

of body parts. It heightens the presence of the body in the experience of movement and the moment. It is in this sense that the somatic approach may be argued to “collapse binaries on top of each other” (to use Csordas’ 1994a terms). This explanation appears to resonate with Bainbridge Cohen’s definition of embodiment offered in the introduction of this thesis. To remind it here, it states:

Embodiment is the awareness of the cells of themselves. It is direct experience. There are no intermediary steps or translations. There is no guide. There is no witness. There is the fully known consciousness of the experienced moment initiated from the cells themselves. In this instance, the brain is the last to know. There is complete knowing. There is peaceful comprehension. Out of this embodiment process emerges feeling, thinking, witnessing, understanding.

(Bainbridge Cohen 2001: page not available)

Therefore, it becomes clarified that embodiment is a ‘being’ process, and not one that requires effort, active thinking or attention.

A sense of wholeness, or else a sense of unity of the body and mind appears to be expressed by Participants 1, 2 and 3. Participant 1 spoke of “an absolute awareness of [her] being”. She felt “fully centred and every cell of [her] body connected”. Participant 2 explained she felt “complete as one, on [her] own” and yet felt “connected with every other part of the group”. She felt the same with every part of her body. Participant 3, reflected saying she felt “something very substantial happened in [her] body during this workshop. She described it like she “began to feel [her] presence, to feel here for [her]”. These statements illustrate an embodied state, as perceived in a somatic-informed approach to dance pedagogy. They point to a sense of integration of the body participants experienced. In the case of Participant 2, it also points to a sense of connection she felt between herself and the people around her.

To summarise, discussion in this chapter supported that a re-education of dualist perceptions of the self may be possible following *embodiment processes*, particularly in the experience of *integration* of the self in the

moment. But it was indicated that dualism persists when analysis of embodied experience is involved.

7. Conclusion

This thesis explores somatics as a social movement, with particular reference to BMC® and its relation to New and Independent Dance in Britain. To do so, it focuses on the example of BMC® and traces an ethnographic history of the method exploring it as part of the growing field of somatic practices approached here as a social movement. Grounded on a post-positivist paradigm and post-structuralist dance anthropology, it examines BMC® as a “socially constructed movement system” (Grau 1993) that emerged in a western cultural context in the latter half of the twentieth century. It examined BMC® as a form developed by its inventor, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, through her collaborations and insight exchange on the experience of the body with artists, professionals and participants around the world who form part of this social movement. Second, the thesis worked to illustrate the way an emphasis on embodiment, as approached in somatics, has impacted on somatic-informed dance with particular reference to British New and Independent Dance. To do so, it identified the historical, cultural and conceptual context in which the exchange between the two fields took place. It also identified some of the pedagogic tools and principles used in this strand of contemporary dance that portray this exchange, thereby charting a dimension of New and Independent dance that had not been offered in this manner before. Finally, the thesis examined the potentiality of impact of the somatic approach to dance pedagogy a little deeper. In doing so, it critically examined a claim widely made by practitioners in the field and dance scholars (Aposhyan 2004, Batson 2009b, Hanna 1970) suggesting that explorations of embodiment, such as those offered in somatic-informed dance, may negate or re-educate dualist perceptions.

The thesis shows that somatic practices form a collective enterprise that aimed to establish a new way of perceiving the body and its role in lived experience. It aimed to heighten the role embodiment plays to acquiring a sense of self and

relating to the world around us. It demonstrates that this vision met interests and experiments in the dance world and influenced developments in contemporary dance worldwide and in New and Independent Dance in Britain since the 70s.

This research has taken the perspective of a practitioner-researcher. A practice-led (Protopapa 2011) approach has been followed combined with dance anthropology (Sklar 1999, 2000, Ness 2004, Novack 1990), medical anthropology (Csordas 1990, 1994a) and dance history (Banes 1981, 1987, 2003, Jordan 1992, Mackrell 1992). In this frame, the thesis places the notion of embodiment as lived phenomenon in dialogue with understandings of this concept as a research paradigm (as distilled by Csordas 1994a, Ness 2004 and Sklar 2000). A detailed analysis of the methodological and conceptual frameworks I have engaged with for this study is outlined in Chapter 2.

Reflectively speaking as a dance artist informed by a somatic approach, the analysis of theory through practice and of practice through theory further clarified and grounded my pedagogic approach to movement and artist education. Although this was not a goal of the thesis, it is an emerging result that could point to the usefulness of a researcher-practitioner approach. Additionally, while offering an analysis of the cultural and historic positioning of BMC®, the examination of the practice is offered as another source of data to the wider field of discourses on the body and embodiment. It, thereby, wishes to contribute to a growing body of research in the field of dance and somatic practices.

Besides practical knowledge and decisions about pedagogical practice as a dance artist and practitioner, the methodological and conceptual framework employed as part of this research offered evidence and insights on topics listed below in Figure 25. The scheme offered here illustrates the way each framework provided evidence that responds to the objectives of the thesis. It also points to the way findings interlink and emerge through non-linear means.

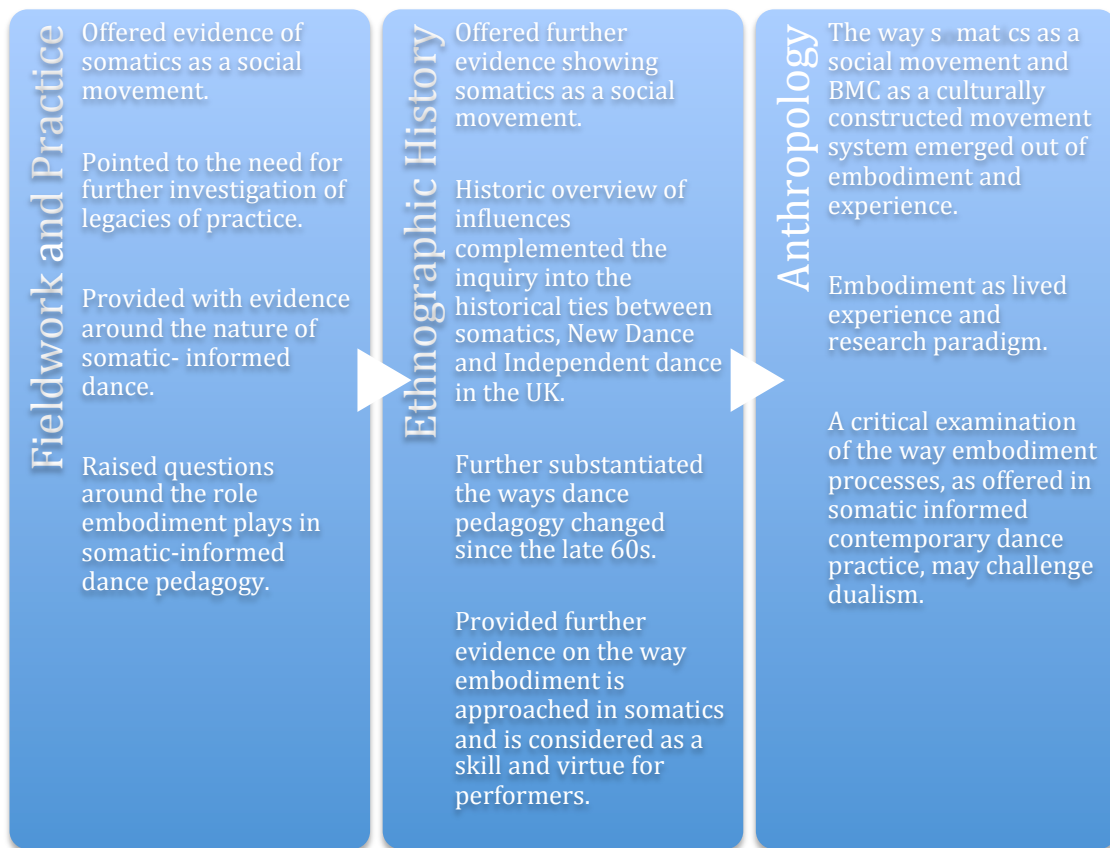


Figure 25. Evidence generated and the progressive nature and structure of arguments as relating to the methodological framework employed.

For example, the anthropological lens endorsed through an ethnographic-historical methodology provided with data that allowed for an illustration of how embodiment is understood in BMC® and somatic-informed dance pedagogy. Thereby, the thesis engages with Grau's (1993) outline of potential anthropological questions, offered in section 2.2 that include: "what attributes do human beings have in common? and what are the basic mental capabilities and processes that allow humans to develop different languages, cultures, and social systems?" (Grau 1993: 21). The conceptual and methodological framework employed in this research also allowed for identification of connections between dance and the field of somatics in the form of exchange between artists and practitioners historically and somatic principles and tools employed by dance practitioners.

The themes explored in each chapter relate to strands of arguments interweaving in this thesis. These are shown schematically in Figure 26 and are

related to methodological, anthropological and ontological questions that emerged through this research and the objectives of this project, each informing the other. The synchronic analysis, that is the socio-historical positioning of BMC® and of aspects of contemporary dance through an ethnographic history engages with notions of legacy and lineage between practices and relates to a wider theoretical interest in this field. Through an extensive reference to lineage and through demonstrating the situatedness of BMC®, this thesis has revealed that the emergence of the somatic movement happened in parallel with significant developments in the scholarly world over the past five decades. It has been shown that these include the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (1962), Husserl (as discussed in Clark 2013, Csordas 1990, 1994, Gallagher 2005), cultural phenomenology (Csordas 1994a, 2011) and cognitive neurosciences (Gallagher 2005). These fields as well as somatics restructure a mechanistic or materialist view of the body and a top-to-bottom arrangement of the relationship between brain and body. The thesis converses with scholarly and practical sources that demonstrate how this restructuring is possible. In doing so, it works to show the way the somatic movement and somatic informed dance practice, as socially constructed movement systems, may form a distillation of conceptual frames such as the embodiment paradigm. In line with this framework, it illustrates the way principles from diverse systems of thought, prevalent at the period investigated, become embodied and influence the formation of movement systems diachronically.

The thesis shows that restructuring the hierarchy between body and mind was experientially explored by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and other somatic and somatic-informed dance practitioners reshaping the way dance is practiced and experienced today in Britain and beyond. As analysed in Gallagher 2005, findings in phenomenology and neurosciences show the way with which the body shapes as much as is shaped by the brain. Although Cohen's main means of research has been through sensing, moving and attuned observations of the mind states of anatomic structures, the development of BMC® did not happen 'in a vacuum' as she states (1993). The materials that shape current BMC®

practice were informed by bodies of thought that on one hand guided Bainbridge Cohen's explorations and on the other explained what she was discovering on herself and through her work with others on an experiential level.

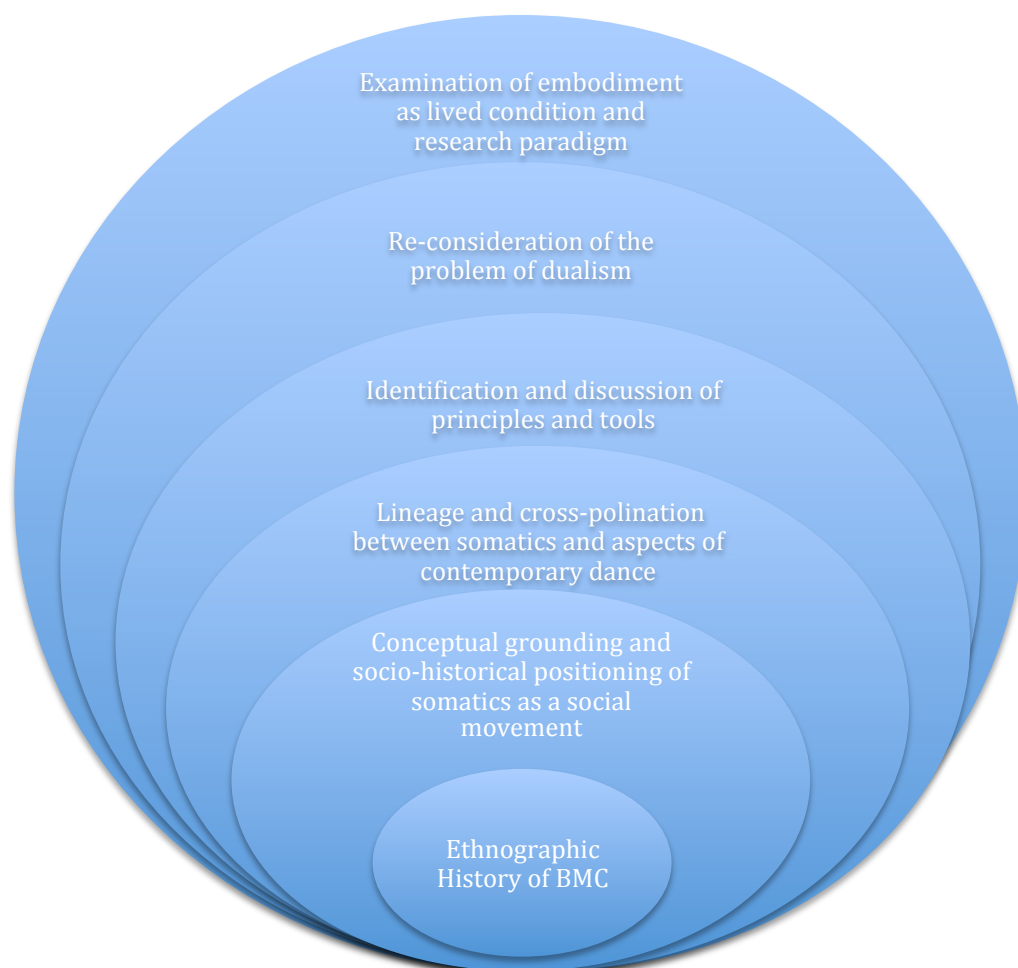


Figure 26. Arguments presented in the thesis in a schematic representation showing succession of discussions.

Chapter 3 introduces the practice of BMC® while positioning it in cultural and historical context. Through historic data it has situated the evolution of the method over the past four decades with reference to its lineage and influences. The chapter is offered as a means to present a practice that was generated out of its inventor's embodied history and her exchange with multiple and diverse reference points that transcend cultural, paradigmatic and geographic boundaries. The role of participants who took part in her sessions that included numerous dancers is also noted. I therefore argue that, Bainbridge Cohen and participants who have contributed in the evolution of this practice have explored

concepts and mappings of the body with and through their bodies. It is through these experiments and explorations that BMC® has formed. Thereby, the role embodiment has played in the emergence of the method begins to be noted and the way the concept of embodiment is approached by BMC® elaborated. I begin to argue that BMC® emerged as an experiential approach to movement education and a socially constructed movement system through an intricate interplay between the embodied histories of inventor and participants and the social, cultural and historical context it is situated.

Chapter 3 has illustrated some of the ways Bainbridge Cohen together with her participants explored the anatomy and physiology of the body through embodiment processes. She did so with the aim to 'center' the body and mind, or in other words, with the aim to heighten embodiment as central to their existence and practice. As argued, the practice works to cultivate a sense of holism in being-in-the-world. It helps to re-structure our perception in relation to our bodies and to re-integrate and recognise the connections between parts of the body, between anatomical structures or realms of existence such as physiology and thought. Chapter 3 shows some of the ways BMC® cultivates an embodied understanding of the relationship between movement and subjectivity, thereby, fostering 'subjectification' (Fortin and Vanasse 2011). It affirms claims encountered in the field that BMC® develops an understanding of ownership of the body, thus restructuring an alienation from our physiological dimensions generated in the western world by a domination of rationalism and systems of thought that place the mind in a hegemonical position over the body.

The chapter also shows the nuances BMC® offered in "experiential explorations" (as introduced in section 2.6) of embodiment. Through analysis of the practice and identification of its origins and lineage, it is shown that a specific approach to embodied anatomy, perception and consciousness was developed that raises awareness and the possibility of reflection on anatomic systems and visceral structures underlying movement, sensory experience of the body and thought. In reverse, the thesis has also introduced to the way

embodiment processes encountered in BMC® cultivate the ability to notice the way thought is reflected in and emerges through the condition of tissues of the body. Epistemologically speaking, this may be considered as a controversial assertion, but as shown, it is a way of thinking about and experiencing the body that is increasingly becoming backed up by new developments in phenomenology, cognitive sciences and neurosciences (Clark 2013, Gallagher 2005). The approach employed in Chapter 3, as explained, is informed by an ethical responsibility to fairly represent the work of a practicing professional body.

Taking the analysis of practices and lineage forward, Chapter 4 takes an ethno-historical perspective to provide evidence for the cross-pollination between BMC® and New and Independent Dance and the influence of the somatic movement to the development of parts of the contemporary dance scene in Britain. Influences are discussed through an examination of lineage, situating practices in cultural and conceptual contexts. The chapter traces primary cultural and aesthetic shifts and demonstrates that as with other arts, pioneers in dance since the early 70s sought to re-define the praxis of their art form. They sought to liberate the body from stylistic regimentation. The chapter identifies aspects of experimental and emerging, at the time, contemporary dance practice that illustrate how artists became interested in 'natural', 'raw' movement. It argues that New Dance practitioners engaged with an emphasis on kinesthesia in movement, on *how* one gets to or *what one senses* to get to a bodily shape. It supports claims that artists prioritized process over an ocularcentric (Garrett-Brown 2007) interest in the end result and in the precision of the shape. They heightened an emphasis on the subjective experience of movement and approached the self as an integrated whole. Chapter 4 argues that the opportunities the somatic movement offered for exploring the body and for developing an understanding of the body was embraced by the parts of the dance world that became interested in these premises. It argues that through exchange, a distinct somatic-based discourse and approach to practice emerged and that embodiment processes were thus included in the creative

and pedagogic realms of dance practice. The chapter explores the way this was evident in Britain since the 1970s, in experiments of the New Dance collective and the artistic exchanges in the Dartington College of Arts, through to today's contemporary dance practice as found in the Independent dance sector. It is therefore argued that dancers' view of their bodies was extended from a mechanistic perspective to one which emphasizes lived subjective experience re-affirming earlier studies arguing that somatics develop a sense of "the body as experienced from within" (Hanna 1970).

The process of historically positioning these practices raised methodological issues around the restrictions the task of labeling places in understanding influences. From the exploration of lineage, legacies and influences between BMC® and contemporary dance, an understanding of cultural forms as permeable, emergent, osmotic and transient is reinforced. Re-affirming the plausibility of the embodiment paradigm, it is proposed therefore, that the emergence of culturally formed methods, such as BMC®, appear to be the offspring of an embodied intellectual and social osmosis, rather than emerging from a linear causality. In this frame, innovators and pioneers become understood as situated in the sense that they are thought of as embodied subjects in an infinite dialogue with their environment that is both dynamic and inherent.

In examination of lineage, I have found that a linear representation (such as that shown in Eddy's diagram, Figure 4) does not actually emit the role embodiment plays in the transmission and exchange of concepts of body-based practices such as somatic forms or contemporary dance. Eddy's diagram forms a useful working schematic representation of influences for the emergence of the somatic movement. However, through this research, it is shown that influences are much less linear. Culture formation seems to be more like a fermentation process. The fermentation of ideas, concepts and practices happens through the body on an individual and a collective level.

The focus of Chapter 5 is twofold. First, it works to further illustrate the way this cultural fermentation process is manifested through the practice of some somatic-informed contemporary dance practitioners providing evidence for their exchange. Second, it deepens the analysis of a distinct discourse of practice. The chapter examines the nuanced ways in which contemporary dance began to be practiced since the 70s, building on the ethno-historical and practice-informed perspective. It offers introductory discussion of indicative principles of practice and pedagogic tools shared between aspects of the contemporary dance and the somatic world. The discussion of principles and pedagogic tools also illustrate the shifts of interest towards embodiment in New and Independent Dance practice and the cross-pollination between dance and somatics. Finally, through these discussions, Chapter 5 indicates some of the ways the term embodiment may be understood in a somatic-informed approach to dance pedagogy.

The particular combination of practice-led, ethnographic and historical methodology employed in this research, made the identification of practitioners and principles possible and informed their analysis. Principles and pedagogic tools are also viewed as cultural traits of a culturally situated, socially constructed movement system. Their analysis is offered as a means to emanate the meanings embodiment might take in the field. This is a research approach to somatic informed contemporary dance practice that, to my knowledge, has not been undertaken before. The exploration of the particular discourse of practice through analysis of some basic premises responds to calls for the need of such a task (Schiphorst 2009) and works to contribute towards developing a specificity in claims asserting that somatics have influenced dance practice.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 show the ways embodiment is fostered through somatic work and somatic informed dance education. They allude to the way this approach leads participants and student artists to a re-newed sense of self. The concept of embodiment is thus explored as a lived condition. A

fundamental reason for the emergence of the embodiment paradigm or of practices based on embodiment was its value for negating and re-conditioning dualist views. As a result, the last chapter of this thesis explores the ways with which embodied processes or lived experiences as offered through somatic education converse with the philosophical problem of dualism. The dialogue between the emphasis on embodiment as raised in cultural theory informed by a phenomenological outlook (such as Csordas 1994a) and as raised in the somatic movement (see for example, section 2.3 and 6.4) illuminates further each frame. It begins to unpick the ways with which the somatic approach may enhance one's 'way-of-being-in-the-world', borrowing the concept from the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Csordas' (1994a) reading of this.

Critically engaging with the practice both through application and through the embodiment paradigm in anthropology, Chapter 6 expands on the analysis offered in previous chapters and particularly Chapter 3. It critically examines BMC®'s potential for re-educating dualist perceptions. It illustrates the way BMC® may heighten somatic awareness to the level that it includes observation and reflection on visceral structures of the human body including the smallest structures such as the cell or mitochondria. As it is shown, the practice works to elevate dimensions of somatic proprioception, normally considered as inaccessible, above the threshold of consciousness. Through discussion of embodiment processes the thesis shows that participants in BMC® practice may witness and reflect upon not only the mind state of a tissue of anatomic system, but also on the patterning tissues may have acquired. Although the phrasing and premises upheld here may seem controversial for the traditional rationalist approach to the body, the way this might be possible is a topic of particular interest requiring deep and interdisciplinary research beyond this research project. However, for the purposes of this project, it is useful to acknowledge the development of this discourse of practice as a collective expression of a distinct and evolving understanding of the body and human movement that emerged out of experiential exchange.

Critically examining the practice, Chapter 6 also demonstrates that specifically the BMC® approach to embodiment is not freed from dualist perceptions. As part of this argument, a differentiation is offered between the experiential and the analytic realms of this approach each reflecting polarities long existing in western systems of thought from which BMC® practice drew amongst other influences. Conversely, it is argued that the somatic approach to embodiment speaks to the terrain between dualities such as objectivity and subjectivity, biologism and sociologism, as did the quest for a 'cultural phenomenology of embodiment' in the 90s. As Csordas (1994a) has clarified the purpose of the methodological and paradigmatic shift towards embodiment is defined by the terrain where opposed ends meet between these dualities. Even, the word 'centering' in the title of BMC®, I argue, may reveal a similar purpose. The potentiality of this methodological advancement lies on the possibility cultural phenomenology offers for collapsing binaries on top of each other. To repeat Csordas' position (also quoted in Chapter 2), that "terrain is marked by the characteristic reflectiveness and the process of objectification that define human consciousness, giving substance to representation and specificity to being-in-the-world"(20). The blurred boundaries between the objectification of biologism and the phenomenal experience offered through somatic processes are also observed in BMC® practice and are discussed in Chapter 6. Therefore, it is argued that a sense of whole and embodiment is fostered when the analytic realm and the process of objectification that defines human consciousness is left to the background. In this frame of thought, I support claims stressing that embodied processes offered through somatic work may contribute towards re-integrating and restoring a sense of self that includes bodily awareness and a recognition of corporeal intelligence. But I contend that the extent to which this may be possible is based on the practitioner's reference points, his own cultural positioning and his or her clarity around existential matters such as dualism.

Chapter 3, 5 and 6 begin to show that embodied processes are seen to develop a phenomenal experience of bodiliness in time and space and it is in those moments that dualist perceptions may be partly reconciled. In Chapter 5, this

was shown for example, in Clarke's descriptions of the "state of readiness" and openness to new experience and sensation that she worked to cultivate. Her reference to the German word *stimmen* to described the way she worked with the body. It's like tuning a stringed instrument, she clarifies. Besides the knowledge of the body and the guidance through specific tools, to facilitate such a quality requires an environment that is grounded on allowance and acceptance of the self and the timing of the body. Karczag's descriptions of a good improviser speak of the value of embodiment and illustrate the type of qualities a somatic informed approach to creative work may look for. In Chapter 6, the reflections of participants in the series of workshops I facilitated at the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu also illustrate the way an embodied state of being-in-the-world is understood in somatic-informed dance.

In cultivating bodily awareness, a more *integrated, whole* presence emerges and a development of certain aspects of the 'sense of self' of the artist involved. This includes a sense of the body in being-in-the-world. It is shown that somatic based pedagogic methods allow for the development of a gentle and responsive connection to the environment with a sense of innate clarity of focus and openness. Therefore, I argue, that this way of relating may have significant repercussions not only in one's dance practice and performance but in the way one communicates with and senses the other and connects with his environment.

The conceptual grounding and shared emphasis on embodiment as encountered in the somatic movement and the contemporary dance world offered in this thesis has enabled interpretative observations and distinction between predominant meanings of the term embodiment. This distinction was made possible through my involvement in the field as a practitioner and ethnographer. Three basic interpretations and uses of the term may be offered here as a conclusive summary. The term is used in the field to denote: a) a kind of attunement where all dimensions of the living person are experienced as united. As it has been shown, this is a pre-analytic sensory-motor condition that

BMC® practice helps to attend to and observe. As already mentioned, in the context of somatic informed dance pedagogy, the aim is to re-integrate and understand corporeal knowledge and highlight its importance. As it is shown, the pedagogic process is underpinned by an interest to bring awareness to the tissues or patterns which are unconscious with a view to re-integrate them once more into the whole functioning of the self. b) The use of the term embodiment also signifies one's comportment, a signature way of being-in-the-world, a distinct way of moving and engaging with the world through the body that according to BMC® is grounded on individual processing of information and cultural conditioning and is reflective of the anatomic system (or part of) that a person's movement is *supported* by or *sources* from. c) The 'act' of embodiment of an anatomic system in phrases such as 'the embodiment of the skeleton' or the 'embodiment of the tibia' which, as referred amongst BMC® practitioners denotes what it is to sense this anatomical part or its support in movement or stillness. The endeavour to clarify meanings and uses the term embodiment takes in the field was considered pertinent as a ground-clearing task offered in the field. This clarification and the understanding of the interdependence between dimensions of existence informed the kinds of observations I can make during practice and therefore influenced the kinds of guidance or feedback I offer to participants.

This thesis has shown how the emergence of the somatic movement may illustrate that embodiment and experience form the existential ground for culture and self, in line with Csordas' (1994a) assertion. The concurrent development of the interest in embodiment both in theory and in culturally constructed movement systems are not seen in this study as illustrating a causal arrangement of these two cultural manifestations. Rather, theoretical frames and movement systems are viewed as emerging and cross-informing realms of cultural life that are grounded on embodiment. To follow Csordas' line of argument, I argue that the genesis of culture is existentially driven. In the context of this study, I abide to his theory of cultural phenomenology to embodiment as a lens through which to understand the interplay between the

body and culture. An added complexity is encountered in the case of somatics where embodiment and experience forms both the existential ground for the emergence of this culturally grounded discourse and the subject of interest of this social movement. This is an area that will require further analysis beyond this thesis.

The themes this thesis has explored have raised a series of other significant questions that I consider as calling for further investigation in the future. For example, the way somatic approaches to movement education address and challenge dualism raises another set of questions relating to the place where boundaries between education and therapy blur. If the principles and tools we use in somatic-informed dance education are the same as those used in therapeutic contexts such as body-based psychotherapy (Aposhyan 2004) or somatic psychology (Hartley 2004), can we differentiate the impact the somatic approach has on participants in the different contexts?

The lineage, the tools contemporary dance has employed and cases I have encountered in practice as a facilitator or participant in somatic informed dance workshops during deep embodied *processing* raise ethical concerns. For example, how is a student protected and supported if he or she experiences deep emotional processing during a somatic-informed dance session that is part of a compulsory curriculum within an educational context? What are the principles and pedagogic tools available to the somatic-informed practitioner that are distinct to an orthodox dance teacher and are they sufficient to cater for the protection of the mental health of the student? While being focused on developing a sense of embodiment and heightening the importance of the body in the experience of movement, are somatic-informed dance practitioners aware of the other dimensions of existence (such as the emotional or mental) this work impacts on? If a practice has transformative or “therapeutic” potential, as somatic-informed dance practitioners often claim for their work, is there not a risk to lead to negative outcomes? The research would suggest that impact on a level of the human condition as fundamental as that of embodiment entails

significant benefits as well as risks. What might somatic-informed practitioners do to protect and support students in this process of self-growth as artists? Given the psychophysical impact of work with and on embodiment in dance education, could further knowledge in psychotherapeutic tools and principles and further grounding of this pedagogic approach in therapy and / or collaborative work with psychotherapists equip somatic-informed dance practitioners for facilitating this process more safely? What might we learn from psychotherapy and from fields the somatic movement has affinities with around the psychological impact of the somatic approach to education (and therapy)?

As a way of navigating some of the issues identified in the questions outlined above, in this research, I prioritised covering the ground of situating practice and examination of pedagogic principles and tools drawn from somatics. This was offered as a means to substantiate what certain principles mean and where they come from and to facilitate clarity of terms and intentions when propagating or promoting embodiment. Through this research, it became evident that working with embodiment, in a way, unites fields – it calls for interdisciplinary understanding and, therefore, an interdisciplinary grounding of pedagogy. The thesis aimed to demonstrate how the pedagogic applications of the somatic approach impact on dance, before reaching to other disciplines.

The boundaries where education and therapy blur, with the above questions in mind, is a debate I have engaged with actively in the past few years. Through discussions with somatic-informed dance artists and somatic practitioners, and through participation in conferences focusing on this subject, I have explored some of these questions. However, the confines of this thesis do not allow for an inclusion of the analysis of these topics. As a result, findings from this aspect of my research will be further analysed and disseminated beyond completion of this project. This is an area that I aim to further investigate following completion of this research process.

Additionally, examining practice through the lens of the embodiment paradigm raises further critical reflection on language used in BMC® and by some somatic-informed dance practitioners that suggest a possibility for ‘re-educating’ or ‘re-patterning’ aspects of one’s embodiment. This line of argument raises another set of questions relating to ontological theories, cultural theory and politics. For example, when somatic-informed dance practitioners claim that their approach develops a “sense of self” (Smith 2002), as indicated through this thesis, what do they mean exactly? How do the fields of psychotherapy, anthropology or phenomenology approach the terms of “self” and “sense of self” and is there common ground between them? How might these fields further elaborate the role embodiment plays in the notion of “self” that might be useful for somatic-informed dance education? The research indicates the necessity for clear conceptual grounding of these terms. It also points to the worth for practitioners to develop an awareness of the socio-cultural stance that underpins their approach to self and subjectivity.

One of the aspects that the embodiment paradigm highlights is that the body is at all times culturally situated. This thesis has shown that somatic practices, such as BMC® is a culturally constructed movement system that has inherited and developed a range of values and principles upholding a particular ontological view that works to unite the body and mind. If one accepts these premises, then it becomes pertinent to critically examine claims around the transformative potential of the BMC® approach to dance pedagogy, specifically with regards to its potentiality for emancipation and empowerment. The thought process regarding this debate is as follows. If a somatic approach such as BMC® cultivates ‘embodiment’ of a particular body part and then invites for a reflection on the way the body has been culturally patterned, then perhaps a claim around the potentiality for ‘re-patterning’ might arise. The participant’s critical reflection is always facilitated by a culturally situated discourse of practice. Therefore the practice itself informs how sensed experience will be reflected upon. This consideration leads to two types of questions that require different pathways of further investigation.

Firstly, this research has illustrated how through BMC® one may reflect on the way her or his movement is *supported* by different body tissues. However, it is indicated that this is an experiential process that might be considered controversial for a western mapping of the body. Some of the tissues one may source from in BMC®, such as the organs - anatomic structures connecting to the autonomic nervous system - would be considered unperceivable. In phenomenological terms (Gallagher 2005), they could be called as pre-objective dimensions. But is it not an objectifying process to reflect on or perceive pre-objective dimensions? This is an inquiry that calls for further examination through phenomenological accounts and the way these converses with phenomenological theory in the future.

The second set of questions that derives from the conception that the body is always culturally situated forms as follows. If we consider that critical reflection on cultural patterning is enabled through another culturally positioned practice, how may this converse with ontological theories and how might it elaborate debates around determinism (Turner 1994)? Can the somatic movement foster transcendence beyond cultural frames? Besides illuminating specific points of interest to somatic and somatic informed dance and movement education, this line of argument will contribute towards anthropological questions around the interplay between embodiment and culture. This has been another subject of interest that emerged during this research process that, as above, space limitations do not allow for an inclusion of the discussion. Further investigation in this area, analysis and findings on these questions will also be disseminated in the future.

This study is underpinned by an understanding that the scope of the somatic movement is not restricted to reformulating dance pedagogy or the way dancers experience their bodies and movement, but extends to a vision of society and of being-in-the-world which may have physical, psychological, social, cultural and political implications. Many people who have endorsed this approach not only

practice dance differently, but also testify changes in the way they express themselves, in the way they relate to their self, their body, other people and the environment. Given the impact the somatic approach has to participants, discussions offered in this thesis further point towards the potential an emphasis on embodiment in the somatic approach has for movement education, contemporary dance pedagogy, theory and epistemology.

To conclude, the particular research project has raised a view of the body as a whole and transient entity (and in this I include both mental and physical dimensions), a porous organism and an infinitely evolving system. As illustrated, the subject absorbs and processes techniques, thoughts, concepts, sensory-motor stimuli, interactions and environments. It takes in and forms the environment. It reflects culture and is reflected in the culture and yet it retains a diversity characterized by subjectivity. Collectively with other subjects people generate new forms of knowledge that are at once intellectual and bodily. The evolution of a “socially constructed movement system” (Grau 1993) or, as it could also be called, a culturally constructed body system such as BMC® or the somatic movement, appears as not static but an evolving, emergent, permeable process of collective bodily expressions, manifestations of an osmosis that happens both bodily and socially at once. In we accept that without a body there is no person, then the body is not *part* of the self, but it *is* the self, the personification of being. The self does not own a body but it is a body. Therefore, ‘the self’ forms as much as it is formed by culture through embodiment. With embodiment being the connecting thread between arguments, collective notions of embodiment are seen in this study as a diachronic lived realm of existence informing the emergence of culturally constructed movement systems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Scanned Ethics Approval Form

Gina Giotaki Medium Risk Ethics Form

Revision 1.00

Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

1 Project Information (Everyone)

Title of Project An Ethnographic History of Somatics and Their Relation to Postmodern Dance: The Case of Body Mind Centering
Name of Principal Investigator (PI) or Research or Professional Degree Student Georgia Giotaki
Faculty, Department or Institute Performing Arts
Names of Co-investigators (CIs) and their organisational affiliation N/A
How many additional research staff will be employed on the project? None Names and their organisational affiliation (if known)
Proposed project start date (At least three months in the future)
Estimated project end date January 2013
Who is funding the project? Coventry University through a bursary scheme. Has funding been confirmed? Yes
Code of ethical practice and conduct most relevant to your project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Research Association

Students Only

Degree being studied (MSc/MA by Research, MPhil, PhD, EngD, etc) PhD
Name of your Director of Studies Dr. Natalie Garrett
Date of Enrolment 25 th January 2010

2. Does this project need ethical approval?

Questions	Yes	No
Does the project involve collecting primary data from, or about, living human beings?	√	
Does the project involve analysing primary or unpublished data from, or about, living human beings?	√	
Does the project involve collecting or analysing primary or unpublished data about people who have recently died other than data that are already in the public domain?		√
Does the project involve collecting or analysing primary or unpublished data about or from organisations or agencies of any kind other than data that are already in the public domain?		√
Does the project involve research with non-human vertebrates in their natural settings or behavioural work involving invertebrate species not covered by the Animals Scientific Procedures Act (1986)? ¹		√
Does the project place the participants or the researchers in a dangerous environment, risk of physical harm, psychological or emotional distress?		√
Does the nature of the project place the participant or researchers in a situation where they are at risk of investigation by the police or security services?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions, proceed to **Section 3**.

If you answered **No** to **all** these questions:

- You **do not** need to submit your project for peer ethical review and ethical approval.
- You should sign the Declaration in **Section 16** and keep a copy for your own records.
- Students must ask their Director of Studies to countersign the declaration and they should send a copy for your file to the Registry Research Unit.

¹ The Animals Scientific Procedures Act (1986) was amended in 1993. As a result the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), as an invertebrate species, is now covered by the act.

3 Does the project require Criminal Records Bureau checks?

Questions	Yes	No
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with children or young people under 18 years of age?		√
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults who have learning difficulties?		√
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults who are infirm or physically disabled?		√
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults who are resident in social care or medical establishments?		√
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults in the custody of the criminal justice system?		√
Has a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check been stipulated as a condition of access to any source of data required for the project?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions, please:

- Explain the nature of the contact required and the circumstances in which contact will be made during the project.

Due to the inclusive nature of somatic practices there may be occasions when participants in the field may have learning difficulties or some physical disability of which I may not be aware in advance.

4 Is this project liable to scrutiny by external ethical review arrangements?

Questions	Yes	No
Has a favourable ethical opinion been given for this project by an external research ethics committee (e.g. social care, NHS or another University)?		√
Will this project be submitted for ethical approval to an external research ethics committee (e.g. social care, NHS or another University)?		√

If you answered **No** to **both** of these questions, please proceed to **Section 5**.

If you answered **Yes** to **either** of these questions:

- Sign the Declaration in **Section 16** and send a copy to the Registry Research Unit.
- Students must get their Director of Studies to countersign the checklist before submitting it.

5 More detail about the project

What are the aims and objectives of the project?

Aim

The aim of this research is to trace an ethnographic history of BMC examining the practice as part of a social movement and as a post-modern western somatic method influencing the development of contemporary dance in Britain.

Objectives

1. To trace and construct a history of the interrelation between the growth of somatic practices, with particular reference to BMC, and the development of contemporary dance in Britain.
2. To investigate somatics and BMC in particular as a social movement and a cultural phenomenon.
3. To examine the philosophical frame of thought which shaped the ground for the development of somatic methods and BMC in particular.
4. To examine the methodological advantages of researching on embodiment as an existential condition if one is trained in embodiment.

Briefly describe the principal methods, the sources of data or evidence to be used and the number and type of research participants who will be recruited to the project.

This study will be qualitative and ethno-historical. It involves both experiential engagement and theoretical investigation. Ethnographic fieldwork research will be undertaken within the BMC training programme in Liverpool, during the Embodied Performing Arts course in London (permission has already been granted for both of the above) and within one of the courses led by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the inventor of the practice. Permission for the latter has been granted following direct contact with Cohen in June 2010. Some of the ethnographic tools foreseen to be used include detailed field-notes, interviews and informal discussions with practitioners and artists like Cohen, Katy Dymoke, Linda Hartley, Jens Johansen and peer participants as well as participant observation.

What research instrument(s), validated scales or methods will be used to collect data?

Methods include field-notes, a study/focus group, voice recordings of workshops where this is permitted and relevant, structured and semi-structured interviews, informal discussions, and video recording of practice where this is relevant and following the consent of participants involved.

If you are using an externally validated research instrument, technique or research method, please specify.

If you are not using an externally validated scale or research method, please attach a copy of the research instrument you will use to collect data. For example, a measurement scale, questionnaire, interview schedule, observation protocol for ethnographic work or, in the case of unstructured data collection, a topic list.

6 Confidentiality, security and retention of research data

Questions	Yes	No
Are there any reasons why you cannot guarantee the full security and confidentiality of any personal or confidential data collected for the project?		√
Is there a significant possibility that any of your participants, or people associated with them, could be directly or indirectly identified in the outputs from this project?	√	
Is there a significant possibility that confidential information could be traced back to a specific organisation or agency as a result of the way you write up the results of the project?		√
Will any members of the project team retain any personal or confidential data at the end of the project, other than in fully anonymised form?		√
Will you or any member of the team intend to make use of any confidential information, knowledge, trade secrets obtained for any other purpose than this research project?		√

If you answered **No** to **all** of these questions:

- Explain how you will ensure the confidentiality and security of your research data, both during and after the project.

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the reasons why it is essential to breach normal research protocol regarding confidentiality, security and retention of research data.

The historical dimension of this project will aim to identify key figures influential to the development of an industry, the field of somatics, and its influence to contemporary dance. The process of naming artists will only follow their consent. In the event that artists will prefer to remain unidentifiable, they will be anonymized and data that may show their position and thus allow for tracing of the individual will be kept confidential and locked in filing cabinet.

7 Informed consent

Questions	Yes	No
Will all participants be fully informed why the project is being conducted and what their participation will involve and will this information be given before the project begins?		√
Will every participant be asked to give written consent to participating in the project before it begins?		√
Will all participants be fully informed about what data will be collected and what will be done with these data during and after the project?		√
Will explicit consent be sought for audio, video or photographic recording of participants?	√	
Will every participant understand what rights they have not to take part, and/or to withdraw themselves and their data from the project if they do take part?	√	
Will every participant understand that they do not need to give you reasons for deciding not to take part or to withdraw themselves and their data from the project and that there will be no repercussions as a result?	√	
If the project involves deceiving or covert observation of participants, will you debrief them at the earliest possible opportunity?	√	

If you answered **Yes** to **all** these questions:

- Explain briefly how you will implement the informed consent scheme described in your answers.
- Attach copies of your participant information leaflet, informed consent form and participant debriefing leaflet (if required) as evidence of your plans.

If you answered **No** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain why it is essential for the project to be conducted in a way that will not allow all participants the opportunity to exercise fully-informed consent.
- Explain how you propose to address the ethical issues arising from the absence of transparency.
- Attach copies of your participant information sheet and consent form as evidence of your plans.

This ethnographic study will involve fieldwork in diverse settings with the aim to trace connections between somatic practices as applied by dance artists and the philosophical approaches on which their practice is grounded. Settings include relevant festivals, somatic workshops and Body Mind Centering courses in an attempt to identify the cultural dimensions of the practice. As a result, the number of participants in the field will be far bigger than the informants identified as relevant for the project. The project will not involve any intervention other than documentation of participants' behaviour as available in the practice and as relevant to an anthropological study and the topics the research will focus on. Observation involves a level of movement analysis inherent in the practice of somatics, dance and dance ethnography. Participants from whom data will be drawn and who have given their consent to be named will be informed of the focus of the research and about the way the data will be dealt with or written about by presenting them with the relevant section of the text in which they are being represented. Alterations will be made to the text following their consent prior to the submission of the thesis. Due to the nature of the field and the practice based aspect of the project, an overt ethnographic approach will be applied wherever possible by explicitly outlining participants the focus of the research. It will, however, involve instances where a covert approach is applied, as for

instance in contemporary dance festivals where my involvement is as much participatory as research focused. Participants in events such as this are not invited to participate in the research, but are informants, in the ethnographic sense, who happen to be in the field. Underpinned by a grounded theory perspective, informants who will be identified as potentially providing significant data for the project during fieldwork, will be explicitly informed of the focus of the research.

8 Risk of harm

Questions	Yes	No
Is there any significant risk that your project may lead to physical harm to participants or researchers?		√
Is there any significant risk that your project may lead to psychological or emotional distress to participants or researchers?		√
Is there any significant risk that your project may place the participants or the researchers in potentially dangerous situations or environments?		√
Is there any significant risk that your project may result in harm to the reputation of participants, researchers, their employers, or other persons or organisations?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the nature of the risks involved and why it is necessary for the participants or researchers to be exposed to such risks.
- Explain how you propose to assess, manage and mitigate any risks to participants or researchers.
- Explain the arrangements by which you will ensure that participants understand and consent to these risks.
- Explain the arrangements you will make to refer participants or researchers to sources of help if they are seriously distressed or harmed as a result of taking part in the project.
- Explain the arrangements for recording and reporting any adverse consequences of the research.

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9 Risk of disclosure of harm or potential harm

Questions	Yes	No
Is there a significant risk that the project will lead participants to disclose evidence of previous criminal offences or their intention to commit criminal offences?		√
Is there a significant risk that the project will lead participants to disclose evidence that children or vulnerable adults have or are being harmed or are at risk of harm?		√
Is there a significant risk that the project will lead participants to disclose evidence of serious risk of other types of harm?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain why it is necessary to take the risks of potential or actual disclosure.
- Explain what actions you would take if such disclosures were to occur.
- Explain what advice you will take and from whom before taking these actions.
- Explain what information you will give participants about the possible consequences of disclosing information about criminal or serious risk of harm.

10 Payment of participants

Questions	Yes	No
Do you intend to offer participants cash payments or any other kind of inducements or compensation for taking part in your project?		√
Is there any significant possibility that such inducements will cause participants to consent to risks that they might not otherwise find acceptable?		√
Is there any significant possibility that the prospect of payment or other rewards will systematically skew the data provided by participants in any way?		√
Will you inform participants that accepting compensation or inducements does not negate their right to withdraw from the project?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the nature of the inducements or the amount of the payments that will be offered.
- Explain the reasons why it is necessary to offer payments.
- Explain why you consider it is ethically and methodologically acceptable to offer payments.

11 Capacity to give informed consent

Questions	Yes	No
Do you propose to recruit any participants who are under 18 years of age?		√
Do you propose to recruit any participants who have learning difficulties?		√
Do you propose to recruit any participants with communication difficulties including difficulties arising from limited facility with the English language?		√
Do you propose to recruit any participants who are very elderly or infirm?		√
Do you propose to recruit any participants with mental health problems or other medical problems that may impair their cognitive abilities?		√
Do you propose to recruit any participants who may not be able to understand fully the nature of the research and the implications for them of participating in it?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **only the last two** questions, proceed to **Section 16** and then apply using the online NHS Research Ethics Committee approval form.

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of the **first four** questions:

- Explain how you will ensure that the interests and wishes of participants are understood and taken in to account.
- Explain how in the case of children the wishes of their parents or guardians are understood and taken into account.

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12 Is participation genuinely voluntary?

Questions	Yes	No
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are employees or students of Coventry University or of organisation(s) that are formal collaborators in the project?	√	
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are employees recruited through other business, voluntary or public sector organisations?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are pupils or students recruited through educational institutions?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are clients recruited through voluntary or public services?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are living in residential communities or institutions?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are in-patients in a hospital or other medical establishment?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are recruited by virtue of their employment in the police or armed services?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are being detained or sanctioned in the criminal justice system?		√
Are you proposing to recruit participants who may not feel empowered to refuse to participate in the research?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain how your participants will be recruited.
- Explain what steps you will take to ensure that participation in this project is genuinely voluntary.

In the context of investigating the creative and educational applications of somatics for the dancer / performer, a study group will be formulated inviting a small number of students with relevant background and expressed interest, in this aspect of the project, to participate. They will be repeatedly informed/reminded of their choice to take or not take part in the group.

13 On-line and Internet Research

Questions	Yes	No
Will any part of your project involve collecting data by means of electronic media such as the Internet or e-mail?		√
Is there a significant possibility that the project will encourage children under 18 to access inappropriate websites or correspond with people who pose risk of harm?		√
Is there a significant possibility that the project will cause participants to become distressed or harmed in ways that may not be apparent to the researcher(s)?		√
Will the project incur risks of breaching participant confidentiality and anonymity that arise specifically from the use of electronic media?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain why you propose to use electronic media.
- Explain how you propose to address the risks associated with online/internet research.
- Ensure that your answers to the previous sections address any issues related to online research.

14 Other ethical risks

Question	Yes	No
Are there any other ethical issues or risks of harm raised by your project that have not been covered by previous questions?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **this** question:

- Explain the nature of these ethical issues and risks.
- Explain why you need to incur these ethical issues and risks.
- Explain how you propose to deal with these ethical issues and risks.

15 Research with non-human vertebrates²

Questions	Yes	No
Will any part of your project involve the study of animals in their natural habitat?		√
Will your project involve the recording of behaviour of animals in a non-natural setting that is outside the control of the researcher?		√
Will your field work involve any direct intervention other than recording the behaviour of the animals available for observation?		√
Is the species you plan to research endangered, locally rare or part of a sensitive ecosystem protected by legislation?		√
Is there any significant possibility that the welfare of the target species or those sharing the local environment/habitat will be detrimentally affected?		√
Is there any significant possibility that the habitat of the animals will be damaged by the project such that their health and survival will be endangered?		√
Will project work involve intervention work in a non-natural setting in relation to invertebrate species other than <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> ?		√

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the reasons for conducting the project in the way you propose and the academic benefits that will flow from it.
- Explain the nature of the risks to the animals and their habitat.
- Explain how you propose to assess, manage and mitigate these risks.

² The Animals Scientific Procedures Act (1986) was amended in 1993. As a result the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), as an invertebrate species, is now covered by the act.

16 Principal Investigator Certification

Please ensure that you:

- Tick all the boxes below that are relevant to your project and sign this checklist.
- Students must get their Director of Studies to countersign this declaration.

I believe that this project does not require research ethics peer review . I have completed Sections 1-2 and kept a copy for my own records. I realise I may be asked to provide a copy of this checklist at any time.	
I request that this project is exempt from internal research ethics peer review because it will be, or has been, reviewed by an external research ethics committee. I have completed Sections 1-4 and have attached/will attach a copy of the favourable ethical review issued by the external research ethics committee. Please give the name of the external research ethics committee here: Send to ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk	
I request an ethics peer review and confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly. Send to ethics.uni@coventry.ac.uk	√
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.	√
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the Code of Research Ethics issued by the relevant national learned society.	√
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity Framework.	√

Signatures

If you submit this checklist and any attachments by e-mail, you should type your name in the signature space. An email attachment sent from your University inbox will be assumed to have been signed electronically.

Principal Investigator

Signed..... (Principal Investigator or Student)

Date

Students submitting this checklist by email must append to it an email from their Director of Studies confirming that they are prepared to make the declaration above and to countersign this checklist. This email will be taken as an electronic countersignature.

Student's Director of Studies

Countersigned Natalie Garrett (Director of Studies)

Date 3-4-11

I have read this checklist and confirm that it covers all the ethical issues raised by this project fully and frankly. I also confirm that these issues have been discussed with the student and will continue to be reviewed in the course of supervision.

Note: This checklist is based on an ethics approval form produce by Research Office of the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University. Copyright is acknowledged.

For office use only**Initial assessment**

Date checklist initially received:	DD/MM/YYYY	
1. Ethical review required	Yes	No
2. CRB check required	Yes	No
Submitted to an external research ethics committee		
3. External research ethics committee (Name)	Yes	No
4. Copy of external ethical clearance received	DD/MM/YYYY	
Ethics Panel Review		
5. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
6. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Original Decision (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
7. Approve	Yes	No
8. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
9. Resubmission	Yes	No
10. Reject	Yes	No
11. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	
Resubmission		
12. Date of receipt of resubmission:	DD/MM/YYYY	
13. Date sent to reviewer 1 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
14. Date sent to reviewer 2 (Name)	DD/MM/YYYY	
Final decision recorded (Consultation with Chair UARC/Chair RDSC)		
15. Approve	Yes	No
16. Approve with conditions (specify)	Yes	No
17. Reject	Yes	No
18. Date of letter to applicant	DD/MM/YYYY	

Signature (Chair of UARC/Chair RDSC)

Date 4.4.2011

AS CHAIR OF CSAD SARC

Appendix 2.

BMC® Programme Development Chronology

1979	<p>The first BMC® Practitioner Training Programme is offered in Amherst, MA, USA. The first certified practitioners graduate around 1982. In 1983 Maryska Bigos graduates who had started her studies in 1979. She later becomes the founder of the Kinesthetic Learning Centre mentioned below.</p> <p>A number of programmes are developed by the School for BMC® in the next two decades as listed in chapter 4. BMC® teachers who graduated from the first programmes offered in the USA have recounted (in conversations with author) hundreds of participants in the first courses in the 80s some of which were held in large gym spaces to fit the people taking part. This points to the wide-spread interest in this approach as well as to a fascination with process-oriented experiences in the 80s (also commented upon by participants of the time). The large numbers participating in BMC® courses in the 80s became both a point of criticism and a discouraging factor for some aspiring practitioners who, instead, decided to explore different approaches taught in more contained groups.</p>
2003-2007	<p>The European BMC™ Program, also referred to as the Chiemsee program by practitioners, takes place on the island “Fraueninsel” in the lake Chiemsee in Southern Germany. This appears to be the first training programme offered in Europe. This is established by practitioners and teacher of BMC®, Thomas Greil, Myra Avedon, Jens Johannsen and Friederike Tröscher, some of who later established the association which now runs the BMC programmes in Germany.</p>
2005	<p>Gloria Desideri, a BMC® teacher, establishes a cultural association which becomes a limited company in 2009 and becomes renamed as Leben Nuova. The association offers BMC certification programmes in Italy since 2006. It is based in Tuscany, a medieval village of Center Italy. Between 2006 and 2012, two cycles of the Infant Developmental Movement Education (IDME) Program and the Somatic Movement Education (SME) program were completed. Main teachers are: Gloria Desideri, Jeanette Engler, Thomas Greil, Marcella Fanzaga, Angelica Costa.</p>

2006	<p>Soma Association is founded in Paris (France) and runs the first BMC® professional training in France started in the same year. In 2010, over 30 people graduated as BMC® Practitioners. As of 24th May 2014 it offers the following courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Somatic Movement Education (SME) 2. BMC Practitioner Program 3. Infant Developmental Movement Education (IDME) Program <p>(Info taken from http://www.bodymindcentering.com/organization/soma, accessed 24th May 2014) The association SOMA is directed by Emeline Seyer (administration) and Thomas Greil (educational direction). The SME program is directed by Lulla Chourlin and Thomas Greil, the IDME Program by Thomas Greil and Janet Amato. The faculty of SOMA is composed of Certified Teachers of Body-Mind Centering®. Vera Orlock is one of the core teachers. As most BMC associations do till present they also frequently invite other teachers from Europe and the US.</p>
2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moveus is founded by Jens Johannsen, Friederike Tröscher and Thomas Greil in April 2007 to host BMC® Certification Programs in Germany. This course is conceived as the continuation of the first European BMC® program mentioned above. Current courses take place in Potsdam near Berlin and in Vussem, Mechernich, a small town in the countryside one hour from Cologne. Programmes offered as of 24th May 2014 are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Somatic Movement Education (SME) Program 2. BMC® Practitioner Program 3. Embodied Anatomy & Yoga 4. Embodied Developmental Movement and Yoga <p>www.moveus.de</p> 2. The Kinesthetic Learning Center (KLC) is founded and becomes the only licensed Body-Mind Centering Somatic Movement Educator, Infant Developmental Movement Educator and Practitioner training center in the USA. Maryska Bigos, currently Programme director and maybe Wendy Masterson, currently director of program development must have been the founding members. 3. Embodied Asana was founded and begins to offer courses that integrate BMC® and Yoga (also called BMC® Application Programs) directed by Amy Matthews. Since 2007 Amy

	<p>Matthews and co-teacher Roxlyn Moret offer the “Embodied Anatomy and Yoga” and “Embodied Developmental Movement and Yoga” programmes in New York. The courses are being offered in New York through the Breathing Project since 2007. In the West Coast of the USA, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Amy Matthews taught the BMC® and Yoga programmes from 2008 to 2012. Matthews has led the EAY programme offered in Portland, Oregon at Yoga Shala of Portland, in Berkeley, CA.</p>
2007-2008	<p>Babyfit, Slovakia was founded. This is an organization which focuses mainly on infant and children education and aims to raise awareness and provide professional development courses on the subject. Between 2007 or 2008 the first Infant Developmental Movement Education (IDME) in Slovakia was offered. Graduates from this course who graduated in 2010 include:</p> <p>Slovakia Anna Caunerová Alexandra Fádliková Angelika Kováčová Zuzana Németh Iveta Prieložná Alexandra Streitová Katarína Zaťková</p> <p>Austria Edith Rudman Alexandra Sommerfeld</p> <p>Italy Laura Banfi Marcella Fanzaga</p> <p>The Netherlands Wieneke Penninga</p>
2007-2008	<p>Embody-Move Association (EMA) was established between 2007 and 2008 and is the licensed association hosting BMC® training programmes in the UK. In May 2008, the first SME programme in England started hosted by the dance department at Liverpool John Moores University. Katy Dymoke, the programme administrator, educational director and one of the first BMC® teachers in Britain, is at the time undertaking her doctoral research at the same university (supervised by Dr. Elizabeth Smears). The following year parts of the programme were hosted by Edge Hill University after a collaboration between Dymoke and a dance lecturer from Edge Hill university who was also on the board of the association and a participant/student in the new SME course offered, Lisa Dowler. In 2012, to increase accessibility of the courses, the second SME programme started in</p>

	<p>London and run partly between Liverpool, London and Ormskirk. In January 2013, the association in collaboration with Edgehill University in Ormskirk, Merseyside started a Masters degree programme in Dance Movement Psychotherapy which embedded 6 SME courses.</p>
2009	<p>Corporalmente is the licensed organization which offers the SME programme (Programa Brasileiro de Educador do Movimento Somático) in South America, in Brasil from 2009.</p> <p>Educational Directors: Dr. Adriana Almeida Pees and Jens Johannsen Administrative Directors: Dr. Adriana Almeida Pees and Matthias Pees Regular teachers: Jens Johannsen, Adriana Almeida Pees, Lisa Clark, Gloria Desideri. www.corporalmente.com.br</p>

Appendix 3.

Draft Interview Plan

To explore:

What is their relation with somatic practices.

1. When did you start dancing? What were your first experiences of dancing? Or What brought you to dance?
2. How were you introduced to the concept of embodiment? What was your first somatic practice experience? (What would you call somatic practice? A number of practitioners, including artists such as Miranda Tufnell, still debating on what somatic practices are - aiming to raise a dialogue amongst practitioners in Somatic Forum in Lancaster last October 2010)
3. What were you discovering in somatic work that you did not discover in more traditional form of classes? (Some practitioners also name traditional forms of classes as 'orthodox' – Would this term find you in consent?)
4. What somatic methods have you engaged with/ worked on? Who introduced you to these methods first or what prompted you to trying the particular method?
5. How did this, in some respects, newly found knowledge influence/change your work?
6. Did you notice shifts in the way you valued a 'good' performer?
7. Did you notice shifts in the aesthetic/style of your work or the work you enjoyed watching?
8. If so, what was the difference?
9. How did this engagement inform or change:
 - a. The way they moved
 - b. The way they invited other dancers to move or create work
10. Would you say that dancers bear a particular kind of knowledge that non-dancers or not experienced movers do not have?
11. What did dance teach you about:

- a. Your body?
- b. Your self?
- c. Your relationship with others?

Q 10 & 11 aim to note their views (implicit or explicit) on embodied knowledge. What the body knows? What dancers know that non-dancers don't. May give examples of how a person uses an apparatus or about the sense of orientation.

Looking at the way they positioned themselves/ their work in relation to the historical / political developments:

- 1. Did your involvement in dance inform how you saw the world or the way you participated in it?
- 2. Did your involvement with somatics change how you saw society and what it needed?
- 3. Would you say that there was a political stance /agenda in your work?

Finding something about cultural values etc...

Think of 'values' I've noted being taught through somatic work...
Ask in relation to them to find more about whether they were shared amongst practices and if they informed the way practitioners viewed their work and themselves in relation to their cultural context/world around them.

Appendix 4.

A reflection on my role as 'insider' and 'outsider' practitioner- researcher

Reflecting on my 'in-between' role in this research I wrote:

I'm partly native, partly outsider by nature, both in the geographic and cultural context of England and the social movement I am investigating. I am Greek in origin, but have lived in England for more than half of my adult life. I received all my academic and most of my artistic education in Britain (BA Community Dance at LJMU, MA in Dance Studies at University of Surrey, currently PhD at Coventry University). There is also a bodily memory of technical training I had in the first 13 years of my dancing experience. I was trained in orthodox dance techniques including intensive ballet training in the Vaganova system with a former principal dancer of the Sofia Ballet Academy; Martha Graham, Horton and Limon techniques, African jazz and jazz with an Alvin Ailey Dance School graduate. Although these experiences responded to my need for physicality and dancing, they didn't fulfil my understanding of a democratic pedagogy and provision of dance or the creative dimensions of dance as an art form. I could only articulate some of these concerns before I entered the BA course that opened up endless possibilities. As an undergraduate, I experienced traditional pedagogic approaches to techniques, but was also introduced to release based forms, contact improvisation, somatically informed improvisation tasks (although not at the time called as such) and partner-graphics as part of the then called 'choreography' modules. In fact, at the time the term 'somatics' was not as widely acknowledged in Britain as it is now. Since 1999, I've been interested in the connection between body, mind and emotion in dance (and movement). In a project I organised as a result of this interest, I had my first BMC® session in April 2000 which fascinated me experientially, but also raised infinite questions... Since, I have worked and taught in numerous settings both in England and in Greece...

Although I did not initially start my studies in BMC® with the aim to develop a research project around it, I was aware of my process of acculturation as I had the keen but also critical stance of an HE dance teacher and artist. As an artist firstly introduced to orthodox training and slowly discovering the multitude of possibilities offered by somatic education. I was also always aware of the moments when an idea or value was introduced as part of BMC®, a discourse, an idea or value perhaps distinct from my own. In certain cases some of these differences offered fruitful thought and reflection leading to questions addressed in the thesis. My practice has been influenced significantly by the somatic approach, even more so over the past six years, after I began the BMC® training. In this evolving and shifting process, I was able to notice cultural,

pedagogical, behavioural, movement traits that I let go of and that I endorse, traits that I experiment with and filter and then hold or let go. Like an inherent critical approach to a constantly evolving and emerging hyphenated identity.

One could argue that my identity is not hyphenated; I am born and raised in a specific culture by parents born and raised in the same area and that it also true. However, fusion of cultures exists when we allow it or when we engage with different cultural systems. In this respect, it is refreshing that authors in Davida (2011) address the potentiality of the research position hyphenated identities offers. For years, I have been immersing myself in practices that respond to my artistic, corporeal and intellectual curiosities.

I can also perhaps recognise what's western and what's eastern, given aspects of the Greek and Corfiot culture, history and geographic position. Here the Greek notion of 'eastern' differs to that of a western European understanding. During this research process, I have gone through different stages of relating to aspects of my identity. Immersion in different cultural discourses have opened up new possibilities, but have also uncovered the danger of alienation. I have re-affirmed, questioned, denied or rediscovered as deep as fundamental existential and political values inherited from my cultural origin and personal history. After the longer parts of fieldwork, there were moments I felt my own understanding of Greek-ness was becoming clarified. And as I was researching on this, Odysseus Elytis' musings on an aspect of Greek-ness resonated. Greek-ness, he said, "...is nothing else but a way of seeing [perceiving] and feeling [experiencing] things [situations]. Whether that is on a greater scale or on a humble scale...whether that is on the scale of a Parthenon or an oil lamp. The focus is always on politeness and quality, as opposed to size and quantity" (in Theologidou 2014). I felt I was clarifying its value for the current socio-political climate and needed to be in touch with it more. Returning to Greece, following a period of four years in Britain gave me both the chance to reconnect and observe where in the corfiot culture I was finding what I longed for. It also gave me the essential distance from my main field of research (Britain) in order to collate data, explore the applicability of the somatic approach in a different cultural and professional setting and complete the writing for this research. In this perspective, my approach resembles that of traditional anthropologists who returned home following fieldwork. Only in this case, I was both an anthropologist and a bearer of the somatic discourse and the somatic informed dance or movement pedagogy and was, at the same time, creating a new field...

Offering the somatic approach in new (to me) context - that is other than the community of practitioners I was part of in Britain - uncovered many challenges, but offered a valuable opportunity for discovery that gradually became inbuilt with the research process. Challenges even included, for example, finding the language that could facilitate a somatic exploration without alienating Greek participants with concepts that would seem

remote from their reality or understanding. English was the language of practice I had mainly acquired. There was a need for consideration of how to engage participants with a level of awareness or mind state that a suggestion to '**find** the weight of the head' in a simple roll down would not sound foreign even if it was articulated in ...Greek. This translating process re-affirmed the observation that often in somatic work we address a level of awareness of consciousness which is briefly discussed in section 3.5 of the thesis. I was, therefore, constantly vacillating between an insider and an outsider position as being a hyphenated ethnographer in both fields in the UK and Greece. Jennifer Fischer's articulation of the hyphenated ethnographer position reminds also of Indian-born ethnographer Jayati Lal. Reflecting on her return from the United States to India and her experience of doing fieldwork in places she had not been before, Lal has stated that she felt like "a 'native' returning to a foreign country" (in Fisher 2011: 48). This insight also seems to resonate. The responses of non-dancers, Greek people with little or no previous experience in the somatic approach re-affirmed the distinct nature of a number of concepts inherent. 'Letting go of holding', the notion of 'less is more', or the experience of bottom up education were all elements which surprised. As with numerous first year students, the introduction to these qualities needed attentive **holding** and **grounding**/rationalising in order for some participants to understand its place.

(Reflective note, 22nd March 2014)

Appendix 5.

Introducing the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu and Situating it in Context

As a brief indication of the cultural context where these developments take place, I should mention that Corfu is an island with a long tradition in the performing arts and with a characteristically large analogy of inhabitants being involved or trained in some art form. This engagement emanates in locals' exchanges and the way they view the arts. It is also reflected in their understanding of the concept of culture as the dimension of social life concerned with the arts and other intellectual achievements. In Greek, without attempting a definition, the term 'culture' refers both to the collective and topical or global human intellectual achievements including the arts. It also refers to the social structures, doctrines, belief and value systems and behaviour of a particular people or society. Here and for all the reasons regarding my view of anthropology articulated in section 2.2.3, I will not attempt a reductive description of this cultural context. But I only offer a small opening towards it inviting the reader to read these lines with an appreciation of the need for understanding locality of cultures within a global context and the complexity of local histories. Partly as a result of the sweeping stereotypes or, perhaps, the reductive lens of mass tourism promoting Corfu as a destination for the sun and sea, the cultural dimension tends to be a dimension less known or even imagined in western parts of the world or Europe.

The Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu is part of a wider national network of Regional and Municipal Theatres, an initiative of the Greek Ministry of Culture that aimed to work towards increasing the accessibility of theatre to areas beyond the capital. For the first time, the Regional and Municipal Theatre of Corfu is directed by a contemporary choreographer with a background in theatre, Petros Galias. With an interest in both dance and theatre and a persistence in developing accessibility in the arts, Galias invited different artists, including myself, to offer workshops with their own approach to their art form. These were offered either as part of a weekly schedule of classes on different subjects open to the public or as a series of master-classes. In the same context, a year earlier, and as part of a series of classes she taught in Greece, Ann-Cooper Albright taught a series of workshops leading up to a score for participants of the weekly classes and other members of the public. The content and approaches offered in the Theatre are varied, but mostly fall under the traditional approach to theatre and movement pedagogy. However, there are individuals in Greece or Corfu in specific who take a somatic approach, but not necessarily name it as such. As a researcher-practitioner belonging more in and shaped by an artistic and scholarly community in Britain, on my return to Corfu, I noticed a growth in interest in holistic practices, alternative therapy approaches as well as political movements responding to and raising awareness about both topical and global socio-political concerns. I found, for example individuals, working to develop their practices and a clientele. The

trends encountered in Greece are naturally a reflection of social movements existing globally as a result of the information age and artists' travels and exchanges with different cultures. To me, cultural trends also form another example of the permeability of 'national' or cultural boundaries in the age of globalisation and the illusiveness of notions such as a 'nation' as depicted by Appadurai (1996, 1990) and analysed by Anderson (1991). There is much to be said about developments in the field of dance in Greece, as well as to what part between the west and east it is situated, but which falls beyond the parameters of this thesis.

Appendix 6.

1. Programmes and Courses

This section introduces the programmes and courses offered by the SBMC around the world and their emphasis. The growth of interest in the BMC® approach internationally, the search for a position of the form as a profession and perhaps a considered management from the School's side gave rise to a licensing scheme. The scheme established between the SBMC and practitioners in various parts of the world who wished to deliver the material is particularly evident in BMC® in comparison to other somatic forms which may not have been made as widely available in different parts of the world or may not have chosen to register or trademark the title of the approach. Hundreds of people have been trained in courses over the decades and thousands of people have been consumers of principles of the practice. Besides participation in BMC® courses or workshops led by certified practitioner, numerous people have become consumers of aspects of the practice through osmosis between fields and practices. Principles were shared through exchange of concepts and explorations between artists who may have followed an embodiment process but not necessarily linked it to BMC®. As shown in Appendix 2, there are a number of organizations or associations around the world currently licensed to deliver BMC® programmes and courses.

The programmes offer a distillation of the BMC® material as shaped over the decades and practiced currently and are now taught by certified BMC® teachers in the US, England, France, Germany, Italy, Slovakia and Brasil. There are graduates in over thirty countries in five continents. New practitioners are now becoming certified and are taught by teachers other than Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. The material delivered is therefore always reflective of each teacher's cultural positioning, her take on the method, perceptions and understanding of the material and the product of her own explorations, questions and interests.

The courses offer a specific approach to anatomic systems, cells and developmental movement patterns, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, and introduces the ways with which the personal embodiment of all these tissues interact or form and are being formed by our perceptions, awareness and consciousness. Participants in the courses include people from diverse walks of life, cultural, educational or professional backgrounds. They participate in the courses for a number of reasons including personal and/or professional development or because they want to learn another way to help others. For example, a German lady decided to take the course in order to help her teenage daughter who had multiple sclerosis, and a participant from Austria had decided to participate in the course in order to find alternative ways to support her sister who was newly diagnosed with diabetes. Groups in Europe, for example, are characteristically multicultural. During my own training, apart from few of us who more or less followed most courses from start until the end of the programme, the groups differed each time. I had peers from different parts of the UK, Greece, Italy, Austria, France, Germany, Serbia and elsewhere. For the professional training courses, there is a general requirement for participants to have completed the 21st year of age.

The programmes offered by the SBMC are categorized into Core Programmes and Application Programmes. Each programme offers a series of intense courses which generally have a suggested and preferred order of delivery. The order suggested relates to the gradual development of an embodied understanding of the philosophy and principles of the method. It also relates to shifting perceptions about the body and where support in movement is coming from in the body. Many courses may be attended individually without previous experience in BMC®. According to guidelines of the SBMC, for those not necessarily interested in studying the method for certification, courses may be taken in four suggested study tracks. The combinations advised offer different insights and focus of study. For example, for an introduction to BMC®, the SBMC suggests a combination of the Skeletal System, the Organ System, Senses and Perception 1 and Basic Neurological Patterns. Or for an

Introduction to 'Embodied Developmental Movement' the School suggest the courses Senses and Perception 1, Basic Neurological Patterns, Reflexes, Righting Reactions and Equilibrium Responses and Ontogenetic Development. The combinations I refer to here are listed in the study material folder provided as part of the Senses and Perception 1 course I took in May 2008. Courses titled 'Competency' and 'Professional Issues' complete the cycle of each certification programme.

In the UK programme I attended, the Muscular System was offered last in the series of body systems explored. This was a choice of the UK educational team who chose this order with the aim to allow for a deeper understanding of the underlying structures initiating or sourcing movement. This approach adds to and challenges the predominant western perception that all movement is only made possible by the muscles or that it is a cooperation of the nervous, muscular and skeletal system only. By shifting attention to different body parts or anatomic systems the quality of movement and the experience of the movement differs significantly.

1.1 The Core Programmes

The Core Programmes consist of a sequence of courses which cover the embodiment of each of the body systems outlined above and the developmental material. They core programmes cover the breadth and depth of the Body-Mind Centering® material. There are three programs in this series, with each gradually exploring deeper levels of embodiment:

1.1.1 Somatic Movement Education

This is a two-year intensive course which forms the foundation for the next two core programmes. With this, certified practitioners are able to deliver the BMC® material in an educational setting or in other settings with a pedagogic focus. This programme was shaped in the past decade by the SBMC as a shorter option of studies in the BMC® material. The emphasis of the course demonstrates the identification of the pedagogic potential of this approach and

its pedagogic applications. However, issues around the possibility of differentiating between education and therapy when working with embodied processes is a topic of debate in the field with which I have actively been involved.

1.1.2 Certified Practitioner of Body-Mind Centering® / Somatic Movement Therapy

This was the original certification programme formed by the SBMC. The first graduates completed the course in 1982 amongst which was Linda Hartley who met Bainbridge Cohen in 1979 and took the training course close after this. As discussed earlier, the material of each course was being explored and taught since the sixties and gradually evolved into forming a certification programme. In the US, during the 80s, BMC® courses were taught mostly in dance spaces, in a large Church Hall and on one occasion in a gymnasium hall as participants in a course could be over a hundred¹⁰⁰. Somatic processing,¹⁰¹ or in the somatic world language ‘having a process’, as Bainbridge Cohen asserts (2015): “was an outcome of the process of embodiment ...[BMC® teachers] had many ways to help participants [understand] that this was an educational process that had therapeutic responses but it was not therapy. That was/is a very important distinction”. (Please see conclusion for my involvement to this debate). A BMC® teacher with slightly more critical views on the way participants engaged with the work in the 80s suggests that at the time, ‘having a process’ was for some considered as a kind of accomplishment, and therefore, the numerous assistants in the course were found to be valuable in order to *hold* participants during deep experiences. Assistants included Len Cohen and other already trained BMC® practitioners. The number of participants during the 80s is an illustration of the popularity of this approach, but also evidence of the amount of people this method has influenced with

¹⁰⁰ As an anecdotal story shared to me, a currently renowned scholar in the field of dance and somatic practices, referring to her initial training in somatic work has recalled that her initial interest was to train in BMC®. Arriving at the gym in the US where the training was taking place in the 80s and seeing over hundred participants in the space, she was discouraged to take part in the course and therefore decided to study the Feldenkrais Method instead.

¹⁰¹ Further discussed in Chapter 5.

regards to the way they perceive the human body. The popularity of this form and the increasing number of courses in different countries form partly the basis for considering this method as part of a social movement.

The content entailed in each course, principles and methods are the result of Bainbridge Cohen's work with dancers, artists, disabled people, doctors and other professionals who attended her classes and offered feedback on what they experienced. Grounded on embodiment of physical structures, the principles and methods which emerged and form the syllabus of BMC appear as instrumental in generating conscious insights on embodied processes. The feedback she received from her own embodiment and other people's journeys appear to have been categorized into 'mind states' of the different body systems.

The Certified Practitioner of BMC® programme is currently a progression from the Somatic Movement Education Programme. It lasts for another two years and focuses more on the therapeutic dimensions and application of the work. This offers ways to integrate body systems for therapeutic reasons and, importantly for some of the discussions in this thesis, includes two courses in client assessment and therapeutic approaches which the SME programme does not offer. For a list of the courses entailed in each of the Core programmes, please see Appendix 7.

1.1.3 Certified Teacher of Body-Mind Centering®

This course is a progression of the Practitioner Programme and is followed by an assistantship scheme before one becomes certified to teach the BMC® material as part of a certification process.

1.2 Application Programs

Application Programs focus on key Body-Mind Centering® principles and their application to specific disciplines. "Embodied Anatomy and Yoga" and "Embodied Developmental Movement and Yoga" explore BMC® in its

application to the practice and teaching of yoga. “Infant Developmental Movement Education” is a programme that focuses on developmental movement and its application to facilitating *optimum* development in infants.

As clarified by the SBMC,

The subject material in the (Core) Somatic Movement Education program overlaps with much of the subject material in the (Application) Embodied Anatomy and Yoga and Embodied Developmental Movement and Yoga programs. There is variation here but, in general, the two programs differ in that courses in the Core Somatic Movement Education courses may cover a greater range of material while the courses in the Embodied Anatomy and Yoga Embodied Developmental Movement and Yoga programs cover key principles of the material and spend more time applying those principles to yoga.

(The School for Body-Mind Centering®, 2014a)

The dynamic nature of the BMC® community and the evolving nature of the BMC® material may be also seen in the SBMC’s note below, following its description of the programmes. This states:

Please note: Program and course information is accurate as we can make it at the time of writing. It may be subject to change without notice. Please contact the organization offering the course or program for current scheduling and course information. The School for Body-Mind Centering® and the organizations offering the programs and courses may find it necessary to make adjustments from time to time, including changes in scheduling, location, tuition, course offerings and program content and requirements.

(The School for Body-Mind Centering®, 2014a)

Appendix 7.

BMC® PROGRAMME CONTENT

All content in this appendix is quoted from The School for Body-Mind Centering® 2014c.

Somatic Movement Education Program

This program explores the richness of the relationship between body, mind, movement and touch in the context of our dynamic Embodied Anatomy and Embodied Developmental Movement approach to Somatic Movement Education. Students are introduced to the foundations and fundamentals of embodiment in working with themselves and others. This 500+ hour program is generally completed in two years. All courses in Years 1 and 2 are required as well as related homework.

Most courses in this program may be taken individually or in combination for personal growth or professional enrichment.

Courses in the Somatic Movement Education program:

[Skeletal System](#)

[Organ System](#)

[Senses and Perception 1](#)

[Basic Neurocellular Patterns \(BNP\) \(formerly called Basic Neurological Patterns\)](#)

[Primitive Reflexes, Righting Reactions and Equilibrium Responses \(RRR\)](#)

[Ontogenetic Development](#)

[Ligamentous System](#)

[Fluid System](#)

[Nervous System](#)

[Endocrine System](#)

[Muscular System](#)

[Professional Issues 1](#)

[Competency 1](#)

Practitioner Program

Continuing on from the SME program, this program builds on the foundations of the Somatic Movement Education program and requires two additional years of study. Themes cover: deepening personal embodiment, achieving greater subtlety in touch and repatterning skills, addressing psychophysical aspects, assessing clients, learning therapeutic approaches and developing skills as a

professional. This 1000+ hour program takes four years to complete - two years completing the SME program and two years of courses in the Practitioner Program. Graduates are qualified to deliver the work in therapeutic as well as educational contexts.

Courses in the Practitioner Program:

[Integration of the Body Systems and Developmental Movement 1](#)
[Embryological Development](#)
[Immune System](#)
[Breathing and Vocalization](#)
[Senses and Perception 2](#)
[Subcellular System](#)
[Psychophysical Integration 1](#)
[Professional Issues 2](#)
[Integration of the Body Systems and Developmental Movement 2](#)
[Client Assessment and Therapeutic Approaches 1](#)
[New Frontiers](#)
[Teaching Skills](#)
[Student Presentations](#)
[Client Assessment and Therapeutic Approaches 2](#)
[Psychophysical Integration 2](#)
[Competency](#)
[Professional Issues 3](#)

Appendix 8.
Documenting and Mapping Connections, Legacies and Reference Points: Photographs
from Tasks at Dance and Somatics Conference, Coventry University 2013

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Figure 27. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 4 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013

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Figure 28. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 5 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013

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Figure 29. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 6 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013

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Figure 30. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 7 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013

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Figure 31. Documentating legacies and reference points – Group 2 at Conference on Dance and Somatic Practices, Coventry, 2013

Appendix 9.
Announcement of Event
The Big 30: X6 and Friends – Now and Then, A Round
Table Discussion

Sunday, October 20, 2013 4:00pm until 8:00pm

The founders of Chisenhale Dance Space return to discuss topics relevant to arts and politics, now and then. This is an event not to be missed!

X6 Conference Agenda (Summer 1976)

1. Traditional and mainstream dance – its political, administrative and aesthetic structures, its functions and objectives
2. Experimental dance: its nature, functions and objectives
3. Needs and material conditions for progressive dance
4. Creativity: new aesthetic criteria... new working processes... individual choreographer versus collectivity
5. Skill and technique: their place in progressive dance today.
6. Teaching and learning: traditional structures and possible alternatives
7. The use of discussion and theory in progressive dance today

This agenda, written by the X6 Collective in 1976 encapsulates much of the philosophy that the members held at the time. Now, nearly 40 years later, the X6 collective meet together again at Chisenhale Dance Space. During a 4-hour 'Round Table' meeting, Jacky Lansley, Fergus Early, Mary Prestidge and Emilyn Claid will discuss topics relevant to arts and politics, now and then. Friends and colleagues, who worked with the collective, will be invited to join them at the table and discussions will be open to audience participation. Maedée Duprès (also a member of the X6 Collective) is unable to join this event.

Book your tickets now on 020 8981 6617, only £5

Please note: All contents in this announcement are quoted from Chisenhale Dance Space, 2013.

Appendix 10.

An Extract from an Interview with

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GG: So do you feel there are things in common between somatic practices and new dance / contemporary dance practice?

SM: Yeah....

GG: Or what is your first response to that kind of inquiry I suppose?

SM: It's interesting cause I don't think of myself as a somatic practitioner, you know and I haven't studied any one particular somatic practice. And you know, trained in Graham Technique and then Cunningham and those sort of things. But, when I look back there was quite an important input from all sorts of different somatic, well we now call somatic practitioners, but we never did then you know. Input from release technique and contact improvisation and all sorts of bits and pieces over the years which I think have had quite an important influence and it has an important influence on developing... on some ... on developing dance work that was happening in the 80s I guess mostly, maybe late 70s, late 70s – 80s.

GG: I was looking at Emilyn Claid's book 'Yes, No, Maybe' and she was saying that in that quest for finding new ways of working, new tools and so on, the tools that ... and she put it in the first plural as 'we did' as in the people working at that time... was 'aikido, release based knowledges and body-mind-centering'. And I thought the choice of the three tools that she had was particularly intriguing and interesting to me... and I wonder what other people think about that. Do these things ring a bell as the first kind of input post-Graham era, I suppose or post- Graham training.

SM: When I look, I had started earlier than that, that's why I pulled this one out about the thing we did in college [refers to a memoir / document / programme note] she showed me on the day. My first thought for my own pathway was really working with Eva Karzaq, who worked for a short time with Rosemary Butcher who I was dancing with and Eva did what I'd call release sessions with us as part / during that rehearsal period. So, in a way sort of formally calling something and kind of really being aware that I was doing something different: I was lying on the floor, I was feeling my limbs, I was rolling in a very... and in the way that Eva run was like 'oh ok!'. You know it's a part of me, it was coming from there (points outward to what her eyes would capture) and then it was learning to come from inside which is what somatics is about, or noticing, awareness. But when I think about that as well, I then think, you know there's this point later on when I thought back, and then I thought well actually it relates a lot to things I did do as a student which weren't called dance. So I did a strange course in today's terms I suppose. I was at Dartington in 68 to 70 where

there was a dance and drama department that were together and that particular everybody did the same, dance and drama students did the same course in the first year and specialized in the second year. And in dance, in the first year we did Graham technique solely. We shifted in the second year to kind of Humphrey wide... but Dorothy Madnet taught and Rosemary Butcher came. And Rosemary Butcher taught us Graham in the second year. But dance was very much about technique, and then you got on with your choreography. It was sort of a bit of a mystery really. We didn't really have any composition teaching. But we all did drama. And I think the work I did with Keith Yon, who did a sort of voice and body thing and the work that we did with Ruth Foster who a kind of Laban based, she taught something which she called resources which I later understood was based on kind of Laban. But was very ...mm I don't know how to call that ... I think it was really good! (she notes emphatically and we laugh) and I think both of those classes related to what I learnt later with Eva and other people. In terms of, you know they were both classes that needed a lot of lying on the floor and breathing with Yon because we did singing and I don't know what he would call it, but there is certainly a lot of relationship to what I did later in that early work to do with understanding the body. And coming from a very individual perspective. It wasn't about, you know, arriving at this shape or this contraction. It was about feeling your body and noticing how it moved. And Ruth's classes, you know, we did do 'bound flow' and 'free flow' and running around the room, but we also...it was very much about building your resource. And we all used to be quite naughty in those classes and be quite rude about them but I think they were very interesting fundamental classes that were based on Laban's technique but were really, I think really really well taught. So it was about listening to your self, and noticing what was happening, noticing what movements you had a propensity towards and what you could expand and that sort of thing. And not text, I mean we did tiny bits of text but most about the body. I think that really relates to dance I did later on really, which I would relate to somatic techniques. But all of this, as I say I never studied one specific technique at all. It just sort of arrived. It wasn't even, it's interesting you quoting Emilyn cause I don't, I don't know that's maybe just me and my life. I seem to have fallen into things. Interesting things were there and I would play with them or consume them or interact with them in different ways. I mean I think one important part, a very important part to a sort of dance and all of that world in the late 70s, 80s was X6. And Emilyn, Jacky, Mary and Maedee and Fergus because they set up this space which gave... much more of a control of what they were doing, you know they didn't have to go on what was already on offer. They could think of what they'd like to be on offer and make it happen. But I was more a consumer of that, you know. And they all came from very specific mostly ballet background, ballet based background than contemporary. And so they had this stronger, in a way, body of tradition that they would say, well what else is there. As I don't feel like, although I did come from Dartington and a Graham technique, I'd then started working with Rosemary Butcher who worked in quite a different way from that already included improvisation within the performance, structured improvisation. And then X6 was there and it was like 'oh what's happening here then'. I can't remember whether I...It is my earliest memory of doing something that felt

different was working with Eva Karczaq really. See this is where this comes in handy [shows workshop schedule/publicity material from Riverside Studios from her archive] cause I can tell you around what date that was... See in this one the photograph is of Eva so I know she was working with us at that point and that was in 77. So I was probably, I think it was 75 when I was working with Rosemary Butcher. I think we did work with Eva in 76 or so or 77. That's February so it must have been 76. And I can remember being in a studio in Paddington and doing all this... it was quite extraordinary. But she'd worked with...

GG: which studio was that...

SM: Oh it was to do with the PE education in this country. Cause Rosemary taught at Pimlico school, was a secondary school teacher for many many years... She always seemed to have access to strange studios... So it would have been through her teaching that she got it.

Cause Eva worked before that time with Strider with Richard Alston and ... And I had seen that performance actually. I remember that, probably before this time, that having a big effect on me. And they'd worked with Mary Fulkerson with Strider. The company Strider had done quite a bit of work with Mary Fulkerson. Now I don't know what other work Eva had done at that point. I think she was already quite involved with a more somatic understanding of the world. But apart from the influence of what we had at the drama department classes earlier, that's my first memory of kind of approaching a movement training from a different perspective, from a much more internal perspective and a much more to do with 'what is this body' as opposed to putting movement on to it. Working with running and walking and falling and rising and ...you know. And then I guess, after that whole X6 thing meant that other things were possible. I remember doing workshops with John Roland, he taught another strand of release technique because its different, you know release is one of those words that means 6000 things to 6000 people. I mean I distinctly remember workshops with John Roland, but there were other workshops as well, that's why I'm sad I don't have more flyers cause my memory doesn't stretch. His must have made quite an impression on me.....He was American, he was at X6 as well. He then was... later on I taught in Holland at the School for New Dance Development and he taught there quite a lot as well. I don't know if he was sort of there for years or, I think more likely, he came for a patch of time to take intensive workshops.

GG: When was that?

SM: Oh when was I there? Probably in the 80s

...

SM: I brought this (shows me a poster with details on performances from X6). I don't know what year it is, it doesn't say. And I was hoping there were more. It's example from X6, and it's got performances from Lisa Nelson and Steve Paxton, in which I performed something called 'relatively' by Steve Paxton with

private parts. So this is the piece, I think this is very early performance of the piece that later became / called "part" with Robert Ashley music. So it doesn't include workshops, but, I don't know, seems... I can remember quite a lot of ...Look there is a whirling dervishes film...

GG: yeah! I was just looking at that

SM: this first one was a performance with inspiration from the British countryside and modern Chille! None of these people... there's Gill Clarke... had anything to do with Chille (laughs). Jessica I still know well and Claire, I don't know what's happened to her. I was just intrigued that they were doing something about Chille.

GG: There was something about multicultural... or information coming from other cultures right?

SM: and then this piece was influenced by Tai Chi. This is a modern musical... Oh! 'modern musical'. Who was that (looks more carefully at the poster) oh, Tim Robi. It's funny cause I did something called modern musical. It was sort of jazz dance we'd call it now. But I don't know if he means this.

And contact improvisation was starting to happen more. People were experimenting with the way they did a class. So they'd bring people in, but then being influenced in that and making their own explorations of what a class might be, what a workshop might be, what choreography might be really. And BMC, I never did any BMC at all. But another person that was around, a bit later I guess, when we went to Chisenhale rather than X6 was Patricia Bardi who was quite... I never did workshops with her or work in that area. I think that was a step too far from me at that time. 'what do you mean you're dancing from your spleen' [she says jokingly reflecting on the way she saw the practice at the time]. So I think I was a bit non-appreciative of that area, but with more maturity I can see.

GG: Did she work a lot in Chisenhale?

SM: She did at one stage yes. And I think I was more interested in her performance and her voice work. She used to work with voice a lot. She was very funny, she was a loveley woman. Made very funny performances. I can remember she made a piece with Chris Cheeck at Chisenhale. Who didn't come from a dance background at all. He was a poet, a musician, a performer and somehow fell into dance and ended up being part of the Chisenhale collective. Was lovely a guy, he lives in America. They did a piece called "Dick and Jane" (begins to rhythmically say a line from the text they used in their piece) 'Dick and Jane is not the same as Jane and...' see I can still remember. It was like they were playing on the word books, when you're learning to read it says 'dick and Jane'... But at the time, I forgot the name ... it was Jane 'Somebody' dance officer at the arts council and Dick Bartship was his officer... I don't know if... I thought it was very funny. I can't remember how it

progressed, but I remember it (repeats rhythmically the line she could remember from the piece). I think it is quite influenced by those experiments. Clearly, Pat's work was, Patricia's work was influenced by her BMC work which she very much studied and taught for many many years.

GG: Do you remember when she taught in Chisenhale?

Mid 60's she watched Rambert perform "Blind Sight" in Manchester and thought it was quite radical. She notes Mary Prestidge was probably in it.

Dartington is where she states she discovered dance as an art form. "The dance I was doing until then was much more about entertainment, so sampling dance as an art form. And I think that is an art form,... but it was a whole other world, it was terribly serious. The people in the year before me were very serious and very very good.

She refers to Flora Cushman who taught Graham and left Dartington when Sue was finishing her first year.

Did workshop with Judith Jameson from Alvin Ailey... found her class terrifying but also thought she was wonderful.

SM: "I didn't choreograph for a number of years, because my creative urges (didn't think of that at the time ,but retrospectively) my creative urges were satisfied by working with Rosemary Butcher. She used the creativity of the dancers a lot. We made phrases, we improvised within... I mean the first piece I was in [continues describing the work and the role of the dancers in it] Riverside was very inventive at the time and Rosemary Butcher was the choreographer in residence there. So we were around there, we did our rehearsals there for quite a bit. Although sometimes also in Pimlico School where Gaby Agis was her student.

GG: At Pimlico School?

SM: Yeah, yeah and she used to come to rehearsal and things.People who came from America like Steve Paxton and Lisa Nelson, would teach at Dartington and would also do a workshop at X6. [So she points to a connection between the influences and approaches taught at Dartington and and exchange with X6].

Talks about the annual dance festival at Dartington which lasted for 10 years and which again brought some very interesting people into the mix from different sort of release worlds.

SM:...and I can remember I was going to perform my own work by that time, as well as Rosemary's. But there were masses of performances and masses of workshops as well. I remember Gaby [Agis] getting from here and getting in trouble [with London Contemporary Dance School] for missing some classes...

not that I was involved with the school at that time. I remember at one particular point Gaby saying, 'oh if I have to lie on the floor again, I'm going to scream'. There were lots of individual workshops where you might not get off the floor for one hour and then you might get up and dance around and then you'd have a break and go to someone else's and then lie on the floor for an hour. [we laugh] You know, and I think they were all very good but they hadn't coordinated what each one were doing maybe. But I'm trying to think, if I saw a list of American ... like Barbara Dilley, I think came at one point and.... Trying to think of names from that era. Because of course Rosemary Butcher had been at the first Dance School at Dartington 4 or 5 years before me and then she'd been to America. She'd been to New York and worked with Elaine Summers in New York, so she'd seen, she'd been exposed to a lot of that early experimentation and she had taken part in performances. So she was influenced by not a somatic world but the whole Judson work really 'is this dance or is this dance'. You know, looking at bodies in different ways. And the whole feminist movement of that period and the whole kind of alternative health movement of those times. I think they all pour into that questioning about ... which has become more refined into more specific studies. But that would lead into that somatic world.

Appendix 11.

An Extract from an Interview with

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SW (1.50) : ...And then at 16 going of to full time dance school and although I don't often talk about that period, because it is interesting in terms of it being '76 – '79, so there were changes going on.... Not that I was aware of any of that, I just wanted to be... actually a ballet dancer. And then the young generation of this sort of tele version of...And from that training, and even though I was only 16 and very naïve and didn't know what I was doing, [I was] very well aware that I didn't want to do that. It was sort of a positive experience through the negative of not wanting to do. And then sort of suddenly realizing that my body, was a body that should be (and I didn't talk in these terms those days), but it was a body that wanted to express its intelligence. And somehow that experience was all about removing the intelligence from my body. And I didn't know it at the time, but I found that profoundly uncomfortable.

GG: In what sort of session were you finding it uncomfortable?

SW: Well it was a traditional sort of vocational ballet school, where all day was dancing from 9 in the morning until 6 at night. Ballet, followed by pas de deux, followed by point work, followed by jazz. So it was just about working the body.

GG: What school was that?

SW: It's Elaine Theatre Arts. Work, work, work the body. And as soon as you put any type of questioning to it, it was shut down! Literally it was shut down. And I had a very odd experience there, because part of just wanted to run away a million miles and never dance again, and part of me just said 'you know, I may make this work for me'. And dear that Elaine, who I think is still alive and must be about 120 by now was this sort of incredibly old school... you had to courtesy her on the corridor and you had to wear full make up everyday, but I didn't, you know I was a rebel from the beginning cause I refuse to comply. But she allowed me to participate in everything. So I'm kind of made a part for myself and I was determined to do all my exams. So I was the only girl in the class that wasn't fully made-up, I was the only girl who refused to sort of go to all the auditions and 'couch' auditions as they were called cause you basically just ...for the director... And I refused to take part in the annual shows because it was so...to me. I didn't understand this refusal, but it was...and I was never a rebellion you know, I was a spotty girl. You know, I was not a rebellious person, but somehow that training was all for me about removing my agency in my experience.

GG: There's something about it that almost requested a submissiveness....

SW: YEAH! Totally! You just have to totally submit to it, and simply comply, perform and hear.

GG: And very often is not about submitting to the art form, but submitting to the person which makes it problematic. A person that has an ability of self sensing, I suppose, feels the tension. I can relate. The way you say this makes me reflect on things that I felt, but the kinds of things that I would do were very subtle in terms of my opposition. Or it was the going away to find something different. That's how I was expressing it. It's great that you mention it. Sorry to divert.

SW: No, no. Absolutely and I think we probably all found that in some ways at different times in our experience. Somehow it was very present for me that discomfort. Actually never giving up, determining not to give up on it. And I have to say appreciating the rigour of the training and what it was all about. Because there was something incredibly important about that rigour and that discipline that I did respect. So it's not to say that it was all bad. But it was something about the cultural ethos and philosophy that was deeply quite oppressive for me. But anyway, there was one moment I remember very distinctly and I don't remember where, but I remember the moment which is it must have been somebody from the contemporary world who was brought in just to do one off workshop. And there we were in our little kind of ballet kit, being asked to crawl on the floor! And it was extraordinary, because it was sort of ..I mean I found it uncomfortable, because I didn't really know how to do that. I didn't know how to change my centre of gravity. I had no understanding of this you know,You know going on the floor was always going down to come up again. So it was never about just being on the floor. So that was a little moment where I thought, 'oh, that's interesting' 'who's this weird woman and why are doing this weird stuff and being interested in it'...Anyway moving forward, when I left there I never thought I was going to dance again, cause I really did hate it I was gonna go off and do music. And last minute I decided to do a degree in dance and went to what was then called Leicester Polly [Polytechnic]. And it was just FANTASTIC (she says emphatically). It took me a year to undo, just sort of slap off all this stuff. Because of course it was deeply ingrained in something which I knew was uncomfortable, but still very very ingrained in my body. So then having wonderful, wonderful teachers who were just SO inspirational and people I think that had the biggest influence on me was probably Fergus Early guessed it...I mean we had endless guests. It almost like this wonderful ongoing guest list, you know of the post...sort of New Dance people at the time... who were coming out of the system and...

GG: What year did you go to Leicester?

SW: '79. So end of 70s. So again these people were completely new to me, but it was at that time when there was beginnings of that breakaway movement and I joined ADMA, which was the Association for Dance and Mime Artists, which was that pre-new dance.

GG: Did you join ADMA while you were at Leicester Poly?

SW: While and just after... I mean I carried on being part of an intern ...soon after. But it was ...festivals. But people like Fergus Early, Maedee Dupree, Christine Just, Tony Fusher, Gill Clarke (she emphasizes), who I remember being just so inspired by her. She was young, she wasn't much older than me and she had this fabulous 2nd position. You know I remember kind of this incredible turn out I guess. But was something about her ease and her movement, she was working with Janet, Janet Smith. It wasa delight that everyone of these teachers just came in and just fed! In this wonderful way of... So it was yeah... and it meant that I met a lot of people and that network and made me realize there was another dance world that was much more ...for me, more interesting.

GG: Where you recognizing that delight at the time?

SW: Absolutely. I mean it was everything from...I remember Maedee coming and making a piece with us and just that delight in being able to find movement! You know the body being able to resource instead of the body becoming a machine to work and oil and push and shove (notes humorously)...

GG: and perfect?

SW: Yes. It was ...somebody was interested in me, not just in perfection you know that obvious stuff. So in a way to me it was really noticed at the time. And finding that, God, I could actually put movements together! You know, its called choreography! And me even not being exposed to that process. Because there was no choreography. Well I only did choreography of others...

GG: The repertory?

SW: Yeah and that was it. What mode dance is.

So here there was this starting with the empty space, starting with a blank canvas, starting with the dynamic of oneself in relation to the other dancers and these glorious artists. And also being part of that time where there were very few divisions. Well there was a blurring sort of division between dance, music and theatre. So many times, although I was doing dance, my experience was very much like a ground ful. So I worked a lot with composers, musicians, actors, playwrights. Both in terms of the feeding we were getting and the work that we were making. I think Maedee was the only time when she worked with a dance group making a dance. You know, most of the time it was about just exploring the body through these different sort of disciplines, practices. And that was very invigorating. And then it was possible to feel and identify with this group of really interesting people. And I felt that, you know, at that time it was small enough that community so you feel you were absolutely part of it. And you were central to it. There was nobody that you were revolving around, although I was a student and tended to sort of feel slightly in awe of. But there was a sense that already you were part of a community of practitioners. Which was

really liberating. And so that transition out of being a student, which is always such a scary place

GG: How many years were you at Leicester Poly?

SW: Three. So I did the standard degree, you know. And the actually shifted really seamlessly in a way out, into the world that I felt I was already very connected with. So was able to sort of feel I was already in that community of practitioners, if I make sense. So were this different era. So work was more simple in that way and working was around...you know, I quickly was sort of able to work with and alongside and between and taught with and feel that this was my community of practice. And I think that was something that emerged very wholesomely at the end of the 70s. There wasn't that sort of...Cause we weren't into label, I think nobody new what a label was. You know there was that, the commercial kind of stuff and then there was this other sort of much more embracing and wholesome world you know. And yeah...

GG: To take you back to the course, I'm just thinking, what was a standard degree course then? You know, what kind of subjects...

SW: Hm, that's interesting. Well it was pre-modular. You know the educational system we have now would be largely a course and I honestly can't say I received much paperwork. ...There were courses that we were taking. You know, we would dance every morning...actually we still did have ballet for a little while at the beginning. And we had contemporary dance taught by Gideon Averhami, which was a whole other, you know, Graham basically... Oh actually, I'll go back a bit, when I first went there Dr Vi Bruce was head of dance who was a Laban teacher, Laban based. So Laban methods were taught all the way through. So we would be ...

GG: Was it Laban Movement Analysis?

SW: Yes! All this! Diagonals, efforts, lots of ...dancing in ...skirts.....It was ..and I thought that was hysterical in lots of ways. Because I come from this kind of, you know. But it was still very liberating, but somehow it was so different, you know. This analytical way of moving which of course I enjoyed because it fed my brain [mentions emphatically], but I also thought it was hilarious, because in a way it was quite old school..... So there was Dr Vi Bruce there ...

GG: ...

SW: Absolutely. Yeah I agree with you. But for me it was this sort of antithesis. Having never been even allowed to think about what I was doing to suddenly then it was all about analysis...the steps didn't matter. It was all about the analysis of this effort graph and all this... [I thought] God it's really weird. Anyway then Gideon arrived who was this Australian dancer from .. who was this very kind of masculine, broad-chested sweaty man who came and taught

serious Graham which my body just really didn't want to do. But I was interested in it. Because it was at least... So it's funny cause it was this sort of transition from Elaine into Laban Movement Analysis into Graham, but then threaded through that was all this wonderful ...[refers to New-dance practitioners]. You see I don't remember that

GG: What you remember is very interesting to me. Because it seems to me that what we remember is the thing that has informed us enough to make us shift to a different place.

SW: And I remember VERY strongly one day when Fergus came. And we were lying on the floor, probably for a long time, which in itself was so unusual for me to even just be still! And he was asking as to... you know he was giving us **images!** Images! And we were able to **imagine** things! (SW had an enthusiastic and expressive way of emphasizing the words or ideas that made an impression to her and that informed her evolution as a dance artist.) You know visualize things. And I remember, part of it was, I'm not remembering it terribly well, but ...he gave us the image of tea-pot or tea-cups. But I think it was around sort of feeling the vessels and them pouring and those sort of things. And I remember sort of wrestling with my brain kind of that thing which we do...I think I've done ever since... but at the time that wrestling with how much do you let that image in. You know, does the image stop the movement, stop the stillness even? And sort of wrestling at that time with very vivid sort of 'I can picture a vivid giant blue tea-pot, but that's not the point', the point is not the giant blue tea-pot... and so I was wrestling with that and be curious about 'what am I meant to be imagining?' 'what is that role of the image?'... you know, so that was really interesting for me and I still remember that session. And it was such a different world, thinking and just being in the studio. You know completely reformulated my experience of what the studio was. A studio that was still a traditional... we still had mirrors on the wall, bars. You know which was completely home territory for me. And yet, there we were negating what was the home space. In a way it was culturally ...too. And that was really interesting too. Suddenly, I had to rethink my whole sense of where dance happens.

GG: But at that point, was it more experiential? What you say about having to rethink space. Was it more experiential or were you becoming aware through those things that practitioners were saying or would like of you to think.

SW: Hmm. I think it was both. I mean it's easy to think now. I'm not sure what I was thinking at the time to be honest. But I'm just recalling my vivid memories, but I think.... Yes it sounds very knowing now and I don't know how knowing I was then. But I think the very fact that, of course being a degree course, there was a chance to be, and I'm not sure we used the word, 'reflective'... this is all much more recent... There was nothing called 'reflection' really. But I think we were doing that. Because we were writing about what we were doing, we were searching about what we were doing, reading about what we were doing. So there was that parallel process of having to think about what it was that we were

doing it was sensitivity probing that anyway. But I'm not sure how knowing it was. Cause I think there was a lot of confusion for me in a very productive and positive way. And even things like space changing or the environment changing. You know a lot of work I did was out of doors. You know. It was out in other spaces. Because that was growing as well. Suddenly dance didn't have to be in the studio. So that was a really big moment of 'WOW'.

GG: You mentioned Maedee Dupree, you mentioned Fergus Early, and two more people who I'm trying to remember right now.

SW: Christine Juffs and Tonny Thatcher actually. Tonny is at Laban now. Christine Juffs left dance...she was an Alexander practitioner. She was a ..what was that name of that group? They had a group and I can't remember the name... It was Tonny Thatcher who is now at Laban...Gosh, loads of others. Gill, Madee, Mary Evelyn came who is now at the Place, Janet Smith. You know it was the time of Extemporary. And Extemporary was doing fairly conventional contemporary dance work.

GG: That was before Emilyn Claid went to Extemporary, wasn't it?

SW: Yeah. But it was Lloyd Newson. It was a fabulously imaginative time. So what else did we do? We did lots of making, lots of choreography, lots of performance workshoping. They were called performance workshops which I think was indicative of the nature of what we were doing. A lot of time, workshoping, and exploring, experimenting with text and image and design. You know it was very cross-disciplinary. We had aesthetics. I think in terms of the theory, we did aesthetics. We did dance history...Vi was a big ethnographer. So she'd spent a lot of time in Bali, so we did quite a lot of ethnological stuff... While I was there Jayne Stevens and Mike Huxley came onboard. So they were part-time. Noel Witts... I think that had a lot to do with it. Noel Witts was the Head of Performing Arts, Theatre practitioner. But very very ... I still see him quite a lot. He is an amazing man actually.

GG: Why do you think that?

SW: Well I think because he allowed for... his area of research expertise is Eastern European Theatre. So I think there was a sort of rigour, a real attention on experimentation, adventure, risk taking. And I liked that a lot.

GG: So when the artists came in, what we now call New Dance practitioners. How long were they coming for?

SW: I don't remember, but I think it varied from a day to a workshop to a whole residency. There seemed to be a lot of money around then, because we were getting a lot of...you know this was constant. Almost every week, I seem to recall, there was someone coming in.

Whatley continues on to talk about her placement at Bristol Community Dance Centre where she met Sarah Rubidge who was one of the first women to set up the Centre around 1977 and who introduced Whatley to an ethnographic method of research. She pursued this method later in her 3rd year in her thesis about Cycles Dance Company where she met Sally Sikes, Gregory Nash, Rosemary Lee.

Reflecting back to her journey, interests and aesthetic she recalls looking for more form in work created at the time by Cycles.

In question around the development of the New Dance Festival in Coventry, Whatley talks about how she managed the New Dance Festival at Coventry University and her influences and shifts in New Dance practice and its influences.

GG (7:10): You mentioned already that you were discovering all these things through New Dance, and I wonder, where you aware at the time of the term embodiment?

SW: No, God no... I mean it's so interesting how one's language molds and evolves and changes and emerges... I don't really know how much we talked about the word 'Body'! I mean certainly I wasn't anything like somatic ... I don't know what the language was, but it wasn't the language of the body. And it wasn't because there was an anxiety about that or it wasn't because it was problematic. It just wasn't part of the discourse. I really don't remember [bringing] that kind of attention on interiority, you know of thinking from the inside out. And yes Mabel Todd, she was one of my first reference points, sort of finding a channel out of something I felt uncomfortable [talking of her technical training and patterning] and Margaret H'Doubler. I mean when I think about the early reading... maybe that's useful, because maybe it was in my language and I don't remember it being. But I think my earliest sources for teaching differently in dance was H'Doubler in particular. And probably Humphrey a bit with 'The Art of Making Dances' as reference. But Mabel Todd...

GG: Is that with the 'Thinking Body'?

SW: Yeah... And Louise Steinman with 'The Knowing Body', that was an early text. It was before Tufnell and before Andrea Olsen and that sort of thing. I remember using [Louise Steinman] as a teaching resource. Not in a sort of experiential anatomy way, because I don't think I was even contemplating that as a teaching method. But purely as a...way of triggering ideas about image and body...well not body but about image and the knowing body. [That was around '76?] ...one of those early kind of alternative ...texts which brought image and poetry and alternative ...ways of looking at the world. I remember that being really important for me.

GG (11.20): ...New Dance practitioners seemed to reach out to different practices. Like for example now you mention Lewi Simons, or the knowing body, or Mabel Todd was a reference.

SW: And Mary Fulkerson early theatre papers and things like that. They were a reference. But I think you are right and I 'm glad you said that, because I've often been troubled by that myself thinking 'I haven't done a training in Feldenkrais or Alexander'. You know and I've been very good friends with Lucia Walker for years and years and years and we dance together. And you know she gave me some Alexander classed for a while. And I was very respectful of and was slightly in awe of her... 'well she is a proper Alexander teacher' you know. I was thinking 'I don't get any of that, I do a bit of this and a bit of that'. And I think it's interesting. Our generation, you know in the generation of people 50 plus as me there are people who at some point in their career have made a conscious decision to do the training and there was a while I thought 'yeah I'm going to do Feldenkrais' because I did a lot of that with Scott Clark and love that work. But I did do a massage training which I thought was a way into having a body based practice. But I think you are right. There is something interesting around that eclectic one kind of accumulates and collects this different sort of influences without necessarily doing what I think younger dancers do which is for the right reasons say 'this is what my practice'. Maybe there more of a sense of 'this is my practice', 'this is where I'm going with it'. I don't know. Maybe it was more of that opportunity for New Dancers...

GG: I don't know if it is. Because a lot of people don't decide to do and yet, those that don't decide to do one particular practice go to work with different practices to source...

SW: I think there are a lot more of those practices available. I mean when I was out there, there wasn't much, you know. You could do Alexander in Oxford, cause Oxford of course was a great place to do cause Lucia's parents were playing a big part. You know, lots of Alexander teachers. So it was a bit of a trendy thing for a while and in Oxford. People would be going to become Alexander teacher there. But if you wanted to train in [this or that] it was actually quite hard to do that. You couldn't access it as you can now.

GG: yes....referring to changes in availability of BMC™ programmes and my training.

SW: And also I think commitment. And the idea of setting a portion of time now to do a training would be impossible...

GG: Maybe it's not essential. We might choose to do it because we might want to taste something at a particular time or channel something at a particular time which becomes timely.

SW: And that I've really enjoyed if I'm honest. Cause over the years, you know, I have tasted a lot of these practices and I've really enjoyed thinking 'Hm, that

works or that didn't quite worked for me or that sort of thing, that contradicts or confirms. And I've also been slightly put off, if I'm honest, 'one has to be the disciple of' kind of thing. And I've never, you know you can tell by stuff I was saying. The idea of conforming or follower is quite hard for me. You know to preach stuff according to is totally...

GG: Sure, because it's sort of...it's that submissiveness again, and for me it feels it contradicts the very philosophy of the practice.

SW: Yes, exactly. Yes.

GG: It's made me feel very often very uncomfortable and it puts me in that position of negating, negotiating, thinking 'hm how will I solve my own tension'. Because if you need to be critical or if you are a person with deep analytical skills then you will not be able to be a disciple. Because you would always kind of evaluate or reflect what you receive as much as what you offer.

SW: Yes, yes. And sometimes that stands in the way of experiencing the practice. In fact it's a difficult thing. How much do I absorb and how much do I become critically engaged with it. Those are difficult kind of places to be.

GG: But I think there is something very useful, fruitful in being critical...Sue McLennan was telling me that a lot of the things that were happening were about forwarding the artform. You know finding a space for the artform.

SW: Yes, this is quite true actually.

GG: (Summarising my point, I paraphrase my words here). I refer to Community Dance and New Dance in the 80s finding a professional position and re-defining the field of dance and suggest that perhaps a critical engagement with somatic practices is necessary during a time such as now when it seeks to establish its professional position and a time that works to articulate its' codes of practice.

SW: ...I think a lot of the drive for what was then New Dance and Community Dance was actually about having to position dance in a way that is respectful... It was about voicing, you know it was about the artist being central to the form and therefore the form, being clearer somehow. But it's only with the benefit of [distance that we can say] 'oh that's what was happening then'. And that whole thing about the somatic field is very interesting. Because in a way it has a very long history that's grounded in other practices and it is by nature transitioning and its not situated only within the dance field, anyway... you know release used to be 'Oh you do release, oh right'. No one really knew what it meant and it was a way of saying 'I'm not teaching Cunningham or Graham or Limon or whatever.' And it's a little bit like that with somatic practices. And you go 'oh there we go'. But ... it's a political positioning as much as a... I don't think it's defined itself terribly well. But is a way of declaring one's region and set of possible practices as opposed to something else...

Appendix 12.

Excerpt from Miranda Tufnell's Biographical Note

Tufnell co-authored this book together with Chris Crickmay with whom she has collaborated since the 70s. In this she writes:

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(Tufnell in Crickmay and Tufnell, 2004 pp.: xiv – xv)

This excerpt forms a moving, colourful, poetic, brief biographical note chosen for a number of reasons. It demonstrates a journey of an influential figure in British dance history, but also depicts carefully the kinds of shifts in the learning processes which become available through somatically informed dance training. Her language demonstrates also the deep reflections and experiences one might have through this work. It illustrates the influences and some significant collaborations which facilitated these shifts in her experience of her body, movement and dance. Tufnell's unquenchable engagement and deep understanding of language, as described here, points, for me, to both speech and movement as fundamental means of human expression. This relates to arguments which will follow in the next chapter, but also to the importance and usefulness of dance anthropology as a discourse for analysis of movement as a fundamental human expression.

Appendix 13.

Introduction to the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA)

The International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA) is the association that has worked to establish the required standards for education and practice in training programmes offered internationally. It is a professional organization first formed in 1988 in California as the International Movement Therapy Association (IMTA) by a small group of people sharing the vision of the founding president Jim Spira. It was established with the view: a) to make explicit the underlying principles which are shared by somatic movement methods and dance therapy, b) to distinguish ‘active movement disciplines’ from ‘the passive somatic disciplines’ such as tablework methods, bodywork, massage, chiropractic and other, c) to standardize practice and training programmes and to offer licensing and advocacy for practitioners. The descriptions, distinctions between practices and history of the organization as offered in the official website of ISMETA is illuminating. Particularly useful in the context of this chapter are the differentiations made between similar practices and the characteristics attributed to the field of somatics in particular. As it states:

- There are fundamental underlying principles shared by somatic movement disciplines (and dance therapy)
- Any active movement discipline is distinct from the passive somatic disciplines – (tablework methods, bodywork, massage, chiropractic, etc.)

(ISMETA, 2014a)

Although there might be affinities between approaches, here the organization places both ‘active’ and ‘passive’ disciplines under the umbrella term somatic but differentiates between the two. With the word ‘passive’ it refers to methods that work on one-to-one basis with the client passively receiving touch or other sensory stimulus such as sounding without his or her participation in the exploration. With the term ‘active’ ISMETA distinguishes the approaches it

represents through: a) the fundamental role they place on movement in the person's experience and understanding of themselves and b) the emphasis they place on reflection and conscious explorations of anatomic structures. With reference to the practitioners the organisation represents it states:

Registered Somatic Movement Practitioners have completed extensive training in ISMETA Approved Training Programs or through a rigorous independent study process. They use knowledge of anatomy with combinations of movement, sound, breath, touch and imagery to deepen their clients' understanding of themselves in movement. Somatic Movement Practitioners work with the body but acknowledge that movement affects the dimensions of psyche and spirit as well. As a result, their work facilitates improved vitality and performance, expanded creative expression and integrated personal transformation in clients' daily lives.

(ISMETA, 2014b)

The aim of the organization is to support the growth of the field of Somatic Movement Education and Therapy, to offer advocacy for the profession in legal and governmental grounds, to promote the work and educate the general public and help practitioners in related fields appreciate the benefits of the approaches in the field. Importantly, it has developed a regulating scheme for 'Approved' professional training programmes. Between 1988 and 1991, before Jim Spira moved to full time employment as a psychologist, an advisory council was established in the association. This included David Zemach-Bersin, Suzanne Youngerman, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, and Neala Haze. According to Bainbridge Cohen (2015), Len Cohen was instrumental in helping the Association register with the Department of Labour in the USA. The council has since grown to include Judith Aston, Don Hanlon Johnson, Eleanor Criswell Hanna, Seymour Kleinman, Vivian Jaye, and Hubert Goddard. (ISMETA, 2014a) It was during the same period that the approval or regulating scheme was initiated. Training programmes that offered a minimum of 500 hours of professional movement education were invited as "Approved Training Programmes". These included Alexander Technique, the Feldenkrais Method, Laban/Bartenieff Studies, The Halprin's Life/Art process taught at Tamalpa, and Jim Spira's own training program – Educational Therapy. Both the SME and practitioners training programmes in BMC® are approved by ISMETA.

Interestingly Thomas Hanna's programme offered at the Navato Institute has not been yet approved. However, the number of programmes entering this scheme is growing together with the recognition of Somatic Movement Education and Therapy as a professional field and the interest of trained practitioners to find a professional position. Research and inquiry into this field is a therefore natural progression of these developments.

Appendix 14 shows the requirements for a registered professional member or for the accreditation of a course or programme as set out by ISMETA. It is of interest to this research that although Somatic Movement Practitioners' work is grounded on the body while acknowledging "that movement affects the dimensions of psyche and spirit as well" and the work is characterised as 'transformative', little reference is made to principles drawn from psychology or other related discipline. As stated in the guidelines (Appendix 14):

Curriculum must include general movement education including but not limited to: movement observation and analysis; neuromuscular or skeletal awareness; movement efficiency, perceptual and motor development, and development of individual movement protocols...The courses of study may include experiential anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and movement classes. These courses must include active experiencing of the subject through kinesthetic or embodied movement applications, rather than only through academic or cognitive analysis... The curriculum must also include hands-on re-patterning which can be related to anatomy, kinesiology, and physiology, including the benefits and cautions of these touch techniques.

The content suggested, in my view, offers a thorough understanding of embodiment and embodiment process. As may be anticipated, the emphasis in a movement education course is placed on content relating to somatic and movement development. However, given the impact 're-patterning', as offered in these approaches, have on mental or emotional level (or in ISMETA's terms on 'the psyche and spirit') I find little acknowledgement made to the corresponding mental and, particularly, to emotional patterning both in the SME training and within ISMETA guidelines. Conversely, little acknowledgement is made to developments and discoveries in the fields of psychology or psychotherapy that may have dealt with some of the issues often encountered

in an embodiment process. Therefore, little guidance is offered towards principles, ways of working with clients and concepts that address the dimension of simultaneous mental processing taking place. Perhaps, in its effort to raise awareness on the importance of the body and level the hierarchical dualist perception of mind over body, the somatic movement emphasises the physical, bodily and experiential in a balancing act. But in doing so, new questions are being raised that, to me, push the boundaries between education and therapy and between scientific fields currently situated on different paradigms such as psychology, medicine and/or holistic and somatic practices. The way this inquiry and argument has informed my research and practice will be further disseminated beyond completion of this thesis.

Appendix 14.

ISMETA Registered Professional Member Requirements As Downloaded From the Official Website of the Association

REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

Individuals applying to ISMETA for Professional Membership who have not graduated from an Approved Training Program must meet the following requirements:

I.

Scope of Practice

The professional field of somatic movement education and therapy spans holistic education and complimentary-alternative medicine. The field contains distinct disciplines each with its own educational and/or therapeutic emphasis, principles, methods, and techniques.

Practices of somatic movement education and therapy encompass postural and movement evaluation, communication and guidance through touch and words, experiential anatomy and imagery, and movement patterning. These practices are applied to everyday and specialized activities for persons in all stages of health and development.

The purpose of somatic movement education and therapy is to enhance human processes of psychophysical awareness and functioning through movement learning. Practices provide the learning conditions to:

- Focus on the body both as an objective physical process and as a subjective process of lived consciousness;
- Refine perceptual, kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and interoceptive sensitivity that supports homeostasis and self regulation;
- Recognize habitual patterns of perceptual, postural and movement interaction with one's environment;
- Improve movement coordination that supports structural, functional and expressive integration;
- Experience an expanded range of movement and expression, along with an embodied sense of vitality and extended capacities for living.

A minimum of 500 class hours of formal instruction in movement education and/or therapy, in either a classroom or tutorial format. These class hours must be geared toward professional training.

The minimum of 500 hours will give an individual the ability to demonstrate facility with skills as described in the ISMETA Scope of Practice via a balanced

Curricular Requirements

combination of skilled touch, movement, and verbal guidance. This includes practice in hands-on facilitation and movement protocols for one-to-one sessions with fully clothed clients.

A. Curriculum must include general movement education including but not limited to: movement observation and analysis; neuromuscular or skeletal awareness; movement efficiency, perceptual and motor development, and development of individual movement protocols.

This course work must be geared toward the training of a movement practitioner so that the individual is skilled in working with movement patterns in others, and not geared simply for purposes of personal development. The courses of study may include experiential anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and movement classes. These courses must include active experiencing of the subject through kinesthetic or embodied movement applications, rather than only through academic or cognitive analysis.

B. The curriculum must also include hands-on re-patterning which can be related to anatomy, kinesiology, and physiology, including the benefits and cautions of these touch techniques. Hands-on re-patterning is defined as employing guidance with one's hands to teach the client/student active movement patterns that he or she will be able to continue to utilize independently. Thus, the client /student will, at times, be actively involved in the movement, not merely passively receiving the movement instruction of the therapist or educator. It is required that assessment skills and interventions use knowledge from efficient alignment, ease of movement, neuromuscular awareness and/or perceptual-motor development. In addition, the curriculum should include biomechanical attention to the educator, therapist, or practitioner's own movement patterns and usage during hands-on work.

C. The Curriculum must also include course work aimed to strengthen professionalism in areas such as counseling, business skills, case studies, ethics, and development of a private practice.

D. The majority of the student's course work must have been graded and / or assessed by the attending faculty and/or program director.

Evidence of 150 hours of professional practice. 75 hours must be after you completed 500 hours of training. Of the entire 150 hours at least 75 hours

Standards of Practice:

The following standards define the professional level of practice of an RSMT and/or an RSME. Together with the Code of Ethics and the Scope of Practice, these Standards of Practice establish guidelines for the conduct of ISMETA registered practitioners.

Standard I – Education and Training

In the interest of the public and the profession as a whole, an ISMETA registered practitioner practices only after professional preparation. This consists, at a minimum, of the completion of a 500-hour ISMETA-approved training program or an approved alternative route of education, and consequent acceptance to ISMETA as a Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT). It is advised that all ISMETA registered practitioners engage in on-going professional development.

Standard II: Practitioner Responsibilities

The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT)

shall practice with honesty and integrity and provide services of the highest caliber. The purpose of the practices of somatic movement education and therapy is to enhance human processes of psychophysical awareness and functioning through movement learning. In his/her professional role the ISMETA registered practitioner shall:

- Be knowledgeable of the Scope of Practice (See full document) and practice within these limitations;
- Accurately and truthfully inform the public of the types of services provided;
- Recognize his/her personal limitations as a practitioner and be respectful of these limitations;
- Display ISMETA certificate of registry prominently in the principal place of practice;
- Provide a physical setting that is safe and meets all applicable legal requirements for health and safety;
- Use standard precautions to insure professional hygienic practices, and

Professional Practice Requirements:

must be sessions with individuals.

maintain a level of personal hygiene;

- Maintain adequate and customary liability insurance;
- Develop a clear agreement with clients about the nature and scope of work together;
- Obtain informed consent from the client prior to providing services;
- Display and/or discuss schedule of fees in advance of the session that are clearly understood by the client or potential client;
- Make financial arrangements in advance that are clearly understood by and safeguard the best interests of the consumer;
- Maintain adequate progress notes for each client session;
- Make appropriate referrals for clients to other professionals when needed;
- Follow acceptable accounting practices, file all applicable taxes, and maintain accurate financial records, contracts and legal obligations, appointment records, tax reports and receipts for at least three years;
- Recognize the value of constructive feedback from clients in sessions, students in classes, and participants in research, and strive to work professionally, self-critically, and creatively within the inherent holism of somatic work;
- Seek professional supervision when needed.

Standard III: Representation as a Professional

The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) must comply with high standards of professional conduct, and must accurately represent him/herself in regards to the profession of somatic movement education and therapy. In his/her professional role the ISMETA registered practitioner shall:

- Honestly represent all professional qualifications and affiliations;

- Only use the initials RSME and/or RSMT to designate his/her professional ability and competency within the field of somatic movement education and therapy when in good standing with ISMETA;
- Clearly identify and give credit to ideas, techniques, and principles derived from the unique contribution of each discipline within the field;
- Promote his/her business with integrity and avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest;
- Do not use sensational, sexual or provocative language and/or pictures to promote business;
- Advertise in a manner that is honest, dignified, and representative of services that can be delivered and remains consistent with the ISMETA Code of Ethics;
- Be prompt with annual payment of professional dues to receive updated certificate of registry;
- When using the ISMETA registration number on business cards, brochures, advertisements, and stationery, do so only in a manner that is within established ISMETA guidelines;
- Do not duplicate the ISMETA certificate of registry for purposes other than verification of the practitioner's credentials;
- Immediately return the certificate to ISMETA if it is revoked or suspended;
- Submit to peer review processes conducted by ISMETA's Ethics and Standards Committee in the case of any alleged violations of the Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice.

Standard IV: Legal Rights and Compliance

The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) must comply with all the legal requirements in applicable jurisdictions that regulate the profession of somatic movement education and therapy. In his/her professional role the ISMETA registered practitioner shall:

- Obey all applicable local, regional and national laws;
- Refrain from being discriminatory towards clients (relative to age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status);
- Report to ISMETA any criminal convictions regarding his/her practice;
- Report to ISMETA any pending litigation and resulting resolution related to his/her practice.
- Respect existing publishing rights and copyright laws.

Standard V: Professional Boundaries in Relationships

A. The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) must be cautious about assuming the role of a professional with family members, close friends, or closely associated employees and colleagues. Problems may include inadequate assessment as a result of role-related discomfort on the part of client or practitioner. The practitioner's emotional proximity can result in a loss of objectivity. Fulfilling the role of informed and caring adviser, however, is not precluded. The ISMETA registered practitioner shall:

- Acknowledge and respect the client's freedom of choice and right to refuse services;
- Recognize his/her influential position with the client and avoid exploitation of the relationship for personal or other gain;
- Clarify all dual relationships that could impair professional judgement or result in exploitation of family members, close friends, or employees and/or colleagues.

B. Issues of dependency, trust, and transference, and inequalities of power can lead to increased vulnerability on the part of the client and require that a practitioner not engage in a sexual relationship with a client. In his/her professional role the Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) shall:

- Recognize the impact of transference and counter transference between the client and the practitioner;
- Refrain from any behavior that demeans or disempowers the client, and recognize that the intimacy of the practitioner-client relationship may stimulate sexual feelings or memories;
- Avoid the exploitation of the trust and dependency of others, including clients and employees;
- If the client and the practitioner have a personal relationship outside of the typical client-practitioner relationship, then each party must be aware of the shift from the client-practitioner session to the social setting of the personal relationship;
- Understand that sexual intimacy is inappropriate, as is the use of touch on any part of the client's body with which he or she is not comfortable (as part of the individual or group in a therapeutic and/or educational setting);
- Refrain from becoming sexually involved with a current client even if the client initiates or consents to the contact;
- Consult with a colleague or other professional before becoming sexually involved with a former client;
- Comply with all laws regarding sexual harassment.

Standard VI: Client - Practitioner Confidentiality

The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) shall respect the confidentiality of client information and safeguard all records. In his/her professional role the Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) shall:

- Protect the client's identity and pertinent information in conversations, written communications, and all other manners unless requested by the client in writing, medically necessary, or mandated by law;
- Protect the interests of clients who are minors or who are unable to give voluntary consent by securing permission from an appropriate third party or guardian;
- Solicit only information that is relevant to the professional client/practitioner relationship;
- Maintain the client files for a minimum period of three years and store

and dispose of client files in a secure manner.

Standard VII: Inter-collegial Relationships

The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) understands the need for collaboration with other professionals within the fields of human services, health and education. To further implement relationships the Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) shall:

- Develop collegial relationships and show respect for diversity among colleagues/associates (age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status);
- Show respect for various personalities, styles, educational trainings and backgrounds;
- Act with integrity and in a constructive manner with colleagues, other organizations, agencies, institutions, referral sources and other professionals;
- Possess basic knowledge of the nature of other somatic practices while maintaining clear identification of one's own expertise;
- Never falsely impugn the reputation of any colleague.

Standard VIII: Grievance Procedures

The Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) and/or Therapist (RSMT) must provide the opportunity for clients or students to contact ISMETA and file a grievance if they have complaints regarding the ethical conduct of the practitioner. Notification of ISMETA's receipt of the complaint must be given to the client/student within one week after the complaint is filed.

Code of Ethics

A Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME) or a Registered Somatic Movement Therapist (RSMT) agrees to practice according to ISMETA Scope of Practice for the practice of Somatic Movement Education and Therapy whenever it holds itself out to clients or students to be practicing Somatic Movement Education or Somatic Movement Therapy.

ISMETA practitioners may not diagnose or prescribe for medical conditions. ISMETA practitioners must abide by laws and statutes governing practitioner's area of jurisdiction and which shall supersede the Code of Ethics and registration entitlement of ISMETA when in conflict. ISMETA practitioners shall adhere to ethical boundaries and perform the professional roles designed to protect the client, the practitioner, and safeguard the therapeutic value of the relationship.

- In his/her professional role the ISMETA practitioner shall acknowledge and respect the client's freedom of choice in the therapeutic session inclusive of respecting the client's right to refuse the therapeutic session
- Recognize his/her personal limitations and be respectful of these limitations
- Recognize his/her influential position with the client and avoid exploitation of the relationship for personal or other gain

- Recognize and limit the impact of transference and counter transference between the client and the ISMETA practitioners
- Clarify all complex relationships that could impair professional judgement or result in exploitation of the client or employees and/or co-workers
- ISMETA practitioners shall respect the confidentiality of client information and safeguard all records. In his/her professional role the ISMETA-RMT shall:
 - Protect the client's identity in conversations, written communications, and all other manners unless requested by the client in writing, medically necessary, or required by law.
 - Protect the interests of clients who are minors or who are unable to give voluntary consent by securing permission from an appropriate third party or guardian.
 - Protect the interests of clients who are minors or who are unable to give voluntary consent by securing permission from an appropriate third party or guardian.
 - Solicit only information that is relevant to the professional client/therapist relationship.
 - Share only pertinent information about the client with third parties when required by law
 - Maintain the client files for a minimum period of three years and store and dispose of client files in a secure manner.
 - RSMEs and RSMTs (practitioners) must offer the opportunity for clients or students who have complaints regarding the ethical conduct of the practitioner during their class or session, to contact ISMETA. Notification of ISMETA's interest in hearing about the complaint must be given to the client/student within one week after the complaint is filed.
 - Refrain from any behavior that demeans or disempowers the client. The RSME/RSMT recognizes that the intimacy of the therapeutic relationship may stimulate sexual feelings or memories
 - Do not exploit the trust and dependency of others, including clients and employees/co-workers. Sexual intimacy is inappropriate, as is the use of touch on any part of the client's body with which he or she is not comfortable, as part of the individual or class in a therapeutic and/or education setting. In addition, if the client and the educator or therapist have a personal relationship outside of the typical client- therapist/educator relationship, then each party must be aware of the shift from the client-therapist/educator session to the social setting of the personal relationship
 - Comply with all laws regarding sexual harassment
 - Only those authorized to use the Registered Somatic Movement Therapist or Registered Somatic Movement Educator title may use that name to address their work. ISMETA professional membership requires continued honoring of standards/ membership (and in good standing) with associated body/school of certification.
 - ISMETA practitioners will clearly identify and give credit to ideas, techniques, and principles when teaching or implementing.