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Taking charge - dance, disability and leadership: exploring the shifting role of the disabled dance artist

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TAKING CHARGE – DANCE, DISABILITY AND LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING THE SHIFTING ROLE OF THE DISABLED DANCE ARTIST

By

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Abstract

Over the past two decades dancers with disabilities have made a significant contribution to the professional contemporary dance sector. Key shifts and initiatives across various contexts in dance have increased debate and practice concerned with dance and disability and the intersections between these two areas.

Discourse focussed on dance and disability has been centred upon access and participation in dance, there is a considerable deficit in practice, research and scholarly activity that explores the progression of the disabled dancer into leadership roles in dance.

A lack of disabled role-models holding autonomous, high profile, decision making positions in the sector is detrimental to the position of both disabled dance artists currently practicing and those aspiring to work and train in contemporary dance.

Dance artists with disabilities possess knowledge of training and working in dance that is as yet under-researched and under-represented in both academic and practice based contexts. Understanding and utilising the knowledge and experience existing in disabled dance artists is central to ensuring progression in the sector. Underpinning this thesis is the claim that disabled dance artists are valued, assessed and critiqued within an existing epistemological framework in dance that is based on normative bodies, rather than through systems and a vocabulary that account for the individual dancer.

The research, centred around the UK and undertaken by a disabled dance artist-researcher, addresses an existing lack of scholarly activity about dance and disability produced by a disabled researcher. Chapters 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 offer 3 case studies of disabled dance artists these sections give insight into the lived experience of training and working in dance with a physical disability, in addition these chapters offer discussion specifically relating to the case study participants perception of themselves as leaders in dance.

The penultimate chapter 7, Reflections on Practice presents auto-ethnographic research relating to the authors' experience of using practice as both a vehicle and an artefact for research into dance, disability and leadership. Offering the practice and research of disabled artists within this thesis contributes a new perspective to the field of dance and disability, specifically by privileging the voices and practice of disabled artists and researchers. By challenging a hierarchy of normative leadership ideologies the potential of the disabled dance artist as leader is presented at the forefront of this study.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.0 Entering the Dance: The Emergence of the Disabled Dance Artist

In 1996, newly graduated with a degree in *Dance and Related Arts*, I was interrupted from a career trajectory that seemed to offer only dance administration or dance therapy, by a workshop with the relatively newly formed CandoCo Dance Company. I had never experienced or seen work including dancers with disabilities away from a therapeutic context and the ethos and practice of (the subsequently rebranded) Candoco resonated strongly with my lifelong experience of impairment.

I worked as a post-graduate trainee with the company for one year. At the time of the initial application for the traineeship I had a strong sense that I was one of a minority of disabled dance graduates. During this year and in my subsequent practice and study in dance, I encountered a number of key shifts in the way dance including disabled people was performed and perceived. These shifts included the emergence of other 'inclusive' dance companies: Stopgap (UK, 1997-) Axis (USA, 1987-) Touch Compass (NZ,1997-) Restless (AUS,1991-). In addition there were a number of training and education initiatives concerned with access and participation in dance (Whatley 2007).

These encounters were hopeful and aspirational with stakeholders contributing to wide-ranging debates around inclusion and access. Key training providers (Coventry University, Trinity Laban) and funding bodies (Arts Council England, British Council) were involved in discussions about dance and impairment. Through these discussions I developed a sense of belonging in the dance sector and a feeling that my impairment should be no obstacle to progressing in dance.

My doctoral research focusses primarily on the UK dance sector, is a culmination of 19 years of working in professional 'inclusive' dance, the term 'Inclusive will be discussed in more detail within the thesis (see p.19). Over this time I have built a practice in dance that is perhaps typical of a mid-career dancer: ranging from freelance performance work, teaching and training and most recently, research. Although I have seen developments in the role of the disabled dance artist, these developments are not commensurate with the length of time that 'integrated' dance has been part of the UK dance sector.

This study is centred on the contemporary dance sector, It should be acknowledged that the collective term contemporary dance is not limited to one particular style of dance practice and training, rather it describes practices that have evolved in the UK since the early 1970s drawing from a multitude of different techniques. These techniques include codified techniques drawing from those established by modern and postmodern dancers (including Graham, Cunningham, Limone), through to Release techniques, Contact improvisation and may reference variations of non-western forms of dance, and street dance.

This research is based on my experience primarily in the area of improvisation and release based training, however it is crucial to understand the long history and diversity of styles that are included in the way contemporary dance as a genre is understood.

Within the contemporary dance sector, there are more dancers with disabilities in performing roles and there have been subtle shifts in disabled dance students participating in training. My work wiithin the sector, however, indicates that there are limited opportunities for disabled practitioners to progress into the leadership roles that will secure a longevity and legacy in the dance sector for disabled artists. In the context of my research the term leader is used to describe roles in dance such as, director, choreographer, policy maker, funder, furthermore. Within these definitions there also exists a further power hierarchy, of 'greater' or 'lesser' leadership roles. For example, those deciding about programming and funding tend to be viewed as occupying more senior leadership roles than those making and presenting dance. As this thesis will discuss, this existing hierarchy calls for an examination of how leadership is framed and understood both in dance and broader societal contexts. It is my aim through this research to pose and interrogate questions from my position as a disabled artist-researcher that have not been fully explored through current research in this area; furthermore that my personal experiences in dance will offer a unique perspective to the investigation.

1.1 Shifts in the Sector: From Access to Development

Since the mid 1990s a shift has occurred in the landscape of UK contemporary dance. There has been a clear increase in the presence of the disabled dance artists both in performance and to a lesser extent in training contexts. Since the emergence of key instigators in the field of dance and disability (Candoco Dance Company,1991; StopGap ,1995) the disabled body in dance has been the focus of much discussion. Within Higher Education and training contexts there is a body of work addressing issues of accessibility for disabled dance students wishing to pursue a dance or performing arts training (Aujla and Redding, 2012; Benjamin, 2001; Whatley, 2007). This research highlighted a number of obstacles facing dancers with impairments confronting a hegemony of ableism in contemporary dance training and education.

Subsequent debate, informed by this early research, meant that the disabled dancer had become more visible on stage. Training, however, was almost exclusively bespoke and took place within a limited number of companies including those featuring disabled performers. This 'on the job' learning undertaken by employed disabled artists arguably did much to raise the profile of the disabled dancer, but little to improve access into the sector and subsequent progression. In an environment where training opportunities were limited to a handful of individuals there followed problems of wider access for disabled people wishing to participate in dance. In response to limited training opportunities, Candoco launched a foundation course in dance for disabled students. The course ran from 2004 to 2007. The programme of study included choreography, technique classes and theoretical study. It is particularly relevant for this study to note the short life of this initiative, which closed due to funding being redirected into Widening Participation projects to be run by Dance and Drama award (DaDa)[1] schools (Verrent 2007:15). This gives a valuable insight into long-term commitment to developmental opportunities for disabled artists. Following the termination of funding for the foundation course the LSC (Learning and Skills Council) issued the following statement:

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[1] DaDa Dance and Drama Awards – Government funding introduced in 1999 offering scholarships to dance and drama students affiliated to specified training providers for more information visit http://www.dadainfo.org.uk

In September 2005, the LSC – now responsible for the Dance and
Drama Awards – indicated to Candoco that they would be changing
the way they deliver training for disabled students from September
2007 focusing more on embedding the drive to widen participation
within the Dance and Drama Awards themselves. (Learning and Skills
Council, 2007)

There is a suggestion here of a shift away from bespoke training opportunities towards training which is rooted in existing programmes of study. This is problematic for the disabled dance student; without appropriate acknowledgement of the diverse and changing training needs of disabled students there is an implication that disabled dance students should adapt to existing models of dance pedagogy. This is also troubling in terms of leadership progression and development for disabled artists. The probability that existing provision will be delivered by non-disabled teachers and practitioners means that disabled students will not see themselves represented in authoritative positions, furthermore potential leadership roles for disabled artists are reduced through the removal of specialized training routes.

Existing research has asked questions about the place of the disabled dance artist in both training and professional contexts (Aujla and Redding 2013; Kuppers 2000; Whatley 2007). Investigation in this area has brought attention to the need to improve access into training and participation in dance practice. Theory and practice emerging from this research has impacted on how the impaired dancer is viewed and placed within an existing framework in dance (Kuppers, 2000; Pell, 2012). Important changes have occurred as a result of this initial research: there is a greater 'acceptance' of the disabled dancer on stage within the context of 'mainstream[2]' dance. In addition there are 'formal' networks, which have evolved from this research that aim to continue to debate and support dance and disability (NIDN[3]). This thesis acknowledges the existing body of work in this area and the integral role this has

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[2] Mainstream is used here to describe familiar dance practices widely accepted by those within and outside the art form
[3] National Inclusive Dance Network (changed to *Dance for Change* in 2015)

played in continuing to question and encourage discussion around dance and disability.

1.2 Progression into Leadership

This study comes at a time within dance which heralds the emergence of several 'new' disabled leaders (Bowditch, Brew, Cunnigham) in addition the timing of this research coincides with the 'coming of age' of disabled dance artists who started their careers in the beginnings of 'inclusive' dance, as we know it today (1995-97) and are seeking development and longevity in their careers (O'Brien, Marsh, Malin). It is highly appropriate and indeed necessary that in-depth research is undertaken to offer a critical framework for what is happening in terms of leadership development for disabled artists and examine how this can be supported by the dance sector. This thesis will explore this through the investigation a number of questions. These are:

- Why are there very few disabled dancers in leadership positions in the dance sector?

- What are the conditions that enable some artists to become leaders yet prohibit others?

- Are issues to do with access to training and professional development still a factor?

- How do disabled artists experience working in dance?

- What role do the expectations of the individual artist play in progressing towards a leadership role?

- Do existing models of 'leadership' participate in the presence or otherwise of disabled leaders in the dance community?'

In addition to the above, the auto-ethnographic aspect of this research relating to my own practice and experience will examine the following questions:

- How can I use what I already know?
- Am I a leader?

- How has the process of my research developed me as a leader in dance?

The hypothesis central to this thesis is based firstly on my belief that much prevailing research in the area of dance and disability maintains a focus on access and participation into the professional dance sector for people with disabilities, but not progression once participating, furthermore that institutional and workforce infrastrucutres, which might support disabiled artists sustain employment, are limited. Subsequently there is a significant discrepancy between access and participation and progression for disabled artists working in the sector. Despite an increased acknowledgement that physical impairment in dance is no barrier to participation, there is a significant lack of leadership roles being undertaken by disabled artists. Significantly, there are limited examples of data to support this supposition so this observation remains speculative to a large extent. It is however supported by my own experience and observations gathered over many years. Anecdotal evidence and personal experience suggests that greater emphasis is placed upon access and participation for disabled dance artists. Through observations in my own practice and research, however, it is apparent that this has not evolved into a similar emphasis on supporting disabled people developing as leaders in dance. There is a tension here that once disabled artists gain access to dance participation they will fit into existing available structures for development rather than opportunities that are more specifically aimed at their individual needs.

A central aim of this research is thus to examine the deficit between initial initiatives to increase access and participation in dance for disabled artists and the number of disabled artists currently in positions of leadership in the sector. It could be expected, that having gained greater access into dance training disabled artists would progress into leadership roles in dance. There is a typical trajectory where dancers shift from performing into teaching, choreography, research or management. This archetypal route is exemplified in a mission statement produced by Dancer's Career Development (DCD), an organisation focussed on supporting dancers transitioning from performing into alternative employment. They state that they exist to:

> Develop the remaining part of their (dancers) career, within or outside
> the dance profession, by building on their distinctive strengths and
> transferable skills. (Dancers Career Development, n.d)

This seems to be a less accessible route for disabled dance artists. A key question of my research concerns the possible reasons behind this lack of career 'mobility' for disabled dancers. Those disabled dance artists who emerged during the beginnings of 'inclusive' practice – for example Dave Toole (1962-), Jon French (1967-), Welly O'Brien (1975-) – have maintained a career in performing, but none have undertaken formal or 'visible' leadership roles in the sector. Historically the debate around dance and disability has focused on investigating how disabled dancers can be included in dance more. There has been less emphasis on the cultural, social and political factors that have impacted on the role of the disabled performer in dance. This has meant that attitudinal and perceptual barriers that limit progression for disabled artists have not been sufficiently addressed.

This study aims to explore the extent to which attitudes towards dancers with disabilities are impacted by enforced frameworks of understanding impairment in our culture and socialisation. This will include an examination of the acceptance or rejection of the disabled body as leaderful.

It is the premise of this study that a lack of representation by disabled leaders in influential positions will impact detrimentally on the experience and progression of dancers with disabilities. When dancers do not see 'themselves' represented in the wider dance infrastructure they are subsequently left questioning if they 'belong' there. This applies to training (lecturers, professors, peers) and practice (producers, managers, performers, choreographers).

1.3 Terms of Access: Gatekeepers in Dance

Underpinning this study is the central claim that the dance sector reflects the hierarchy of 'normative' bodies in society. Although disabled artists have been 'granted' access into dance, there are limited strategies for development,

progression and longevity in the sector. In terms of entrance into the contemporary dance sector, the notion of 'gate-keepers' provides a useful lens to examine the position of the disabled artist. As this thesis seeks to demonstrate, dance has a dominant hegemony of the 'ideal' or dancerly (Kuppers 2000) body. Any bodies deviating from this form are classified as 'other'. It is this marginalisation that has created an environment where dancers with disabilities are expected to practice and train within a context that is defined by their impairment. For instance dance involving impaired artists is often categorised as 'inclusive' or 'integrated'. I will argue that these are both problematic labels, each one suggesting an invitation into an existing field of practice. Disabled artists are seen to be 'included' in or 'integrated' into a 'world' that will 'allow' them in, but any required changes must come from the disabled individual, not from the existing structures.

1.4 The Disabled Voice

This thesis will explore what is relatively unchartered territory in the existing canon of dance research. As noted above, research that engages with questions around dance and disability originates largely from existing non-disabled scholars and practitioners. Inevitably this has resulted in writing and research that is representative of a voice that already dominates the academic landscape in dance. A principal aim of this study is to give voice to the disabled artists working or aspiring to work in dance.

By capturing the perceptions and experiences of disabled dancers at different stages of their career in dance, this study sets out to reveal a truthful and subsequently valuable narrative that originates not from an external perspective, but rather is drawn from the individual artists' own accounts. These voices and experiences will contribute views previously under-represented in dance studies research. My own position as a disabled artist and member of a community of other disabled dancers will enable me to access the experiences and perceptions of this community. I propose that presenting these findings in the context of a doctoral thesis will offer new ways of thinking about, evaluating and discussing the work made by and including dancers with disabilities. Given this people centred nature of

my research ethical approval was sought and given prior to engaging with the research and selected research participants.

The focus of this research is primarily based on the UK contemporary dance sector. However in order to gain a wider understanding of this sector in a broader context, the research will offer an overview of both historic and global perspectives on dance and disability. This will provide a context for the current position of the disabled dance artist. This element of the thesis will identify and discuss the origins of the wider dance and disability sector thus enabling a clear comparison to be made with the roles held by those practising in the UK today.

The theme of leadership will be a key strand of enquiry throughout the research. This is linked to the research hypothesis that despite an initial impetus there remains a deficit in the number of disabled leaders in dance. The examination of leadership will engage with philosophical theories of leadership (Foucault 1982; Popper 2000) in conjunction with more 'corporate'[4] models for thinking about leadership (Collins' level 5 leadership 2001). Drawing on these different discourses will provide a foundation to arguing for what might be considered leadership in dance. This will include an investigation into existing strategies for developing leadership skills in the arts, for example the Clore Leadership Programme[5] as a cross-disciplinary leadership programme for the cultural and creative industries (Clore Leadership Programme 2015). The research will offer an insight into the obstacles faced by disabled artists who are aspiring towards leadership in the sector. I will make suggestions for the development of effective strategies to support disabled dance artists in advancing their leadership capabilities and propose a rethinking of what leadership means within the field of dance, and specifically in the field of disability dance.

1.5 The Artist as Researcher

The role of artist-researcher is central to the thesis. I employ this term in recognition of my own practice as a disabled dance artist and early career

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[4] Corporate is the author's term used to describe leadership theory relating to business and management contexts.
[5] Founded in 2004. An organisation aimed at 'shaping creative leaders through in-depth learning' (Clore Leadership n.) for more information go to http://www.cloreleadership.org

researcher. It is my belief that this position gives me a valuable perspective and opportunity to reflect on and analyse my own practice within the context of my research. By identifying myself as a site for research and the interrogation of the research questions I am also developing my own leadership strategies. The research process not only contributes new knowledge about the experience of the disabled dancer, but in so doing also provides me with valuable skills that can support my own development towards being a leader. To an extent, my self and my experiences in dance are primary subjects of this exploration.

The 'researcher as subject' aspect of this thesis will include an examination of my own entrance into dance training and practice and subsequent employment and development. In addition to this, the study will use my own early and current practice as a research focus. Locating myself as central to my research into the progression towards leadership for disabled dance artists will enable me to interrogate my own perceptions and held beliefs relating to my own body and my dance practice.

The research will use specific aspects of my work as a teacher, dancer, dance-maker and researcher, to examine shifts in personal experience in dance. The study will also provide a vehicle for an examination of my progression into academic research and contribution to scholarly activity. There is a link between this and earlier statements regarding a lack of disabled dance professionals present in the current UK HE landscape. Although there is a lack of 'hard' data relating to numbers of disabled dance students within the UK, there are examples of bespoke research, which suggests that disabled dance students remain in the minority. A report undertaken by CEDAR[6] in 2006 states that 'self reporting statistics on disability were very low (1.5%)'. The report extends on this suggesting that:

> Accounting for disability statistically is problematic. There are
> questions of definition, of identification, of disclosure. The majority of
> disabled people have hidden impairments and so it cannot be done
> by simply looking at disabled people and counting them. (Digital
> Education Resource Archive 2007)

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[6] Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research, part of the Faculty of Social Studies within the University of Warwick.

My personal aim to move into the Higher Education sector has strongly informed the pursuit of this doctoral study, based on a view that greater visibility of academics with disabilities working within HE dance contexts will inevitably inform future generations of disabled dance artists. By situating myself, and my experience as a disabled dance artist central to the study, the investigation will locate the artist-researcher as indigenous to the area of research. In doing so the traditional position of researcher as 'outside' of the research group will be questioned and introduces an auto-ethnographic dimension to my research methodology. The findings of this study will thus be informed by my unique stance as disabled dancer-researcher and also my personal and professional proximity to the subjects of my research. It is this aspect of my study that is particularly novel and enables me to offer new insights to inform knowledge about the disability and dance sector. Moreover, I postulate that my personal identification as a disabled dancer has opened up channels of communication and understanding that are not normally accessible to a researcher on the periphery of this field.

The ethical considerations of this stance will be thoroughly explored in the methodology chapter, chapter 3, to account for bias and how assumption on the part of the researcher could help or hinder this ethnographic, and specifically auto-ethnographic, aspect of the study (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999:249). There will also be consideration given to the inclusion of personal relationships as a source for data gathering in the context of academic research. I will draw from both practice and theory in this area to inform my methodological choices. This aspect of the study will be fed by existing scholarly work in the field of biographical research (Frank 2000) and my own auto-ethnographic dance research.

Whilst the primary focus is on the UK context, the study will extend to a consideration of dance and disability within a wider global context. It will provide an overview of training and education frameworks outside the UK and will review and evaluate professional practice that has emerged from different countries. This will involve an exploration of societal systems that inform the position of disabled people in different geographical environments, which will be extended to consider access to dance practice and training for dancers with physical disabilities. Using this research to offer a comparative analysis of opportunities for disabled dancers will offer insight

into the impact of governmental policy and relevant legal frameworks on the progression of the disabled dancer and how this differs between geographical contexts.

1.6 Artists' Voices

As a way of testing out the theory and my subjective position within the research the thesis includes three in-depth case studies of UK-based disabled dance artists who are at different points in their careers: Dan Daw, Welly O'Brien and Kimberley Harvey. These case studies are built around a series of interviews and observations over the duration of the research period. There are two women and one man involved in this aspect of the research. The inclusion of both male and female subjects is to engage with issues of gender and leadership in dance. I draw on feminist theory and particular the influence of feminist theory within the fields of dance and philosophy to explore the relationship between gender, disability and leadership in dance.

The methodology I have employed throughout the study is primarily qualitative. This is to locate the voices of individuals central to the research and to allow space within the study for these voices and the experiences of the participants to inform the conclusions I reach. The research will thus draw upon a largely phenomenological epistemology, one that holds that the corporeal experience of both dancing and impairment is central to the research ideology. This is informed by a body of existing dance research (Albright 1998; Foster 1986) which argues that theorising the body and the embodied experience of the dancer is essential to developing an understanding of dance theory and practice. This study will build on this existing research by proposing that there is a link between embodiment in dance and the embodied experience of impairment, both the experience of dancing and physical impairment are inherently centred on the body, as such this research proposes that disabled dance artists inhabit a space where they are well placed to offer knowledge on the intersection of these experiences. As yet there is little research that acknowledges the potential value of examining these theories and experiences in the context of the dance, disability and progression into leadership roles nexus. The

study will question the extent to which the experience of being or becoming disabled offers a heightened corporeal understanding to dancers with impairment and the degree to which this potential is recognised by the dance sector in general.

In addition to drawing on dance studies, phenomenology and feminist theory, the study will also engage with disability studies, within which the body is an inherent tool for research into the experience of impairment and the societal and cultural frameworks that impact upon impairment (Shakespeare 2014; Garland-Thomson 2009). The relationship between disability studies and dance studies is a relatively under-explored instrument for examining the role of the disabled dance artist. Historically there has seemed to be a mutual resistance between the dance and disability sector and the areas of disability culture or disability arts. Ruth Gould, Artistic Director of DaDaFest[7] supports this suggestion by observing:

> Companies did start to be founded, however, usually non-disabled
> dancers led the dance and disability agenda. The work was more
> about the language and expressions of the body, than the political
> rights so prevalent in the early disability movement. (DadaFest 2013)

Gould implies a tension by locating the politicisation of disability within the disability arts sector. Within dance she perceives a form pre-occupied with 'standardised' bodies, within which, the disabled body is situated as apart from the non-disabled prescribed body in the art form. Performer and disability advocate Lawrence Carter-Long offers a useful metaphor for the perceived tension as follows:

> This is no safe prearranged marriage of dance and disability. This
> is a collision. This is two worlds coming together that ain't
> supposed to co-exist. (Perspective Daily 2015)

Carter-Long's statement offers a valuable perspective relating to a lack of structure or 'formal' research across the genres of dance and disability arts. He is suggesting an 'accidental' collaboration between incongruous fields of practice and

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[7] DaDaFest is a disability arts festival taking place in Liverpool annually since 2010.

research. This thesis will ask what value lies in interrogating the philosophical, cultural and political frameworks associated with disability research and how these can inform and impact upon the progression of the disabled dance artist.

To deepen this enquiry, the study will engage with examples of work involving disabled performers and dance makers in an existing canon of cultural artefacts to argue that work created and performed by artists with impairments is relatively absent from archived artworks that form our cultural heritage. Furthermore, by interrogating the place of dance and disability within the UK's cultural landscape, the study will question whether this absence is complicit in perpetuating a deficit in disabled artist as leaders in the contemporary dance and arts industries.

1.7 Filling a Gap

In summary, this research aims to fill a gap in existing research within the area of dance and disability. As previously mentioned, there is a lack of scholarly writing and research in dance originating from the disabled artist-researcher, and which incorporates the experiences and perceptions of other disabled dance artists (notable disabled writers include, Kuppers; Conroy; Sandahl). My aim is to make room for continued research and discussion in this area, which will in turn inform a wider and more diverse community of dance practice, theory and research. For this reason I weave together scholarly research, writing and my own practice as a disabled dance artist to address the questions I pose about leadership in dance.

1.8 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2, Models of Disability, acknowledges the frameworks imagined by activists, scholars, policy makers and individuals to consider disability and the position of people with disabilities in the world. My research does not align with one particular epistemological model, rather it recognises these frames as a valuable vehicle for thinking about disability. Chapter 3 will give insight into existing models offering some interpretation and suggestions for possible 'new' ideologies for examining the experience of impairment.

The methodology chapter, Chapter 3, will present a rationale for my chosen methods of research and modes of inquiry specific to the thesis. This will include an evaluation of the epistemological framework for the study and the approaches used to gather data for the study. This chapter will include a justification for the use of a primarily qualitative approach for the research. In addition it will discuss my unique indigenous position as the researcher and what I therefore need to give consideration to for the study. This section will give specific attention to the case study aspect of the research citing auto-ethnography as the mode of research that is central to the inquiry for offering a unique perspective in the field of dance, disability and autonomous practice.

Chapter 4 of the thesis will offer a review of relevant literature across the fields of dance, disability and leadership. This chapter will consider different perspectives from scholarly, practice-based and philosophical theories in order to examine the questions central to this research. The chapter will provide a contextualisation for the thesis by locating the study within an existing canon of research (Albright 1998; Aujla and Redding 2013; Benjamin 2001; Whatley 2007, 2010). The literature review will offer an analysis that points to the gaps in current literature and research, to illuminate the potential of this study to contribute to a wider framework of research and practice concerned with dance and disability.

Chapter 5 of the thesis will present an in-depth evaluation of leadership in different contexts. As a fundamental theme to the study this will be explored both within and beyond the cultural sector. This chapter will propose key themes for thinking about leadership, these include; bodily communication and leadership, leadership and language and leadership within the context of shared cultural heritage.

Chapter 6 (6.1, 6.2 and 6.3) – will present three case studies of disabled dance artists. This section of the study is the culmination of long-term observations and interviews with the three artists. The case study chapters will consider the extent to which leadership is exemplified and recognised through the perspectives and practices of artists at different stages in their career in dance. The case study participants were selected based on their experience in dance and their existing relationship to me as researcher. Dan Daw and Welly O'Brien are both artists with

whom I have worked over the past 20 years and Kimberley Harvey is an artist whom I met whilst working in a teaching role for Candoco. All the participants are active performers, Daw and Harvey are at different stages of pursuing their own choreographic work and O'Brien has a long-standing and diverse experience of performing in different contexts. Their proximity to me is important, I believe my prior relationship with these artists grants this research a unique opportunity to create a space for open and on-going conversations and observations.

This element of the research aims to 'capture' the voices of these dance artists with the aim of offering a unique contribution to the existing canon of research into dance and disability. An analysis of the case studies and the artists' responses will propose a number of themes that align with leadership in dance and will specify the conditions that support or prohibit artists identifying with leadership in their working lives.

The penultimate chapter, Chapter 7 will offer an analysis of my own work in dance. This will be framed around independent practice undertaken throughout the research period and will present my reflections on this experience and subsequent observations relating to my own position as a leader in dance. This chapter will include a reflective analysis of the film element of this thesis that was created to extend the enquiry into leadership in dance through examining my own creative process, my relationship with my collaborators in making the film and the relationship between audience reception and leadership in dance. The final Chapter 8 will offer concluding thoughts culminating from the research and offer suggestions and strategies for further development of the disabled leader in dance.

1.9 A Note on Language

The language used to describe, discuss and represent disability has a history of dividing opinion. The etymology of key words and phrases associated with impairment gives an insight into shifting perceptions of disability over periods of history. Terms such as; 'Handicapped', 'Cripple' or 'Invalid', have been widely rejected by current UK discourse, perceived as holding negative connotations, A

rejection led particularly, by individuals and organisations championing the rights of people with disabilities. A brief inspection of the history of this term 'Handicapped', for example, indicates that it is synonymous with themes of burden or carrying extra 'weight.' There is one school of thought suggesting that handicapped is derived from "hand in cap" a description of 'cripples' begging. Another theory relates to the term handicapped as disadvantaged in some way, take the golfing metaphor for example. Whatever the definition it is not a term promoting positivity and equality.

This research will engage with the language surrounding disability; as a person with a disability this aspect of the study has brought my attention to my preferences and interpretations of words and phrases employed to discuss or describe disability. There is something about labelling with language that is prominent in my personal feelings on this matter. At times in my lifeI have strongly rebelled against the term disabled or any kind of title with my 'one handedness' at its core, I did not want to be perceived as 'different' from my non-disabled peers.

As I gained more experience and frankly greater exposure to other people with disabilities, I started to feel proud of this 'label.' History and habit still means that the word handicapped provokes a negative reaction in me. I am happy and indeed pleased, however to describe myself as disabled/a person with a disability or a person with an impairment. There is also much debate around these terms, and this debate is important, the unpacking of terminology and its associated meaning and interpretation has been and continues to be central to the rights and voices of people with a disability or impairment. There is a valid discussion around the terms disabled and impaired. Disability activist and scholar Mike Oliver offers a useful definition of Impairment as 'individual limitation' and disability as 'socially imposed restriction' (Oliver 1993:49). Even within these definitions there seems to be a potential further discussion around the terms 'limitation' and 'restriction.'

This thesis recognises and argues that the debate is key. Historically, individuals with impairment were relatively passive in the language used to talk about their own bodies and terminology originated from medical definitions of impairment. The research acknowledges the tensions relating to terminology, proposing that critical discourse from a range of communities, disabled and non-disabled, activists and policy makers, can only draw greater focus on the voices of people with disabilities.

My conscious choice to adopt a range of terminology across the research is intended as a resistance to align with a specified vocabulary. Whilst the research recognises the importance of language and the historical and political resonance of language, I also aim to experiment with the language I use in the thesis thus highlighting the diverse thinking in this area. The writing in this thesis will move between the terms disabled, people with disabilities, and impairment or people with impairment. I argue that as a disabled researcher I am well positioned to test out the language around disability in a way that takes on different meanings, noting this is a language that is specific to my corporeality and lived experience and this offers me a researcher stance that is less available to a non-disabld researcher. I am commenting from the 'inside'. I will draw on the vocabulary I use to talk about and understand my body. This personalised perspective on the language of impairment allows me to 'experiment' with fewer limitations than a non-disabled person exploring the same terminology. The history of the language of disability is part of my history and I am well placed to explore its various meanings within the context of this research.

I have learnt through my practice in dance and in particular the dance and disability sector, that communication, verbal and non-verbal, is central to examining ways of working and training. I have experienced or seen many scenarios whereby a dancer with a disability is left to find her own adaptations in a class or workshop because the language used to talk about impaired bodies in dance remains a controversial area. The body in this instance is rarely referred to at all. Thus there is a need to talk about each individual body in dance rather than regarding the dancing body as a collective, standardised, homogenous body. In this research, employing a diversity of terms is intended to directly acknowledge the individual disabled dance artist. This is a central purpose of this research; to continue questioning assumptions whilst respecting individual preference for the language used to discuss the dancer's own body and her experiences.

Beyond the focus on the individual dancer, the research will also include an examination of the terminology widely used to discuss disability in dance more generally. The terms 'Inclusive' and 'Integrated' dance are broadly recognised as descriptors of dance practice featuring people with disabilities. I will question the

assumed acceptance of these terms. Recognising the problematic semantics of these terms I will question their validity and their general acceptance within the dance community. Both of these terms are troubling to notions of equality, agency and autonomy. Inclusive and integrated are both suggestive of being incorporated into an existing structure or framework. In contemporary dance the use of these terms indicates a practice that includes or integrates disabled dancers into a pre-existing domain rather than one where each person is perceived as an individual who can inform and contribute to change and development. Whilst I will adopt the terms inclusive and integrated dance they will be employed as nouns. In doing so I acknowledge the efficiency of the terms for discussing dance made by and including disabled people, whilst I continue to question the hermeneutics of the words in their traditional adjective form.

Hermeneutics and linguistic interpretations, in parallel to epistemological structures and ontological frameworks will be explored in the next chapter. This will include a discussion of methodological approaches; I will outline and rationalise the selected modes of inquiry for this research.

Chapter 2 – Models of Disability

2.0 Changing Frames: Considering Models of Disability

The language used to discuss, evaluate and understand disability is complex. It is an ever-changing discourse impacted upon by political agendas, context, and personal narratives and preferences. For the purpose of research in the area of disability and dance it is essential that some acknowledgement be made towards the language of disability and frameworks employed for considering disability in contemporary society. This chapter will focus on three main models of disability conceived by various theorists over a period of time. It will consider how they originated in order to examine how they have informed and challenged each other.

With specific focus on my own research this chapter will therefore develop the investigation to consider the role of models of disability in the field of dance practice and theory. An analysis of each model will be provided to examine the value of these models in relation to the development of disabled artists in leadership roles in the dance sector. As discussed in chapter one (see 1.10) a rationale is provided for the language employed throughout this thesis and the interchangeable use of terminologies used to discuss disability.

2.1 The Medical Model

From a historical perspective impairment and medicine have been intrinsically linked based on a societal perception that people who are either born with or acquire physical, sensory, neurological, or psychological 'anomalies' should be 'mended'. During the industrial revolution[8] in the UK, developments in 'hospital based medicine encouraged the expansion of professionals whose expert knowledge was disabling' (Borsay 1998:647) by locating impairment within the disabled individual, thereby positioning them as 'sickly' or 'broken' (Areheart 2008:204). The medical model of disability locates impairment in the individual, as a 'problem' to be fixed or aided by adaptation, biomedicine or therapeutic practices. There is a strong resonance here

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[8] The UK industrial revoultion refers to a period in the 18th century that saw the invention of a number of industrial large scale processes that significantly impacted on workforces, manufacture and the position of the individual in society

with notions of socially constructed ideologies of the normative body, and that the medicalization of disability is an attempt to conform the impaired body towards socially accepted norms of physicality. The medical model has informed key societal frameworks for the way disability is viewed and talked about. A prominent example is the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps. This framework categorises disability into three main areas:

> 1. Impairments concerned with abnormalities of body structure and appearance and with organ or system function resulting from any cause; in principle, impairments represent disturbances at the organ level.

> 2. Disabilities reflecting the consequences of impairment in terms of functional performance and activity by the individual; disabilities thus represent disturbances at the level of the person.

> 3. Handicaps concerned with the disadvantages experienced by the individual as a result of impairments and disabilities; handicaps thus reflect interaction with and adaptation to the individual's surroundings. (World Health Organization WHO 1980)

These classifications were introduced in 1980 by WHO as a trial to evaluate its effectiveness in 'classifying' disablement and health of populations. In terms of understanding how the medical model of disability, as described here, has informed our shared understanding and experience of disability it is illuminating to note that this 'trial' continued with only minor modifications to language for over twenty years until the arrival of the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) framework in 2001. A revised document introduced as a 'classification intended for a wide range of uses in different sectors which classified from body, individual and societal perspectives' (WHO 2002). The emergence of the ICF model shifted the focus of disability from a medicalised framework of understanding to a

more indvidualised model that aimed to incorprate a range of perspectives of impairment including, the lived experiences of people with disability.

The medical model has been widely criticised, in particular by disabled people. This is primarily because it is a notion emerging from preconceptions about disability from 'non - disabled' policy makers.

> This 'lack of fit' between able-bodied and disabled people's definition
> is more than just a semantic quibble for it has important implications
> both for the provision of services and the ability to control one's life.
> (Oliver 1993: 61)

Disability advocate, Mike Oliver is suggesting that disabled people lack control over policy and decision making and this is problematic. He notes that devising a vocabulary and framework that emerges from people without impairment is seen as less 'useful' and based outside of the real 'lived' experience of disabled people. Oliver goes on to critique this model further suggesting that: 'If disability is seen as tragedy, then disabled people will be treated as if they are the victims of some tragic happening and circumstances' (Oliver 1993: 63). The link between tragedy and impairment is apparent in the medical model of disability. If impairment is located in the person as a 'problem' it is plausible that society at large may label people with a disability as 'tragic' and as not conforming, but this model does not encourage us to confront our own physical 'stability' as transient or volatile. There is an assumed segregation between the normative bodies in society and the 'broken' ones and this creates a hierarchy linked to physicality and 'ability'.

For the purpose of this research there is value in examining this hierarchy and segregation further. If the medical model acts as a structure to 'oppress' people with disabilities through the medicalization of their experience of disability it seems likely that perceptions of disabled people as 'leaders' will be uncommon. Oliver offers an interesting observation here, proposing that such frameworks do little to improve the quality of life of disabled people, though it might have substantially improved the career prospects of the researchers (Oliver 1993:63). It is hard to envisage people

with impairment as leaders in society if the discussion and policy-making relating to their requirements and 'place' in society is driven by non-impaired leaders.

The notion of 'normative' bodies perpetuated by the medical model of disability can be seen in perceptions of dance and dancers. Dance has a history of rejecting the 'broken' body and elevating an ideological 'Dancerly Body' (Kuppers 2000:119). Examining in particular the era when the World Health Organisation trialled the categorisation of disability, impairment and handicaps it is clear that was a time when there were few if any examples of impaired dancers in the field of professional dance.

Opportunities to dance for people with disabilities in this period was largely therapeutic; a means of 'making better' the lives and experiences of people with disability. It was often hospital, or institution based and almost exclusively led by non-disabled practitioners.

> For those with physical disabilities it can help to increase
> awareness of, and improve their relationship with their
> environment, enabling them to cope better with their disability. (The
> Henry Spink Foundation n.d)

There is reinforcement of the medical model of disability here in the suggestion that dance can facilitate a process of self-discovery or life improvement for disabled people, there is further suggestion that dance will help them 'cope' with their impairment, not that dance might encourage autonomy or leadership of self and others.

Is it possible to be seen as a leader, if one is merely 'coping' or if life appears to be an ongoing battle against adversity? These are not characteristics primarily associated with leadership. The medical model is a structure within which people with impairments are seen as in need of care and guidance from society and the medical profession - not as self directed individuals capable of guiding others.

Drawing a comparison between early developments in the field of dance and disability in the UK in the decade from 1990-2000, and current practice, is interesting. Although disability was on the agenda of how we looked at and talked

about dance in that earlier decade; dance involving artists with impairments existed mainly on the periphery of mainstream dance, seen primarily as a form of 'community' dance. There was little or no evidence of disabled artists as leaders. This practice of facilitation of disabled people led by non-disabled people has some resonance with medical models of disability by using ableist ideologies to 'improve' the lives of those with impairment.

Parallels between policy reform and developments in dance practice can be seen clearly by examining emerging dance activity at key points in governmental changes (Equalities Act 2010). With the increase in voices of disabled people calling for societal changes in perceptions and equality of opportunity, there followed a growth in the disability arts movement. Politically, the arts have played a pivotal role in the development of disability rights, with dance, theatre, movement and visual arts being employed as a means of expression by disabled people aimed at shifting the perceptions held by society at large. The power of the arts to impact change is widely discussed in the area of disability studies (Barnes 2003; Sandahl and Auslander 2005):

> Disability culture really does offer people a key to the basic process
> of identifying as a disabled person, because culture and identity
> are closely linked concepts. (Vasey 1991:11)

Disability activist Sian Vasey is suggesting here that there is empowerment associated with disability culture and the arts. To influence the societal perception of impairment through the creation and presentation of art works that relate to the experience of disability was important in challenging assumptions about who were the artists and who were the subjects. The ability of the arts to penetrate held views in society and to propel impairment into the public consciousness is key in moving forward debates around impairment and society on a broader scale. Performer and Disability activist Robert Softley Gale commented:

> What drew me to performance was this idea that you could change
> how people see you through what you do on stage. I guess that

> has always been my way of working, onstage and off, to give
> people a slightly different perspective of the world and of things
> around them. (Softley Gale 2013)

The medical model was widely rejected through the emergence of the disability rights movement and the development of disability arts. The themes of disability as illness or the oppression of people with disabilities were often used as stimuli for performed work (Baker, 1979, 1996, Shaban and Tomlinson 1980). Parodies of the stereotypes associated with this model were a strong message to society arising from the voices of disabled artists.

The rejection of the medical model, by disabled people and those invested in improving opportunities and equality for people with disabilities took place through a range of methods, including the creation of art works, verbal statements and protests. A rejection which led to the development of the Social Model of disability as a framework for how impairment is viewed within society. This model suggests that it is the organisation of society for able-bodied living that discriminates against disabled people (Finkelstein 1993:36) In contrast to the medical model of disability, impairment was no longer located in the individual, rather that the individual with a non-'normative' body was 'disabled' by an environment and culture of ableist hegemony.

2.2 The Social Model

The emergence of the social model was instrumental in increasing awareness of the requirement for equality of participation in society for those with disabilities, including participation in the arts and culture. Focussing specifically on dance, with the gathering momentum of the social model and the arrival of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995[9], society was forced to re-think its pre-suppositions of what makes a dancer. If dance associated with disability had formerly been categorised as 'therapeutic' or 'worthy' the strength gained from the force of the

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[9] Disability Discrimination act 1995, 2005. The Act became the Equalities Act in 2010.

development of the social model of disability (Oliver,1983) were in stark contrast to this.

The Disability Discrimination Act meant that it became illegal to exclude disabled people from participation in the arts on the grounds of their impairment. Governmental policy required adjustments to be made to ensure access for people with disabilities. For the arts, this was often problematic, and highlighted a pre-existing elitism within venues and long-standing organisations. In practical terms many traditional venues were far from accessible for a range of differing physicalities. Much of the architecture dates back to a time in history when the theatre was reserved for a small section of society, certainly not including those with impairment. Traditional dance establishments, for training and employment, were still operating in a framework of the 'perfect' and non-disabled body. The growing popularity of the social model clearly citing environment and a societal prejudice towards the 'norm' turned attention onto these establishments, and in turn, policy reform required them to make changes.

With a direct link to the field of contemporary dance there are several key events that should be noted in the development of the dance and disability sector. Candoco Dance Company was founded in 1991 by Celeste Dandeker and Adam Benjamin. In terms of shifting perceptions of disabled artists as leaders, Dandeker was pivotal to what was happening in dance. Trained in Dance at London School of Contemporary Dance, Dandeker became disabled whilst performing. Although the circumstances of this event are not central to the point here, it is perhaps useful to consider the unique nature of her position from non-disabled dancer to disabled dancer and leader. Was she herself restricted by a view of the 'ideal' dancer's body? It is possible that this position has afforded her a unique insight into the role of the disabled dance artist in the wider dance sector.

Dandeker and Benjamin were clear at the start of their work together that their interest was in dance as opposed to disability. With reference to politically informed models of disability this was timely. Their refusal on one level to be defined as 'different' and on another their rejection of the 'disability arts' label gave them a unique position. In refusing the label of disability they were demanding to be considered in the 'mainstream' of contemporary dance and in doing so avoided the

categorisation of 'community dance' a genre associated with amateur or participatory practice in dance. This gave Candoco an interesting stance. They could not be marginalised into making dance for disabled people, nor did they conform to the ideologies existing around the 'normative' dancer's body.

Candoco's position aligned the company with the social model of disability. At the beginning of their work as a repertory company they performed in a range of venues through a combination of adaptation by venue and compromise on their part. As a collective of disabled and non-disabled dancers they were openly rejecting archetypal beliefs existing in the contemporary dance sector and in society in general. A sentiment supported by Dandeker-Arnold who commented, 'from the start I knew we (Candoco) had to be accepted in the mainstream' (Dandeker 2001)

In broad terms the social model of disability provided a framework, which offered the potential for disabled artists to develop as leaders. I will aim to show in subsequent chapters the extent to which this potential has been realised. The model attempted to disassociate impairment from 'illness' or 'frailty' or as something to be 'fixed', and brought to public attention the possibility that it is our pre-conceptions in dance that are limiting to aspiring disabled dancers.

One major impact of this model on dance relates to training for disabled dancers. With the Disability Discrimination Act in place it was no longer acceptable to turn students away on the grounds of their physicality. If society was the 'disabling' factor to the individual then it was expected that adjustments both to dance spaces and attitudes to training had to be made.

With this need for adjustment came a response from dance organisations and training institutions that there was a requirement to examine current provision both in practical terms and in terms of delivery modes? of training and education. Many practitioners working in dance education and training were looking to the social model of disability for guidance on best practice relating to access and development for disabled dancers. The combination of the emergence of the social model of disability and the Disability Discrimination Act resulted in some changes. In particular, there was an increase in accessible dance spaces meaning that opportunities for dance education for disabled people were greater than in previous years in the dance sector. Evidenced here by an excerpt from a report

commissioned by Independent Dance[10] and produced by Candoco associate artists Charlotte Darbyshire and Stine Nilsen[11]:

> Based on our belief in the social model of disability… with our particular focus on the provision of dance education and training our aim is to provide a framework, which dance technique teachers can use for their own teaching and class structures. (Darbyshire and Nilsen 2002)

In a political environment within which physical barriers were starting to be removed and attitudinal barriers were shifting a review of changing perceptions of dance and disability was necessitated.

The emergence of the social model of disability was instrumental in raising awareness of the need for equality of opportunity and access for disabled people and providing the 'big idea' (Hasler 1993:16) for the development of people with disabilities. It is an ideology that has received criticism, emerging primarily from the voices of people with impairments. Academic and disability advocate Tom Shakespeare offered a critique of the model thus:

> The very success of the social model is now its main weakness. Because it is such a powerful tool, and because it was so central to the disability movement, it became a sacred cow, an ideology that could not easily be challenged. (Shakespeare 2002:6)

There was a narrative emerging through this critique, which sees the social model as dogmatic and overly simplistic. What emerged was the same simplicity that originally challenged the medical model, suggesting that understanding can be categorised into medical intervention or the eradication of obstacles facing disabled people.

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[10] An artist-led organisation offering training and support to professional dancers

[11] Candoco employs a network of associate artists to deliver teaching and training outside of the repertory programme. The paper was produced prior to Nilsen's appointment as artistic co-director of the company

This perception of the medical model as oppressive and the social model as liberating is one that has developed over the last 15 years and has also informed policies and legislation surrounding disability. Linked to the rising voice of the disabled people's movement the social model of disability represented significant changes in the status of people with disabilities. The proliferation of a framework that rejected an ideology wherein impairment required a cure was key to shifting the role of disabled people in society. This rejection of the medical model called for increased opportunities for employment (Equalities act 2010:22), improved access to education (Equalities Act 2010:58) and a structure, which enabled independence for people with impairment. The radical change from an understanding of impairment as 'affliction' to a perception that separated the individual from the disability increased debate and analysis of disability in society.

Through this new ideology people with disabilities were now expected to gain employment and to access mainstream society. The provision of physical access and a strong legal framework focussed on equality meant that disabled people were further integrated into society as independent people with aspirations and capabilities.

The change from a narrative of impairment as 'sickness' to one of impairment as the fault of a disabling environment inevitably led to an increased presence of disabled people in society. It was no longer necessary to 'hide' impairment from public view. The archetypal image of a wheelchair user covering their legs in a tartan blanket whilst being 'pushed' was replaced by positive images of wheelchair users living active, independent lives.

In terms of leadership, it is undeniable that the transition from the medical model as dominant to the development of the social model impacted on the perception of disabled people as leaders. Now that impairment was not the 'fault' of the disabled person there followed a greater acceptance of the potential of people with disabilities to contribute to and benefit from the world around them. The social model, therefore, led to great changes to practical access and shifts in societal perceptions. It did however still position disablement as away from the 'norm'. Key criticisms of the model suggest that access is given to all 'in spite' of impairment and that

adjustments must be made to 'overcome' obstacles. Disability academic Colin Cameron highlights the problems of this in relation to perceptions of impairment:

> If the Social Model was put into practice and all the barriers around were removed to give equal access to employment, inclusive education, public transport, housing, leisure, information and so on, it would still be possible for impairment to be seen as a personal tragedy and for disabled people to be regarded and treated as victims of misfortune. (Disability Arts Online 2013)

There remained a connection between the social model and personal tragedy model of impairment where people with disabilities are seen as 'brave' or even as 'the object of comedy' (Cameron 2009). These are not attributes associated with leaders, and although significant practical changes had occurred and policies were in place the negative connotations of impairment still seemed to be a barrier to leadership.

2.3 The Affirmative Model

In their 2000 paper *Towards an Affirmation Model of Disability*, Disability Studies scholars, Sally French and John Swain introduced the term 'Affirmative Model of Disability.' Described as:

> A non tragic view of disability and impairment, which encompasses positive social identities, both individual and collective, for disabled people, grounded in the benefits of life-style and life experience of being impaired and disabled. (Swain and French 2000:569)

This theory sparked a key shift in discussion around impairment, which is on-going in current discourse. The model presents an ideology within which impairment

can be a positive experience. French and Swain's research offers a unique perspective on disability, not one that is an unlucky fact of life, or a problem arising from inaccessible environments. Their model is radical in its hypothesis that people born with or acquiring impairment can feel positive about their bodies and their lives. This is an important development in how disability and the lived experience of those with impairment are perceived. There is a central suggestion that a person with a non-normative body would elect to remain 'different' and benefit from their experience of impairment.

Within this model there is no suggestion of 'fixing' people or of removing obstacles. The affirmative model is grounded in a philosophy of self-verification and positive perceptions of the impaired body. It is of value to note that this perspective is one that can be seen as empowering to people with disabilities. In contrast to the medical and social models, it offers a 'real' perspective of the experience of impairment; it is not a theory borne out of legislation or devised by 'non - disabled' people holding positions of leadership. In rejecting the 'tragedy' model of disability, which could 'reflect a deep irrational fear of non- disabled people's own mortality' (Fawcett 2000:18); this framework offers greater potential towards leadership for people with disabilities. Characteristics such as self-belief, positivity and a celebration of ones own physicality and experience are far more aligned with leadership and power than in the ideas central to other models of disability.

However, criticisms of this model have included suggestions of idealism, or a lack of genuine critique through its focus on the positive aspects of impairment. As Cameron suggests 'There was a danger that the affirmative Model could be seen as being about how lovely it is to be disabled' (Cameron 2011). In his evaluation of the affirmative model, Cameron explains this further by suggesting it is a lack of a set criterion in French and Swains' paper that is potentially problematic. Relating this to the delivery of equality training, Cameron highlights the value of a clear definition of the model in this context.

In contrast to the medical and social models of disability the affirmative model does seem more philosophical in its offerings. There is little emphasis on classification of impairment or on regulatory standards for access. This has interesting implications relating to leadership and the status of the disabled person in

society. Without a narrow definition and an emphasis on self-belief and a challenge to normative assumptions, we are all invited to reflect upon our lived physical experience, irrespective of individual disabled or 'non-disabled' status. In celebrating and 'affirming' the unique ways of 'being' we are better positioned to understand difference and the experience of being different.

The affirmative model does not reject pre-existing frameworks of understanding, it follows on from the social model in its challenging of societal pre-conception of impairment. It also seems to take ownership of aspects of the medical model of disability in that there is no denial of impairment or difference, rather a call for recognition of the possibility of embracing this difference.

Returning to the question of how the models of disability might impact on leadership it might be argued that the reclaiming of the medicalization of impairment by those with disabilities is key to exploring leadership. In challenging the relationship of 'non' disabled doctor and 'disabled' patient a shift takes place. If the person with impairment rejects the attempts to be made 'normal' and instead openly 'enjoys' their experience of disability, this is far less oppressive than playing the role of the unfortunate individual at the mercy of the medical profession. Furthermore a sense of enjoying and feeling positive about disability impacts on how people with disability perceive themselves as 'whole', valuable and leaderful members of society.

Much of the thinking around the affirmative model emerges from the field of disability studies. It is useful therefore to evaluate the impact of this thinking on the wider academy and in turn on society in more general terms. It could be argued that we are led in our thinking around disability and impairment from the disability sector, for example the Office for Disability Issues, who work within government to 'support the development of policies to remove inequality between disabled and non-disabled people' (Office for Disability Issues n.d). The social model has become an accepted and widely used frame for understanding impairment in dance. This is a view supported by Kuppers who suggests;

>An analysis of disability as a social construction *and* an exciting
>starting point for new explorations of alignments of space and
>bodies, can be usefully employed to open up students'

> understanding of their own, specific bodies and bodily regimes, and
> their placement in our shared culture. (Kuppers 2010:129)

The subsequent emergence of the affirmative model forces a re-evaluation of this and is in some ways troubling to a shared knowledge of disability as a social construct, which could hinder progression and further understanding in the dance sector. Using the social model of disability, the dance sector has accepted that artists with impairment are disadvantaged by existing physical and attitudinal barriers (Aujla and Redding 2013). There is an acknowledgement that the social model as an epistemological frame has reverberations beyond the issue of disability (Kuppers 2000:119). Further to this acknowledgement the dance sector has endeavored to 'fit' dancers with impairment into existing modes of training and practice, demonstrated here by the partnership between Candoco and Trinity Laban:

> Candoco Dance Company and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of
> Music and Dance are working in partnership to achieve improved
> progression routes and greater access for disabled people into the
> dance profession, and to advocate for the importance of inclusive
> practice in enhancing creative endeavour. (Candoco Dance
> Company n.d)

The development of the affirmative model of disability challenges this position. The suggestion that the experience of disability is a positive one, furthermore that people with disability would not choose to 'erase' or ignore their impairment, impacts on the perception and position of the disabled dance artist. Within an affirmative model the disabled dancer does not wish to be 'absorbed' into a pre-existing culture in dance; their desire is to enter into dance on terms which allow for an exchange of knowledge and experience between what dance can give to people with disabilities and what disabled dance artists can give to dance.

2.4 Conclusion

There is a sense of progression in the models explored in this paper, with new theories emerging to feed and develop the ideas of previous ones. There are clear links between social, political and cultural events (Disability Discrimination Act, 1995; Equalities Act 2010) and the emergence of new frameworks of understanding. In a culture that widely accepts the social model of disability, ideas associated with the medical model seem oppressive and restrictive.

Throughout history we know that impairment, although affected by various social and environmental factors, has always existed as part of the human condition. It is our reaction and response to it that shifts and develops over time. What seems clear is that each model has some relevance to the experience of impairment. By rejecting the medical model are we alienating those people with impairment who are largely dependent on medical intervention in some way? If the social model cites environment as disabling, where is the lived experience of the impaired person in this picture? The affirmation model develops from the social model, but seems also to borrow from the medical model. There is no attempt to deny or hide impairment or indeed the 'realties' of disability, including medical aspects, the key is that the emphasis is on self-empowerment and control as opposed to care and therapy.

The dance sector has made significant shifts in its understanding of issues of impairment. By employing the key ideologies of the social model of disability, many organisations in dance are now fully accessible and attempts are being made to accommodate dancers with disabilities into training and the profession. What is clear is that although the opportunity is there, the number of disabled people working in dance is still notably low. This can be extended to highlight that progression into leadership positions for disabled dance artists (for example - choreographer, director, lecturer, producer) are significantly more limited than those for their non-disabled peers. The affirmative model of disability as proposed by Swain and French and subsequently brought into the domain of disability arts by Cameron seems to 'fit' with much existing understanding of arts and culture, emphasising individuality and the value of diversity. It is this alignment that offers a useful framework to the dance sector. The hierarchy of the medical model and the potentially intimidating nature of

the social model are easy to reject in dance and categorise as 'someone else's problem.' The more 'open' and questioning approach of an affirmation model of disability seems to share much with current thinking and practice in specific genres of dance. For example, within the realm of somatic dance practice in both performance and training contexts, there is an interest in exploring the individual dancer's experience and physicality, or of the potency of listening deeply to the body and being curious about the physical body (Eddy 2009:6).

Shifts away from didactic methods of interaction between student and teacher towards a more 'holistic approach' (Tsomponaki and Benn 2011:203) in dance training and practice could be aligned to the emergence of the affirmative model of disability; the paralells between these developments could inform how we understand dance and disability and in turn how we can improve progression into leadership. An increased interest arising from contemporary dance practice in the individuality and uniqueness of each dancer's body resonates strongly with a framework that highlights positivity around difference. A useful example of this is the re-staging of Trisha Brown's 1986 choreography *Set and Reset* by Candoco Dance Company in 2011 (*Set and Reset/Reset*), described as 'a negotiation between freedom and limitations – an exploration of possibility' by the dancers (Yager 2011).

Current dance practice embraces notions of the dancer as a 'whole' person, who brings to their practice, not just a body, but also her own lived experience of that body and all that makes her who she is. The affirmative model of disability seems to offer the opportunity to move debates in dance away from 'them and us' or 'disabled and non-disabled' and towards an ideology that holds body diversity central to its framework of understanding.

There is an element of over-simplicity in the analogy offered here, it is essential of course that the legacy of oppression of people with impairment and the strong normative culture, which exists in dance, are not negated. It would be unhelpful to suggest that this is an answer to improving access into dance and subsequent progression into leadership. There are many practical and perceptual barriers presenting to dance artists with disabilities, suggesting that we are all just 'different' could potentially de-value the experience and perspective of the impaired dancer. The affirmative model does not provide criteria for effective sharing of 'best practice'

for inclusivity; neither does it define impairment or disability. However, its highlighting of the individual lived experience of impairment based on ones self-perception rather than an idea of disability imposed by a normative culture shares much with an art form based on showcasing the capacity of the body for expression and exploration.

The next chapter will outline the methodological approaches underpinning this study; offering a rationale for specific modes of inquiry and tools for research.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The previous two chapters have started to build the critical framework for the thesis. This Chapter will build on this further by examining a range of methodological approaches and modes of inquiry from a range of perspectives, highlighting the methodology most appropriate for this research. Furthermore it will examine the key methods for gathering data in support of an in-depth interrogation of my research questions. The chapter will seek to offer a clear rationale for the choices made relating to methodological strategies, whilst also offering commentary on and analysis of key areas for consideration when undertaking research, including ethics, validity of findings and relevance of the research questions to a wider audience.

As outlined in chapters one and two, the thesis is focused on disabled dance artists and leadership with the aim of developing a new discourse that will facilitate greater understanding of the shifting roles of disabled people in dance. This focus means exploring the experiences and perceptions of disabled dance artists. It also involves investigating how disabled artists and their work are perceived by the dance sector in general and how this impacts on progression into leadership. These concerns have guided the research methodology. Methods will focus on gathering information relating to developments in this sector from its origins to current practice, this will include a scoping exercise, highlighting where work is happening and how this has been developed, making links between this work and the dance world at large. The next part of this chapter will discuss each of these approaches in detail.

3.1 Methodological Approaches

My investigation involves small-scale, people-centred research. In relation to appropriate methodological approaches for such research, sociologist and researcher Martyn Denscombe states that:

> Each choice brings with it a set of assumptions about the social
> world it investigates. Each choice brings with it a set of advantages
> and disadvantages. (Denscombe 2003: 3)

Denscombe usefully points out the value in acknowledging the relationship between selected methodology and the area of research. My chosen methodology and modes of research relate to my desire to explore the 'real' experiences and voices of disabled artists, including my own. My research is small-scale in nature, not only in terms of the number of respondents involved, but also small-scale in terms of the social world I am investigating. I will adopt a primarily qualitative methodology and it will be post-positivist in its approach. These are frameworks widely associated with arts-based research and there is a history and a relationship between this methodological approach and phenomenology as a theoretical framework. It is important to question this relationship throughout the research in an effort to limit assumption. The familiarity of this method could result in overlooking key data due to lack of scrutiny in relation to my own position as researcher. There is a danger that I may assume the answer through my prior examinations and experiences.

The research will however also draw briefly upon previously published quantitative research, which has measured activity and practice in the dance and disability sector. I will make a composite analysis of these papers and use the findings to make comparisons with my own work. There is an emphasis in my study on phenomenological inquiry, as the research is concerned with an examination of the experiences of disabled people training and working in dance. The research methodology should be appropriately positioned to interpret these findings and in turn allow space and possibility for reflection and re-interpretation from both myself as researcher and from the participants.

3.2 Exploring From Within: Person Focussed Research

By examining the experiences of individuals key to this area of practice I will draw on ethnographic methods. Ethnography as a methodology is appropriate for my study as it can be re-interpreted and re-contextualised in various ways in order to deal with particular circumstances (Hammersley 2007:4). This will allow for differentiated approaches in my encounters with research participants.

The ethnographic fieldwork associated with this aspect of the research will include interaction with disabled dance artists and those involved in the dance and disability sector. This fieldwork will necessitate some detailed definition of the research group. Defining disability and also the genre or genres of dance I will use as foci for the study will also be necessary. As a disabled dancer I am indigenous to this cultural group, therefore my experience and subsequent reflections of the research will offer valuable insight.

The study will also be informed by anthropological methodologies, using the perspective of studying certain cultural and social groups. The research will propose that disabled people working in dance can be seen as and therefore researched as a defined cultural group or invented community (Sklar 2000: 70). As detailed above this cultural group will be defined in the early stages of the research.

Drawing upon my own experiences as artist-researcher is a significant feature of the study. In doing so the research undertakes elements of autobiographical methods of research. My prior experience and current practice within the dance and disability sector provide a valuable source. Framing my work in dance within the context of my research enables me to examine key questions and 'test' them in real situations relevant to my study. Researchers of primary education Edwards and Talbot offer a definition for this strategy for action research, describing it as:

> Individuals engaged in researching through structured self-reflection, aspects of their own practice, as they engage in that practice. (Edwards & Talbot 1994:75)

The notion of self-reflection in the broader context of research is widely associated within educational practice, by using reflection as a kind of improvisation, inventing and testing in the situation (Schön 1990: 5). There is a useful link here with practice-led research in the arts. If we explore how the practice we as artist/practitioners undertake on a regular basis informs our perceptions and in turn how what we think and feel impacts on our practice, we are ideally positioned from a stance as researcher to scrutinise key questions and issues relating to our field of work.

In terms of methods most appropriate to the research, working within a critical framework, which is both qualitative and interpretative, the study uses a range of methods to allow for greater interpretation and to take into account the diverse positions, and viewpoints of the participants involved. Given that these positions are transitional the research needs to be able to accommodate space for reflection, afterthought and shifting viewpoints.

3.3 Conversations and Observations: Presenting and Re-Presenting the Voice of Disabled Artists

Case studies form a substantial part of the research, including longer-term case studies, whereby researcher interviews and conversations take place over a period of time, allowing a relationship to form between researcher and participant. I acknowledge that research, which seeks to explore experience and perception, will benefit from an environment of 'trust' which allows participants to speak openly and to feel an ownership of their contribution to the findings. Anthropologist, Geyla Franks provides a valuable insight into her research methods. As outlined In *Venus on Wheels* (2000) she describes a key moment in her cultural biography of Diane DeVries, a woman born in 1950 without arms and legs, in Long Beach, California:

> Although conducting research in any formal sense was the furthest
> from my mind that Easter Sunday, such experiences provided
> valuable information about who Diane and I were. This information
> was not based on identifying traits that already existed in us, but
> through the joint creation of a relationship. (Franks 2000: 106)

This proximity of researcher and participants will be central to aspects of my research; within the context of research ethics it will be essential to the validity of the study that ethical processes and frameworks are accounted for as my 'encounters' with participants in the form of interviews and observations move from sociable to researchable. Observation will be key throughout the study. As research, which is concerned with both theory and practice, it is expected that in addition to talking to

participants throughout the research, observing their practice will offer a unique and important perspective. This clearly highlights and takes account of non-verbal articulation of ideas and perceptions. In relation to examining the role of the disabled dance artist, author and researcher Marilyn Arsem offers a useful perspective, suggesting that.

> It will be of value to witness and reflect upon their (research participants) practice from the perspective of observer, taking the stance of researcher/observer to see how the work operates and what was learned. (Arsem 2009: 206)

3.4 Leadership in Action: Practice as a Mode of Reflective Inquiry.

This study also acknowledges the use of practice as a tool for exploration. There are two primary strands in need of consideration here, Practice as Research (PAR), and Practice Based Research (PBR). The latter describes research wherein the researcher uses practice (their own or the practice of others), as a means of testing a theory or examining a hypothesis. Associated findings are then presented in a more 'traditional' format separately from the practice. PBR (practice based research) has become commonplace across arts and science research, and contributes to many areas from the medical sciences to spectatorship studies (Riley and Hunter 2009:xvii).

Practice as research (PAR) moves away from the segregation of research and findings, suggesting a new way of research wherein the practice and the findings are intrinsically linked.

Research in the context of PAR is often presented as live or filmed performed work. This mode of research has grown in popularity as arts practitioners develop more research enquiries that are disseminated through their practice, so is seen as a more 'organic' fit to the research subject avoiding the potential difficulties of 'fitting' the findings to the research which has taken place through practice. Researcher and theatre studies scholar, Robin Nelson advocates the development and recognition of PAR in wider research contexts, suggesting that:

Typically, the visual arts, including screen media, produce
(relatively) stable objects, literature produces book-based
publications and music frequently has scores, the practices of other
performing arts leave only traces. Where some form of durable
record is institutionally required of research findings, the
documentation of practice, might, at worst, displace the thing itself.
(Nelson 2013:6)

As Nelson suggests, criticism of this method is that findings are often hard to
quantify and are highly subjective. It is a relatively new development in the field of
research and is still compared widely to traditional methods of sharing research
findings. This comparison is particularly prominent in UK Higher Education research
settings wherein findings generated in practice-based studies have a direct
application to practice (Dodd and Epstein 2011:xvii). In UK research contexts,
models producing measurable practice-based findings are dominant to research
findings presented within a practice itself. A view supported by Nelson who opines
that for some established arts scholars, PAR is not accepted as a respectable
methodology (Nelson 2013:4). Advocates of PAR, including those involve in the early
developments in this field, would argue that comparing is an obsolete position
suggesting that:

PAR must be validated within a new framework. Highlighting the
need to articulate how our practice as research stands up against
the fixed set of paradigms of traditional research. (PARIP 2005)

Although widely referred to in research contexts, there is inconsistency in the
use of PAR in formal UK academic settings. In an environment often focused on
evidence based research, a methodology where 'findings' are far removed from
those associated with traditional research, also one which is difficult to quantify, can
be seen as less 'valid' and lacking in knowable 'data'. There is an interesting link
between a hierarchy of 'traditional' research methods and the position of the disabled

dance artist as leader. Academic environments that resist alternative modes of research dissemination: privileging existing methods of validating research findings, contradict the requirement to consider the individual researcher and her particular needs or preferences. PAR offers an opportunity to foreground the practice and experiences of the disabled artists in a way that rejects the influence of the non-disabled researcher. By offering the practice of disabled artists as researchers and not solely as research subjects their practice can be perceived as more autonomous and therefore leaderful.

My research borrows from each of these aforementioned models. The case study and personal reflection aspects of my study offer a 'translation' (Nelson 2013:4) of findings from being immersed in the practice of others and of my observations resulting from my own practice. I use practice as a mode of inquiry to explore my questions relating to disabled dancers and leadership. These findings are presented in a traditional framework of a written thesis submission; they are borne out of practice, but are positioned for reading and interpretation away from that practice.

Conversely, my thesis includes a film as part of the submission. The film includes both documentation of my working process and excerpts of public performances, it is framed by and at the same time frames my choeographic practice and research in dance. It is not my intention that this work is offered in support of the written thesis; rather, the film is intended as research into leadership for disabled dance artists in its own right. The creation of the film and subsequent analysis and reflection are my practice and the film is located within the context of my overall study as demonstrable Practice-as-Research based in and around my personal progression into leadership in dance.

3.5 Shared Voices: Defining the Artist-Researcher-Participant Relationship

There is some resonance with participatory action research within this study, primarily resulting from the 'research community' featured in the exploration. This is

made apparent by my existing position and experience within this community, many of the participants are known to me and a non-research relationship pre-exists. It is therefore inevitable that the participants will have an informal role as co-researchers. An important distinction to make here is that although the cultural stance of the participants and their link to me as researcher will inform the study directly the research is not a collaborative process. The findings potentially offer a shared perspective or voice resounding from the community, but this voice will be formed through the findings as presented by myself as one individual researcher.

There is limited existing statistical data that relates to access into and engagement in dance by disabled people and to disabled artists positioned as leaders in dance. This research will question why we need to scope the sector in the first instance and how scoping in the context of dance participation provokes philosophical questions relating to dance participation such as; What are the physical and attitudinal barriers confronting disabled dancers? And is there an accepted norm relating to who can participate in dance? My research acknowledges, but will move away from attempting to summarise the current landscape of UK dance and disability by enumerating the number of disabled learders in the sector. Rather, my research is based on empirical evidence rooted in my experience as a disabled dance artist-researcher, which indicates that disabled people are in a small minority in leadership positions in dance (as previously detailed in section 1.0).

The question of how the work of disabled dance artists is perceived is central to my research, and will be explored in parallel to how disabled dance artists experience working in the dancsector. Case study participants were an important part of the research. As part of a semi-structured interview process, each was asked a series of questions, for example; Are you a leader? Who are the leaders in dance? and What does a leader look like? The aim of asking the same questions to each participant was to enable me to compare and analyse the responses to these questions. The small number of prescribed questions provided a framework from which each respondent could offer their own experiences and expand without the constraints of an over-structured questionnaire. This strategy enabled me to respond to the participants in the moment of observation or conversation, therefore inviting a more authentic and personalised response to the research. The overall rationale

behind the research is to highlight strategies for development and increased leadership within the disabled dance community and in turn to identify issues relating to ownership of work by disabled dance artists.

3.6 True Stories: Testing the Validity of The Findings

Research, which is concerned with the stories and personal journeys of the individual, brings with it many issues impacting on the research process and any concluding findings. The research described in this paper has an ethnographic focus through the in-depth and extended periods of observation and participation with the dancers being studied. It seeks to give voice to the individuals who are at the centre of this research and gain insight into their 'real life' experience of working in dance as a person with a disability. Stinson et al offer a useful example of research in this field in their study of young women wherein they aimed to find a methodology that would retain the uniqueness of each person, and at the same time reveal larger issues (Stinson et al 1990: 4). The research undertaken by Stinson recognises the underrepresentation of women in dance and she employed qualitative methods of research, interviews, observation, hermeneutic modes of analysis to highlight how research respondents experience dance. It is the privileging of the participant voice that resonates with my research and my aim to present the artist experience at the fore of the findings.

For reasons previously cited, it is my own experiences and position in the dance sector that have led me to the research. It is this personal motivation that will inform strategies for exploration of the questions being asked through the research. Whilst there is clear value in personal and anecdotal research in a specified area or culture, it is important to differentiate between life story and autobiographical research. It is not the aim of this study to re-tell my individual journey into and through dance, rather it is to cite my own experience in the broader contexts of dance and disability, including an exploration of cultural, social, historical and political factors and their impact on the subject. Consequently, the additional inclusion of auto-ethnographic methodologies in the research will offer a unique and personal perspective. Using personal narratives and self-reflection will allow me to analyse my own experiences,

feelings and perceptions. Cultural anthropologist Bryant Keith Alexander offers a useful comment on the value of auto-ethnography describing this methodology as:

> Allowing a space of reconciliation between objective facts and emotional responses to critically reflected upon experience, on what we know and how we know it. (Alexander 2011: 101)

As with all research the question must be addressed of how 'valid' or 'reliable' the findings of the study are. This is particularly pertinent when undertaking research with an emphasis on interpretative methodology and associated tools for research as there are limited offerings resulting from this type of research in the form of 'hard' readable data, associated with statistical research. Findings resulting from this method might be seen as subjective and therefore hard to measure or quantify and therefore lacking in rigour. Professor of Psychology Richard Morehouse poses the following question regarding the validity of interpretative research methods;

> What is the relationship of the researcher to issues of values? The study of human action is an implicit study of the values that direct action and to be blind to those values is to inevitably misinterpret action. (Morehouse 2011:3)

The aim of my research is thus not to accumulate 'knowable' or quantifiable findings. It is likely that my research questions will lead to further questions relating to my chosen area of exploration. I do not expect to find simple answers through my investigation and I am prepared to discover that findings will not offer straightforward solutions. The research aims to engage with people and their practice through human contact, in the application of research methods such as interviews, case studies, observation and practice. With this in mind it should be clearly noted that any research that takes its focus from human experience, thoughts and perceptions, would produce findings that are open to interpretation from a range of sources, from the participants themselves, from me as researcher and from the reader of the findings.

Acknowledging this ontological stance requires me as researcher to keep in mind and have regard for the subjectivity and potentially transient nature of the research findings. It is vital to understand that where researcher, participant and reader is in our thinking or reflections at any given time, it will impact upon how we respond to and read or understand what we are being asked or presented with. As a researcher I am striving for authenticity in my exploration. It is the 'real-ness' of these observations and reflections that are key to this research. In order to examine questions relating to the dance and disability sector and in turn expose new areas for research and new questions, it is my belief that research must engage with the 'felt' and 'lived' experiences of people engaged in some way in this genre of dance.

In practical terms I will endeavour to maintain validity in my research and findings, through ensuring that the opportunities I offer for reflection are open and fair and that I offer as much as possible the same questions in the same way to all those involved. I will also ensure that the reader is made aware of the aims and methodologies of the research. It is inevitable that our own interpretation will inform how we see or read research presented to us and how it may impact on our felt sense of self. It is my firm view that it is this interpretation that gives this particular research its rigour.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As my research draws primarily on the experiences, thoughts, observations and perceptions of people, it is essential that ethical considerations remain at the forefront of the study. Most research under the broader definition of anthropology or ethnography concerning human behaviour or lived experience will highlight how explorations have been underpinned with a reference to an ethical framework, emphasising the need to consider the effects the research might have on the participants (Wilson 2009: 67). In more specific terms, my research will provide a clear outline of the overall study, including wider research; it will also seek consent from participants. This information will be made accessible to all those involved both in terms of offering opportunities to see the research aims, and also in ensuring that

this is made available in a range of formats (printed, electronic, braille, large print etc.)

In ethnographic research it is important to consider the transparency of the study, and of the researcher. Traditional anthropologic explorations were often undertaken from a covert position, observing cultures from a peripheral stance. There is a suggestion of cultural hegemony here, conjuring the image of the white researcher exploring tribal culture. In relation to my own research and much contemporary anthropological and ethnographic study it is the case that, as researcher I will be embedded in the research, and in part form the research itself. Therefore my research will take a clearly overt position aiming for transparency in my encounters with participants and potential participants.

To some extent this is problematic in undertaking clearly structured research. As a researcher who is essentially researching my own community, everything I do can be seen as research from a structured interview to a shared cup of tea. For example, a social meeting is likely to bring about reflections of interest to this research. It is these more naturalistic environments that offer a unique perspective for the study. In an attempt to address this, I have from the start of this research widely and openly advertised myself as a researcher. Being explicit in requesting permission in disclosing observations or commentary that arise outside of the 'formal' research will also address this potential issue. It is essential for the researcher to acknowledge that bias is inevitable in any ethnographic research. It is inevitable that my own experience and position will inform my interpretation of findings and in turn any presented findings will be open to the interpretation of the reader.

My aim is to provide an insight into both theory and practice relating to the current dance and disability sector. Through a broadly qualitative approach, it will focus primarily on people, their experiences, their perceptions and their aspirations and hopes regarding the future of this area of dance. By employing a range of methodological tools for research, it is envisaged that findings will offer a new and unique perspective on this sector of the dance community. This perspective will arise from a number of factors specific to this research including, for example the position of the researcher as a disabled dance artist/researcher. Research into inclusive dance undertaken by disabled artists is less prolific than research into this sector

carried out by non-disabled dance researchers with an interest in this area. This is perhaps inevitable given the relatively recent emergence of disabled dance artists who are training and working in the wider dance community. If disabled students, teachers, dancers and choreographers form a minority it seems logical that disabled dance researchers experience a similar situation. In addition to examining the experiences and views of people in the dance and disability sector, this research provides me with a personal opportunity to contribute to wider research from the perspective of a disabled dance artist thereby offering me potential progression into a position of leadership in dance.

My existing links with practice and with disabled dance artists provides a unique opportunity to discover how disabled people experience working in dance and in turn how they perceive notions of leadership in dance, and how this relates to their own journey as dancers and potential leaders. By using an ontological framework, based on my lived experience as a disabled dance artist, to underpin interviews, case studies and observed practice the research proposes to 'unpick' preconceptions that might exist in theory and practice relating to dance and disability, and present findings to the contemporary dance sector at large.

Finally, it is a core aim of this research that outcomes from a longitudinal study of key people and practice will be a valuable resource for the development of opportunities and progression for disabled dance artists. It has the potential to highlight obstacles towards leadership and make suggestions for greater access into leadership roles.

3.8 Informal Voices: Blogging as a Tool for Research.

The thesis includes extracts from my blogs and diarised accounts. These are intended to offer the 'true' and 'immediate' voice of the artist-researcher to the study. This method of qualitative inquiry reiterates my unique position as an indigenous member of a chosen research community. These offerings relate to both my observations of the case study participants and reflections of the practice used as a research tool within the study.

The colloquial nature of the blogs in the study invite the reader to interpret the 'lived' encounters of the research practice. As written contributions to the study the blogs endeavour to create a 'picture' of the research. The highly personalised method of writing also makes space for the researchers 'feelings' to be foregrounded in the study. In parallel this aspect of the research highlights the artist-researcher relationship to the participants of the study, which is central to the thesis making clear its potential contribution to a wider field of research.

The blogs will be italicised to clearly differentiate between these extracts and other writing in the thesis. It is acknowledged that the inclusion of 'informal' contributions may impact on the rigour of the study, not least because writing of this nature is largely subjective and based on author supposition. However, my view is that the contrasting textual strategy that arises from the inclusion of the observational blogs offers an important personalised and 'first person' perspective to the overall research.

3.9 Conclusion: Thoughts on the Future for Disabled Leaders in Dance

Much existing research into this area of dance offers perspectives on access to training and access to dance in general terms, as students, dancers, as audience. This research will ask, what are we creating access for? It will use in-depth examination to reveal the experiences of disabled dancers working today and how their views are valuable in constructing an argument about the changes needed to rethink what leadership means within the sector. By examining the recent past in comparison to the present situation, the study will also consider how and why rethinking 'who' leads will have a bearing on what the dance and disability sector might look like in the future. The examination will also attend to the position of disabled dancers within the broader context of the dance community.

The increased visibility of disabled people in dance has led to greater opportunities being offered in a range of settings, and there are certainly more disabled dance artists working and training in dance than there have been in previous decades. My study is focussed on exploring a perceived discrepancy between the hiatus in the dance community 20 years ago and the number of

disabled leaders (choreographer, teacher, lecturer, researcher etc.) in dance. Through engaging with this rationale the study will ask: Where are the disabled leaders? It is expected that findings from this examination will inform and develop current theory relating to the dance and disability sector, through providing forums for sharing practice and theory and also through working with relevant organisations and individuals. It is proposed that the outcomes of this research have the potential to extend discussion in this area, beyond the 'inclusive' dance community and offer a perspective and practical suggestions for the dance sector in general.

This chapter has offered a rationale for the selected research methods and interpretative modes of enquiry, including case studies, observations, practice-as-research and self-reflection. These methods are aimed at capturing and offering an analysis of the experiences and perspectives of disabled artists. The chapter has also identified ethical considerations of these methodological strategies, such as my proximity to research participants and assumed knowledge relating to the subject at the core of the study, and thus the requirement to acknowledge this within the research.

The following Chapter will offer an analysis of existing literature and resources that focus on Dance, Disability and Leadership. The review will include an examination of intersections between these fields of knowledge and practice. It will also highlight where the literature reveals disparities where there is particular reference to the disabled dance artist.

Chapter 4 – Literature Review

4.0 Introduction

Research concerning the intersection between dance and disability is almost exclusively produced from within an existing canon of established non-disabled academics and dance theorists. There is a value in noting the positions of the non-disabled researchers mentioned here: Margaret Ames has an established relationship with Wales-based *Cyrff Ystwyth* dance company a collective of disabled and non-disabled performers; Adam Benjamin is co-founder of Candoco Dance Company; Sarah Whatley is based at Coventry University, a leading institution in the exploration of dance and disability in HE contexts. American dancer and scholar Ann Cooper Albright experienced a temporary impairment upon which examples of her research are focused (Strategic Abilities: Negotiating the Disabled Body in Dance 1998). Study in this area has included analysis of the 'lived' experiences of disabled artists (Ames 2012 UK; Albright 1998 US) and commentary on the perception of the disabled body in dance (Whatley 2007, 2010). In addition to this there is a body of research, which is concerned with access into dance for people with disabilities and some limited work focussed on progression in dance for dancers with impairment (Benjamin 2001 UK; Whatley 2006 UK).

There are examples of research intersecting dance and disability by disabled academics originating from other genres of arts-based research. These include; Performance Art (Kuppers US), Disability Arts (Sandahl US, Shakespeare 1996, 2013) Theatre (Conroy 2009 UK), Music, Visual Arts (Seibers 2010 US). Some of these can offer insights and comparisons with the specific literature and practice that is situated within the general area of dance and disability. There remains a significant lack of resources specifically examining dance and disability that are produced by disabled authors researchers and practitioners.

This chapter will introduce research and thinking across different disciplines that offer some contextualisation for exploring the shifting position of the disabled dance artist. It will begin by reviewing some of the literature that has emerged from within the broad frame of dance studies. Discussion will consider the impact of health and wellbeing on dance in general terms, and specifically in the area of disability and dance, to explore how 'therapy' and 'therapeutic practice' have influenced

scholarship on this theme. I will then survey the writing that is primarily focused on pedagogy and training methods, to assess the value of this research for my own topic. The review will also look to writing that has emerged from related areas, including disability studies and performance studies, to provide an expanded view on the available literature in this field.

4.1 Access and Training: From Therapy to 'Inclusion'

Within the field of dance studies there is a body of research that engages with dance and disability. This research ranges from exploration of dance as a therapeutic practice and dance as rehabilitation, instructional writing for 'working with' dancers with disabilities, to research focussed on access into dance participation and training. More recently there has been some research exploring the development of 'inclusive' dance practice and progression of disabled dance artists.

There is a clear relationship between the development in the literature emerging from research relating to dance and disability and an increased presence in professional dance practice of disabled dancers (McGrath 2013; Williams 2015) demonstrating a shift towards recognising and celebrating the contribution to dance by disabled dance performers (Whatley 2007:1).

There is a notable transition from therapeutic focused 'manuals' for inclusion towards theory and practice that locates the rights of the disabled artist to equal access, as central to the research. In the earlier texts, which will be examined here, the narrative of the research is often one of care and the responsibility of the non-disabled practitioner to include the disabled participant. This is in some contrast to more recent research, which identifies the voice of the individual disabled dancer as key to advancing thinking and practice in this field.

The chronology of research into dance and disability illuminates the changing position of disabled dance artists, highlighting developments and disparities in the sector. It is also important to note that although evidence of scholarly research on this theme is comparatively recent, there is a documented body of practice available where engagement with dance and impairment is clear, for example, in the 1940s, American dancer and choreographer Marian Chace began to explore dance as a

therapeutic tool, focussing on the person dancing rather than the dance technique (American Dance Therapy Association 2015). Chace established Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) as a practice that emphasises the movement of the body (conscious and unconscious) as a physical approach to psychoanalysis and therapeutic work. Similarly in the UK, Dance teacher and author Veronica Sherborne (1922-1990) established *Sherborne Developmental Movement* in the latter part of the 20th century; a mode of teaching and working with movement that is both accessible, especially by people with minimal movement experience (Sherborne Association, UK n.d).

It is difficult to talk about a narrative relating to the development of dance and disability without considering DMT and its role in introducing ideas linking trauma and impairment. However, it must be noted that this thesis and much existing research into inclusive dance resists a link between therapeutic practices and dance including people with disabilities. Analysis of literature emerging from the field of DMT suggests a language that is synonymous with medical models (see Chapter 2.2) of impairment. The 'dancer' is often referred to as 'patient' with DMT positioned as a means of 'improving' dysfunction in the body and mind of the individual.

More recent literature on the theme of dance and disability emerging from the field of dance studies is often allied to questions of access into dance participation and training (Whatley 2006; Aujla and Redding 2013). This writing draws on teaching methods and pedagogical theory so is located as much in educational theory as dance studies. The new requirements introduced by legislative frameworks (see 2.3) led to literature that specifically addressed these issues and offered further thinking and possible strategies for inclusion (Benjamin, Whatley).

One of the first texts that specifically addressed inclusive training methods in dance and the experience of the disabled dance practitioner was Adam Benjamin's 2002 book *Making an Entrance – Theory and Practice for Disabled and Non-Disabled Dancers*. Writing as a choreographer and dance educator, Benjamin claims to reflect what was then a relatively new approach to dance, one which draws from experimentation and exploration of disabled and non-disabled people (Benjamin 2002: XVi). There is a suggestion in this introduction that this text offers a new perspective on access into dance. It is fed largely by Benjamin's role as co-

founder of Candoco Dance Company in addition to his pedagogic practice and inquiry in a range of settings. It is primarily an instructive text, which offers some philosophical theory on inclusion and impairment in particular relating to notions of the 'normative' body in dance. Benjamin borrows from historic events to offer an analogy for how we might think about the position of disabled people in dance. These examples range from Ancient Greek myths surrounding dance and the aesthetics of the dancer to current dance practices and the emergence of the disabled dance artist.

The book also includes structured practical tasks for teaching and learning in an inclusive environment (one which includes disabled and non-disabled dancers). Examples of these practical tasks include 'listening through touch' and 'counter-balances and chair tilts'*.* At the time of publication this was an important text, not least due to its position as part of a significantly limited canon of published work in this area. It was also a key work as it offered a theoretical framework for the practical work being created in different settings in dance, from dance studio to stage. From a socio-political perspective this text is interesting because when it was published it also responded to the requirement that existing scholars, teachers, practitioners and organisations should engage with the question of integration and equality of access. In many ways Benjamin had provided a 'guide' for inclusion in dance.

In the context of this study, Benjamin's text remains a useful resource and offers insight into the 'mood' of this particular moment in dance history. When examined through the lens of current practice however, it is notable for its omission of the disabled voice as a key contribution. It is possible to interpret this text as one 'non-disabled' author offering strategies for non-disabled practitioners to 'work with' disabled dancers. Although this aspect of the writing might be seen to be a weakness when the many developments in dance and disability and associated research are taken into account, there is still a value in understanding that at the time of its publication *Making an Entrance* was largely reflective of the position of the disabled dance artist.

Melanie Peter, author of *Making Dance Special* (2012) provides an interesting perspective on disabled people and dance. This text, similarly to Benjamin's but written a decade later, is an instructional guide and a call for greater access and

equality in dance training, education and practice. What is particularly useful for this thesis is how she describes the relationship between teacher/facilitator and dancer.

> It is all too easy to see limitations towards achievement in dance rather than potential, when faced with certain individuals experiencing physical disabilities, involuntary movement, lack of coordination, difficulties in organising their behaviour, limited symbolic understanding and so on. (Peter, 2012: X)

There is a distinct narrative of 'care' in this suggestion by Peter, the language of this text resonates with medical models of impairment apparent here in the listing of 'anomalies'. Furthermore, Peter describes the impairments as something 'experienced' by the individuals in question firmly locating the disability within a framework of impairment as affliction. This is compounded by the position of the dance facilitator as being 'faced' with individuals with disabilities in doing so they are automatically ranked as 'expert and novice' or to use a medical metaphor, 'physician and patient'.

It should be noted that this text proposes that dancers with disabilities can and should be included in dance provision, in particular dance in education and is based on a belief that learners of all abilities may find enjoyment and creative fulfilment and achievement in dance (Peter 2012:X). In addition to this, it is possible that Peter's quote above could be interpreted as a warning against negating the potential of disabled participants through assuming disability equates with limitation. This desire to provide access to and 'educate' those teaching dance in various settings, reveals a negation in this book of the disabled artist as leader, able to make decisions about his/her individual progression. There is also no consideration given to what 'involuntary movements' or 'lack of coordination' (Peter 2012:X) might do to inform and implement change in current ideologies of the 'norm' and 'traditional' in dance. The author's location within the field of Special Educational Needs should be noted. Her view on dance is from this perspective rather than as dance as an art form in its own right.

Dance scholar Sarah Whatley extends on the theme of access and participation in her 2007 paper *Dance and Disability: the Dancer, the Viewer and the Presumption of Difference.* This text introduces the notion of perception as key to understanding the role of the disabled dance artist. Whatley proposes two key themes in this text, firstly preconceptions of the disabled body and the influence of this on practical dance training provision within the context of the UK Higher education system and secondly the processes of viewing and interpreting the impaired body in dance.

In this text Whatley engages with both dance studies and disability studies in her exploration of the challenges faced by mainstream tutors in delivering dance techniques for disabled students (Whatley 2007:6). There is an important distinction here between this paper and Benjamin's book. Whatley is challenging the view that access can be provided through practical tasks and accessible facilities alone, by employing and analysing existing theory in the areas of dance and disability she is forcing the reader to consider the societal and philosophical considerations that inform normative body hegemonies in dance training.

Whatley's paper marks a shift in scholarly thinking around dance and disability, from those offering strategies for access and participation largely facilitated by non-disabled practitioners towards research that uses an epistemological framework to examine non-physical barriers to dance training and practice. This is particularly evident in Whatley's expressed desire to consider the perceptions of the disabled student who can so often feel silenced through their struggle to attempt to conform to normative representations of the dancing body (Whatley 2007:6). An important caveat of this work is that it is written from a non-disabled perspective, thus there is an assumption that the audience shares this stance. The 'difference' is located in the performers and not accounted for in potential viewers of the dance.

4.2 Disrupting the Norm: Non-Conforming Bodies in Dance

Literature that examines the binary paradigm (Albright 1998:190) of 'accepted' bodily norms in dance offers a valuable perspective to this thesis. The positioning of the disabled body in dance as challenging to pre-conceived ideas of a 'standard'

corporeality provides a framework for understanding the progression of the disabled dancer and the role of disabled artists as leaders in dance.

There is a body of research situated within community dance practice[12] that is useful for this doctoral study. Much of this work offers an evaluation of practice including that by performers with disabilities. As with existing scholarly research, this area is also dominated by non-disabled authors discussing work either from an objective position or subjectively as 'maker' or facilitator. This is perhaps inevitable, given that disabled academics writing about dance are not yet commonplace in the academy. Theatre and performance lecturer Margaret Ames frames her 2012 paper around the practice of a learning disabled performer and her experience of observing his choreographic process. Within her findings she offers a detailed description of the individual dancer's body and physical aesthetic:

> Living with CP can be very tiring. Edward Wadsworth requires support. When out of his wheelchair his mobility is restricted. He has restricted movement in his pelvis, legs, and feet. His upper body is not strong. His arms and hands, shoulders and spine are contracted and stiff. His weak core muscles mean he is usually slumped and his posture is pulled to the right in a marked leaning twist (Ames 2012:148)

Ames presents this account of her research subject to draw the reader's attention towards notions of normative aesthetics in performance and the potential of an 'alternative' body to inform a 'new' bodily or dancerly (Kuppers 2009:119) aesthetic. In relation to my own study this perspective is useful in terms of exploring aesthetics in dance. There is also a value in noting the voice of the researcher in relation to the 'silent' disabled subject.

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[12] Community dance is largely a UK phenomenon defined by UK based organisation 'People Dancing' as:

> Community dance artists working with people. What makes it 'community dance' as distinct from other kinds of participatory dance activity, is determined by:
> - The contexts in which it takes place (where, with whom and why)
> - Approaches to dance practice that are informed by a set of beliefs and philosophies.
> - The values that it embodies and promotes.' (People dancing n.d)

Carrie Sandahl offers a useful view on the placement of the disabled dancer within the context of normative viewings. In relation to the emergence of the disabled dancer she suggests that exploring these phenomenological experiences can suggest new movement vocabularies and can portray views of the world not normally seen in the theatre (Sandahl 2002: 28)

The idea that the disabled body in dance has the power to inform traditional ontologies of the dancing body is central to this study. This is a previously under-developed area in existing research. The aim here is thus to subvert the position of the disabled dance artist as in need of facilitation and initiation into existing taxonomies or simply a metaphor for otherness (Sandahl 2002:18) and propose that in-fact the impaired dancer can improve, develop and enrich established dance theory and practice.

4.3 Performing Disability: Readings of the Disabled Body on Stage

There is a small, but significant body of literature and research produced by dance scholars (Auslander, Kuppers, Sandahl) examining the relationship between disability and performance. These are a useful resource for this study. This work extends beyond issues of access and participation and explores intersections between impairment and performance. As a body of research it sits within both the fields of dance and disability studies. In *Bodies in Commotion, Disability and Performance* (2008) Phillip Auslander and Carrie Sandahl present a series of essays across a range of disciplines from performance and dramatic literary studies to aesthetics, and gender and disability. There are a number of useful perspectives presented in Auslander and Sandahl's text that support my research, particularly those texts by disabled scholars who write about performance itself, for example Smith's exploration of body aesthetics in performance (p.73-85) and Garland Thomson's contribution on performance and the dynamics of staring (p.30-40).

Petra Kuppers is a prolific researcher across the fields of disability and performance studies. As an academic, educator and performer, Kuppers' position in research and performance gives an insightful perspective on the role of the impaired performer. Kuppers suggests that for disabled artists performance can be a vehicle

for exploring how we can gain visibility. She locates performance as an entry into the public realm making ourselves present in our social environment (Kuppers, 2008:153). By employing the pronoun 'we' Kuppers clearly locates herself as both disabled and a performer. As there are limited examples of scholarly practice and research led by people with disabilities in dance, Kuppers offers a useful model from within the field of performance studies and disability that has the potential to inform research concerned specifically with dance practice and the shifting role of the disabled dance artist.

4.4 New Ideologies: A Disability Studies Perspective

There is a body of research positioned across the fields of disability studies and disability cultural studies that offers an examination of people with disabilities from a historical perspective. The aspect of this research that is of specific value to this study focuses on the role of the disabled artist throughout history. Naomi Baker, lecturer in early modern English literature in her discussion of 18th century 'freak show' performers, suggests audiences expressed widespread delight and interest in the irregularity and variety of nature (Baker 2013).

Research in this area gives an insight into shifting perceptions of disabled performers and can inform current thinking around the place of the impaired performer in current practice and research. These examples of disabled artists from our shared cultural history have, according to Kuppers, the potential to act as strange fore parents to today's disabled performers (Kuppers, 2003: p34).

The notion of cultural history informing dance and performance works of today is key to this study. Exploring how disabled performers were perceived, talked and written about throughout periods of history provides a valuable opportunity to consider current perceptions and historically constructed identities of impaired performers. It will be shown that the perception of impairment is central to thinking about dance and disability. Indeed, the relationship between the viewer and the performer is instrumental to the position of the disabled dance artist. These exchanges have the potential to empower or inhibit the progression of the disabled dancer. Scholar Rosemarie Garland Thompson describes the moment of viewing as

an ocular response to what we don't expect to see (Garland Thomson, 2009:3). In *Staring – How we look* she presents a clear picture of staring as a shared encounter where a narrative is implied by each party. She draws upon theories of social constructionism, suggesting that in the moment of staring we are informed by social and cultural factors that impact on our perceived idea of 'difference' or 'otherness.' Garland Thompson uses examples from the arts to exemplify this theory:

> By presenting her body before a viewer, the visibly disabled performance artist generates the dynamic of staring, the arrested attentiveness that registers difference on the part of the viewer. In the social context of an ableist society, the disabled body summons the stare, and the stare mandates the story. The stare, in other words, evokes the question, "What happened to you?" This stare-and-tell ritual constitutes disability identity in the social realm.
> (Garland-Thomson 2000: 335)

Prolific disability scholar Tom Shakespeare identifies Garland Thomson's text as a sophisticated cultural analysis (Shakespeare 2014:52). However, he offers a critique of the work, suggesting that although there is significant value in performance as a tool for challenging the dominant 'norm', Garland Thomson's book negates the everyday lived experience of staring. He postulates that staring at people who have visible differences or impairments is part of disabling social relations (Shakespeare 2014:52).

There are strong links in the field of disability studies to impairment and social status. Consideration of social hierarchy in relation to the impaired performer must therefore be considered in an exploration of leadership. In order to reflect upon the position of the disabled dancer in current practice it is essential to consider where disabled people are located within a societal hierarchical framework.

The specific aspect of this research that will draw upon existing literature from the field of disability studies, is that which is concerned with 'giving voice' to disabled artists. This is in recognition that although there have been shifts in both practice and scholarly research the 'real lived' experiences of dancers with impairment remains

relatively unheard. The lived experiences of disabled artists are often viewed through a 'normative dance' lens. The impact of a lack of representation by people with disabilities is highlighted here by academic and disability activist James L Charlton in his 2000 text *Nothing about us Without us.*

> Most analyses of why people with disabilities have been and
> continue to be poor, powerless and degraded have been mired in
> an anachronistic academic tradition that understands the 'status' of
> people with disabilities in terms of deviance and stigma. This has
> been compounded by the lack of participation by people with
> disabilities in these analyses' (Charlton 2000: 22)

Although Charlton's research is concerned with social, cultural and political issues relating to disability and disability rights on a global scale, there is a value in examining this perspective within a dance framework. The voice of the disabled artist is historically absent from the art form, silenced by a canon of established voices in the sector. The work of Charlton and others in the area of disability rights can offer insight into models of theory and practice that bring the voices of impaired people into our mainstream understanding. Thus enabling them to affect change in a way that is meaningful to their own experience.

4.5 Intersecting Dance and Disability

Although research into the relationship between disability studies and dance is of great value to my own research and it must be noted that this work has instigated debate, which has brought the disabled performer firmly into the collective consciousness of academic practice. There remains a lack of dance research that engages with the progression and position of the impaired dancer who is not actively positioning themselves within disability arts or disability culture. This thesis postulates that progression in dance for dance artists with impairments is often limited to practice that affiliates itself to the afore-mentioned disability centred fields of theory and practice.

There is a significant shortage of literature produced by disabled and non-disabled researchers and scholars that focuses on dance as a singular art form and disabled performers working or aspiring to work in the form. Debate including disability in dance rarely occurs within the context of 'mainstream' dance research and is largely marginalised to disability-centred practices.

Disability as a research area in the context of scholarly interrogation is a comparatively emergent field. There are limited examples of research into dance and disability emerging from the field of disability studies, inclusive of cultural disability studies and critical disability studies. In relation to my research the literature originating from disability studies is useful as a framework for understanding the relational contexts of dance and disabled people. There is also value in interrogating theories relating to the history of disability and philosophical perspectives on perception and societal positioning of people with disabilities.

Within the area of cultural disability studies there has been some engagement with notions of inclusion in dance for dancers with disabilities. My research into the intersections between disability studies and dance studies has indicated a tension between the two fields. Dance as an art form that seems to subscribe to the hegemony of normative bodies and modes of practice is relatively absent from disability-led research. There is a body of research that links disability culture and the disability arts movement, but within this work there is little mention made of the professional dance sector.

4.6 Leadership

The development of leadership roles undertaken by disabled dance artists is central to this thesis. There is a range of available literature focussed on the theme of leadership emerging from both commercial and scholarly sources. The commercial and business sector has offered instructional guides to 'effective' leadership and strategies for undertaking leadership positions. A prominent example of this is the research and writing of author Jim Collins relating to 'Level 5 leaders'; described as an executive in whom genuine personal humility blends with intense professional will (Collins, 2005). Collins' use of the term 'executive', which is

synonymous with the commercial sector and rarely employed in the arts sector, indicates clearly the field of this research.

Collins postulates that highly effective leadership is based less upon hard-driving, egocentric personalities (Collins, 2005) and more upon shyness and humility. Collins implies a rejection of the stereotypically effective leader as strong and ruthless by suggesting that the most successful leaders are often those that have 'overcome' trauma, either through socialization, illness or impairment. In relation to this study Collins describes one scenario wherein a current 'level 5 leader' lost a finger whilst at work. The story goes that he went to class that evening and returned to work the very next day (Collins 2005). Although Collins' inclusion of physical impairment here is incidental, his employment of this to exemplify successful leadership 'in spite of' as opposed to 'because of' a disability, is in many ways unhelpful when thinking about the progression of disabled people into leadership roles. There remains some value in Collins' suggestion that physical trauma or impairment could impact on leadership style.

The literature originating from academic research draws largely upon philosophical theories of leadership and offers an examination of the perceptions of leadership and the role of leaders in society. In this body of literature there are explorations into the meaning of leadership and influencing factors. This is a challenge to the aforementioned business model of leadership as a tangible and measurable phenomenon. Dennis Tourish, an expert in Leadership and Organisation Studies suggests that leadership can best be viewed as a fluid process emerging from the constituted interactions of myriad organisational actors. It is not a finished category, standing apart from the complex organisational processes that produce it (Tourish 2014:80).

Within the context of disability and leadership there are limited texts from either of these areas that address disability or impairment in relation to leadership. However, there is existing research concerned with leadership in the arts; for example, The Clore Leadership and The Cultural leadership programmes. There is a notable absence, however, of research with disabled leaders as a focal aspect. Established organisations as mentioned above actively encourage involvement from disabled individuals, however there is little attention given to the specific experiences

and position of impaired artists and how this informs routes into leadership. In 2009 Jo Verrent and Sarah Pickthall[13] co-founded Sync Leadership, an initiative aimed at supporting disabled artists from across diverse disciplines in their progression towards leadership. The programme consisted of two main strands of activity 'Sync 100', a distance-learning initiative offering information and advice about leadership and 'Sync 20' a bespoke programme to develop leadership capabilities in selected disabled people. In the context of this research it is noteworthy that this enterprise closed in 2011 due to cessation of funding.

In many ways, exploring leadership in dance is an under-researched area, regardless of disability. As an art form, there is a history of limited consideration given to leadership in dance in general terms. This prompts a key question for this study. If leadership for dancers in general is elusive and under supported, what might this mean for disabled dance artists? The lack of literature focussing on the disabled leader in dance would suggest that leadership in this art form is primarily an issue still heavily informed by normative ideologies. In this context, the notion of 'normative' leaders can be extended to include women in dance, who although form a majority in the sector, are possibly less inclined towards leadership, or who are restricted by conditions that do not enable them towards leadership. This is a suggestion supported by a report produced by the Arts Council in 2014, wherein it is stated that:

> Female leaders within the creative and cultural industries report that factors that have hindered their progression include a lack of permanently funded jobs, a lack of line management support, caring responsibilities and poor job opportunities.' (Arts Council England 2014:7)

There is a body of research concerned with leadership and gender (Klenke; Eagly and Chin; Galloway et al), and whilst the aim of this study is not to engage deeply with these theories, there is a value in acknowledging this work, particularly

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[13] For the purpose of this research it is useful to note that both Verrent and Pickthall have a sensory impairment

given the context of the research participants and the inevitable impact that the lived experience and socially constructed ideas of gender and leadership have on the three women and one man participating in my research. The suggestion emerging from this body of work that 'traditional' notions of leadership are 'culturally biased and gendered' (Galloway et al 2015:683) offers an insight into the differentiated responses between the female and male respondents involved in my research, if existing leadership models sit within a framework of 'patriarchy, patrimony and the 'old boys club' network' (Wandia n.d) this will invariably inform the perceptions of the case study participants.

This study will investigate how leadership structures in dance impact on leadership for disabled artists through an interrogation of various approaches to what leadership means and its links to disability, dance and society in more general terms. Historically, disabled dancers appear to have no place in previous research into leadership. Disabled artists have been afforded access into the art form, but there is a significant lack of encouragement into leadership roles. However, according to Disability Arts Online:

> Non-disabled people are seen as smarter, cleverer, more
> resourceful and more often than not take over leadership even if
> they don't mean to. Disabled leaders need pride in themselves as
> do disabled people in general to resist this. We have enough non-
> disabled leaders - we need more of us. (Disability Arts Online,
> 2008)

Disabled singer and songwriter Johnny Crescendo offers an interesting perspective on the responsibility of disabled people to identify as leaders, and this resonates with my research into the unique offerings being made by disabled dance artists progressing towards leadership. His view also connects with the current UK dance landscape within which non-disabled leaders form the majority and arguably remain the gatekeepers to leadership for their disabled peers. The idea of gatekeepers in dance is further explored in Chapter 5 - Leadership in Context.

By drawing on and synthesizing views expressed through different paradigms of leadership my study aims to demonstrate that there is value in utilizing existing leadership frameworks to 'test out' notions pertaining to the development of disabled leaders in dance. From the 'business' sector there is a body of material that focuses on the outward appearance of a leader, this includes research into body communication or 'body language'. This will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

There is some value in also turning towards the research located within psychology to illuminate the role of non-verbal communication in assessing what is understood by leadership. For example, psychologist Michael Argyle presents some useful perspectives in his 1988 text *Bodily Communication*. This book offers theoretical and scholarly frameworks for examining non-verbal communication. There is discussion about differentiation across cultural groups, suggesting that all cultures have distinctive non-verbal style of communication (Argyle1988:49). Whilst this is a valuable means of challenging a dominant norm in non-verbal communication, Argyle does not extend this exploration to examine differentiated means of communication and bodily language in individuals with 'non-traditional' bodies. The implications of this are significant in looking at disabled people as leaders, because if leadership can be signaled through a framework of prescribed non-verbal communication, a body that does not move or gesture within this frame is automatically disqualified. There is a lack of information available relating to how an impaired body might communicate non-verbally. This has the potential to alienate them from an area of research that is a primary source for those working within the field of leadership studies. Through a close examination of how the literature concerned with leadership might expose the reasons why disabled dancers are excluded from positions of leadership I will further explore why there is an apparent discrepancy between impaired bodies and the social constructed ideal 'leadership' body, where leaders are 'upright' and employ a range of widely recognized gestures. Impaired leaders, by contrast, are often 'smaller', 'seated' and gesture in a non-conventional way dictated by their specific physicality.

4.7 Making Meaning: Philosophical Perspectives on the Body and Disability

Philosophical theory has offered a valuable framework for thinking about the fields of dance, disability and leadership. There is significant research into disability that has drawn on established philosophy including, for example, Foucault (1982) and Kant (1790) and more recently the philosophy of the body (Siebers, 2010). The phenomenological epistemology of this study is strongly informed by an evaluation of this area and its relationship to the dance and disability sector.

Within this body of work there is important historical writing emerging from eminent philosophers. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writing on phenomenology of the body, and body as subject or object, (1945, 1962) is a useful tool for examining perceptions of the impaired body in dance. Merleau-Ponty's thinking on phenomenology of perception and the impact of perspectives on the viewing encounter can be linked to viewing the impaired body in dance. How we perceive impairment in dance is influenced by our individual perspective of disability, based on our own experience of being in the world. Merleau-Ponty suggests that his perception of the bodies of others is immediately synonymous with a certain perception of my own body (Merleau-Ponty 1962:239). Relating this ideology to perceptions of dancers with impairment, the viewer or audience perceive and understand the body they are watching based on embodying their own physical being. It is their body that is their point of view on the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962:81). Merleau-Ponty postulates that human perception is informed by our experiences and understanding, thus our viewing of the world is clarified and reinforced through our held assumptions and responses to what we see and what we do. He states:

> The absolute positing of a single object is the death of
> consciousness, since it congeals the whole of existence, as a
> crystal placed in a solution suddenly crystalizes it. (Merleau-Ponty
> 1962:82)

In the context of the dancer/audience relationship this theory would suggest that our interpretations and viewings are inherently linked to our constructed ideologies, furthermore that these 'crystalized' perceptions are actually obstacles to the development and progressive transition of dancers with impairments.

Although Merleau-Ponty's perspective on the body is not explicit in talking about disability, the value of this theoretical framework for this research is in the postulation that the body, any body, is central to human sense-making of the world and our lived experiences. It is this aspect of Merleau-Ponty's work that offers a useful vehicle for examining perceptions of impairment. In his suggestion of a phenomenal body (1962:121) there is an implication of the human body as unified, which transcends normative ideologies. Our sense of our body is inherent to our 'felt' experience, as opposed to a sense constructed by the viewings of others. As Merleau-Ponty states:

> It is never our objective body when we move, but our phenomenal body, and there is no mystery in that, since our body, as the potentiality of this or that part of the world surges towards objects to be grasped and perceives them. (Merleau- Ponty 1962:121)

The phenomenal body in Merleau-Ponty's theory does not differentiate through the form of the body. It resists hierarchical notions of physicality by representing the body as an essential individualised phenomenon.

Philosopher, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) also offers a valuable view that impacts on the politics of disability and power suggesting that the objectification of the individual or "dividing practices" leads to a system of distinction by our given or constructed label, the mad and the sane, the deviant and the good and most relevantly for this research, the healthy and the sick (Foucault 1994:326). Other relevant historical philosophical theories relating to this research include those concerned with aesthetics and perception. 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant's 1790 text 'The Critique of Judgement' provides a useful lens for examining perceptions of impairment:

> The beautiful stands on quite a different footing. It would, on the
> contrary, be ridiculous if any one who plumed himself on his taste
> were to think of justifying himself by saying: "This object (the
> building we see, the dress that person has on, the concert we hear,
> the poem submitted to our criticism) is beautiful for me." For if it
> merely pleases him, he must not call it beautiful. Many things may
> for him possess charm and agreeableness-no one cares about
> that; but when he puts a thing on a pedestal and calls it beautiful,
> he demands the same delight from others. (Kant 2009:70)

In terms of disabled dance artists and their position as potential leaders; Kant's presupposition of a universal beauty resonates with this thesis. Kantian theory proposes that the perception of an object as 'beautiful' requires a shared appreciation based on conformist ideologies of how beauty is manifested. In the modern world we 'agree' upon what a 'normal' body is and this is perpetuated through a number of means; through socialisation, education, cultural context.In this shared agreement of the 'norm' it is inevitable that all those not conforming are positioned as 'other'.

Philosophical theories of 'otherness' are valuable for this thesis; Mikhail Bakhtin's writing on the grotesque provides insight into perceptions of physical impairment within the context of historical art works. He states:

> We find at the basis of grotesque imagery a special concept of the
> body as a whole and of the limits of this whole. The confines are
> drawn in the grotesque genre quite differently than in the classic
> and naturalistic images. (Bahktin 1965:315)

There is a suggestion in this example from Bahktin's *Rabelais and His World* that hyperbolic images of the human form in art works present the grotesque body as objects of curiosity. There is 'rawness' in these representations that we are somehow protected from in more 'traditional' representations of the body. We are

simultaneously intrigued and repelled by the almost mythical depictions of the 'exaggerated' body.

This is a theme present in Tobin Siebers 2010 book *Disability Aesthetics*. Siebers asks us to consider the place and value of the aesthetic of impairment in our cultural heritage. He offers:

> Disability operates both as a critical framework for questioning aesthetic presuppositions in the history of art and as a value in its own right, important to future conceptions of what art is. (Siebers 2010:20)

Siebers is suggesting that the specific aesthetic of disability has a central role in art history as an important element of cultural understanding. His evaluation of perceptions of bodily 'difference' throughout the text offer a valuable insight into the changing position of the impaired artist. What is particularly interesting in Siebers' writing is the 'reclamation' of disability aesthetics within the arts. He describes an environment within which artists are drawing upon the specificity of their disabled bodies and how they are 'viewed'. He hypothesises that this has an empowering effect, demanding that work created by disabled artists take its place in a shared cultural landscape. Using the example of the *Venus de Milo,* an ancient Greek sculpture which has lost both ams and is perceived as 'beautiful by the tradition of aesthetic responses that eschew the uniformity of perfect bodies and embrace the variety of disability', Siebers asserts that the equation between art and disability found throughout modern art is confirmed by the fact that there is really no way to interpret the incomplete figure as other than beautiful. (Siebers, 2010:138)

4.8 Concluding Comments

In conclusion, the literature that is drawn upon in this study reaches across a broad range of perspectives and disciplinary fields. As this review has demonstrated, there is significant resonance across a range of scholarly and practical fields. As with much dance research, this thesis is well positioned to borrow from these areas, relating existing practice, theory and epistemological systems to the questions posed. There is however a notable deficit in literature relating specifically to the development of leadership roles for dance artists with disabilities.

As this analysis has shown, although there is interesting and relevant research on offer from disabled academics and researchers, and some of this research explores impairment and performance, there are limited examples of work produced by disabled researchers concerned specifically with dance. This suggests that for the disabled artist-researcher dance remains a somewhat unmapped area, where the limited research available originates from a non-disabled perspective.

This chapter has therefore highlighted that there is a 'gap' in literature and associated resources. This perceived discrepancy is in the voice and thinking derived from disabled dance artists relating to their experiences of working in the contemporary dance sector. It is these voices that this study intends to capture and reflect upon to offer a new perspective on what leadership means in the field of dance and disability. A related aim is thus to secure the place of these artists in the literature and to enrich the discourse because of incorporating an analysis of their views and experiences. In addition it will bring dance as an art form into the awareness of the disability studies field as a valuable tool for thinking about impairment in a range of contexts.

The following chapter will focus on Leadership, drawing upon the themes discussed in this literature review to offer perspectives from areas including; Philosophy, Dance Studies and Disability Studies. This aspect of the thesis will present an examination of how theory and practice in the field of leadership can inform the development of disabled dance artists.

Chapter 5 – Leadership in Context

5.0 Introduction

There is a wealth of writing relating to leadership and associated theory and practice (Bass 2005; Kets de Vries 1991; Raelin, 2011; Tourish 2013). From the field of philosophy there are examples of critiques or interrogations of leadership theory. But there are limited studies that focus on leadership in dance and almost none that provides a specific focus on disability. This chapter examines what is 'meant' by leadership and how philosophical perspectives have informed current thinking and debate around leadership. The chapter will also offer a specific exploration of leadership within the context of contemporary dance and disability. I will begin by considering how leadership in dance is understood and where there is evidence of initiatives to develop dance leaders. Examining how leadership is manifested and perceived in dance is critical to gaining an understanding of the role of the disabled leader in dance. I will therefore give some focus to the leadership roles in dance and who they are held by. Discussion will then focus on philosophical and commercial theories of leadership to find out what might be useful to understanding more about leadership in dance, and how disabled dancers might be supported to be leaders. There is a significant voice on leadership associated with the world of 'business' and corporate industries. This view is often focussed on offering a practical framework for effective leadership and suggests that leadership is linked to productivity and a successful business. Although my thesis will not draw significantly from this field, there is a useful link in the work, which alludes to the credentials of leadership and what makes a 'leader'.

Disability is notably absent from corporate and business models of leadership (see 1.5). It is this absence that offers a valuable perspective for my research. In a field that advocates strategies for leadership and success, disability is positioned as fallible. As this study is concerned with the development of disabled leaders, identifying where there appears to be rejection of the disabled body as leader-like is key to the investigation. By engaging with writing from a range of theoretical and

conceptual fields, I will highlight areas relevant within existing leadership theory that will inform my research into dance, disability and leadership.

5.1 Leadership in Dance

Leadership in dance is a relatively under-researched area (see 1.1). There are initiatives aiming to encourage dance artists into leadership (Sync Leadership, Clore Leadership Programme; see 1.5 and 4.7). There is little existing research however concerned with how leadership is defined and validated within the sector. The focus on a requirement to develop leaders in dance or to formally identify leadership in the art form reaffirms the view that leadership remains a hard to define concept in dance.

Initiatives in the arts aiming to support leadership more generally offer an important perspective. The Clore leadership programme, which aims to 'strengthen leadership across a wide range of creative and cultural activities' (Clore Leadership Programme 2015) offers a useful model for thinking about leadership in dance. Director of the Clore Leadership Programme Sue Hoyle, offers:

> In my view, excellence in leadership is not defined by personality type, but by values and behaviour. A willingness to share responsibility and power may be one of the key characteristics of cultural leaders in the twenty-first century, together with a drive to build strong alliances (Hoyle n.d)

In 2013 the Clore Leadership Programme with Arts Council England and Trends Business Review 13 (TBR) co-commissioned research into leadership in the UK creative and cultural sector. The resulting findings were published in a document 'Scoping the leadership development needs of the cultural sector in England' (Carty, Jennings and TBR, 2013). The research exemplifies the relationship of the Clore Leadership Programme to more commercial discourses in leadership. The choice to commission an independent organisation with both public and private sector expertise highlights the arts 'borrowing' from more 'traditional' leadership

frameworks. The research sought to 'understand barriers to and enablers of progression as a leader in the creative industries' (Clore Leadership 2013:2). The study employed a review of available leadership training available to the cultural sector, in addition to in-depth interviews and discussions. Although this thesis is not concerned with evaluating training opportunities, the findings emerging from the qualitative aspect of the Clore Leadership/Arts Council, England research offer a useful insight into the perceptions and experiences of leadership in dance.

The commissioned research cites the study as an opportunity to 'focus on groups who have remained somewhat under-researched in relation to leadership' (Carty, Jennings and TBR 2013:2) and within this targeted group are disabled people in the cultural and creative sector. The research found that accessibility of opportunity for progression was a key factor for disabled people. The report argued that bespoke, individualised progression routes would enable greater numbers of disabled artists to undertake leadership roles. In addition to this, they argued that greater visibility of existing disabled leaders in the cultural sector was impactful on potential disabled leaders. The study states that a main barrier to progression as a leader cited by respondents is 'lack of confidence in their own ability' (Carty, Jennings and TBR 2013:3); this is a finding that emerges in my own case studies in chapter 6. My own research confirms the broad themes raised by the study, but by undertaking an extended period talking with artists and through personal reflection, I bring new perspectives to leadership by posing the question: Why do some people progress to become choreographers, directors, academics or producers whilst others do not? I am proposing that, although the key characteristics of leadership may differ between the arts and the commercial sector, there still seems to be something unexplainable associated with what makes a leader.

There is a small and interesting body of research emanating from sports research, which speaks to dance leadership to a limited extent; although research in this field is concerned with the development of leaders in dance, the work is restricted by the positioning of dance as a participatory or fitness pursuit rather than an artistic activity. For example, 'Sports Leaders, UK' is an organisation offering awards and qualifications that 'equip young people with employability skills for life improving motivation, self-esteem, communication, team-work and confidence'

(Sports Leaders UK 2015). Qualifications available from Sports Leaders, UK include, 'Certificate in Community Dance Leadership' and 'Certificate in Dance Fitness Leadership'.

These qualifications offer a useful perspective on perceptions of dance leadership outside of dance as an art form. The differentiation between 'fitness' and 'community' illuminates and reinforces traditional notions of body hierarchies in dance. There is a suggestion that one form is concerned with physical wellbeing and health, and the other with participation and enjoyment, notably neither form is concerned with dance as an arts practice. Most importantly for this research the dance qualifications form a small part of the overall sports curriculum. It is not the concern of this thesis to explore the relationship between dance and sport, but it is noteworthy that dance in the context of an organization such as Sports Leaders, UK, is indicative of a broader educational environment where dance study is often included as part of physical education as opposed to a subject within existing arts curricula.

In 2006, Senior Lecturer in Dance, Sonia Rafferty and Professor of Dance Science Matt Wyon, conducted a research project entitled 'Leadership Behavior in Dance'. Although this is a piece of work produced by specialists in dance and dance science, which offers a valuable insight into dance leadership, it is notable that the framework for this study borrows from a pre-existing model defined by sports researchers and concerned with leadership in sport; 'Multidimensional Model of Leadership' (Chelladurai and Salah 1980). Rafferty and Wyon employ Chelladurai and Salah's 5 types of leadership behaviour described thus,'Training and Instruction, Democratic Behaviour, Autocratic Behaviour, Social Support and Positive Feedback' (Chelladurai and Saleh 1980:36). Using this framework Rafferty and Wyon distributed questionnaires to students and teachers of dance. The aim of this was to explore the perceptions of both teachers and those training in dance with regard to leadership behaviours and 'identify those dimensions of teacher behaviors that were important in dance technique training' (Rafferty and Wyon 2006:9). The research concluded that 'positive feedback and training and instruction behavior in dance were identified as important factors in dance learning' (Rafferty and Wyon 2006:12).

Recommendations of the study included a suggestion that teachers could 're-appraise and vary their personal instruction giving behavior' (Rafferty and Wyon 2006:12). The study offers a valuable perspectve on interpersonal communication between dancer and teacher as a hierarchical process, or for the purpose of this thesis, leaders and 'followers' in dance. The notion of a hierarchy between teacher and student is useful to my study and relates to leadership behaviours in dance and research participant perceptions of leadership; both of which are relevant to research into dance, disability and leadership. Limiting factors of note are that Rafferty and Wyon's research is essentially a guide towards effective or improved leadership in dance. It is less relevant to notions of developing leadership opportunities. The assumption of 'who' is leading remains unquestioned. It is notable also, that as with much dance research, the impaired body (as either teacher or student/leader or follower) is absent. One caveat to this is in the example of Rafferty and Wyon's recommendations and their call for differentiated leadership behaviours; an aspect of their findings which speak to themes explored in this thesis relating to challenging normative body traditions in dance leadership.

5.2 Reaching for the Top: Leadership Outside the Arts

Research into leadership emanating from outside of the arts, is in many ways, in contrast to the 'traditionally' perceived hierarchies or measures of 'success' in dance. Leadership in dance, as proposed by this thesis, is under-researched with limited discourse relating to leaders in dance. Conversely, in more commercial sectors, leadership is identified as a key marker for, and influence on, effective and successful business.

Jim Collins is a prolific writer-researcher involved in business and commercial analysis. In 2014 he undertook a large-scale research enquiry and his research culminated in the proposition of a 'new' type of leader; the 'Level 5 leader.' Collins' model presents a challenge to the 'ideal' or archetypal leader for business and industry. And his research shares much with practical guides towards effective leadership and successful business models. This is primarily reflected in the research question from which the notion of 'level 5 leadership' is derived: Can a good company become a great company and if so, how? (Collins 2001:4). The

research was conducted over a period of five years and employed both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches, using financial metrics and analyses of company data to gather a picture of the 'success' of the business. He also conducted in parallel interviews and an in-depth analysis of policy and strategy documents to gain an understanding of the narrative around each business.

In terms of understanding leadership, Collins' research offers an interesting view in that he reiterates in this writing that his research did not aim to define a leadership model. He suggests that; 'level 5 leadership found us' (Collins 2001:3). Collins elaborates on this view by describing shared characteristics between the executives in leadership positions within the businesses moving from 'good' to 'great'. He describes this finding as 'not what we expected' (Collins 2013:3). Collins is suggesting that the discovery of a 'Level 5 Leader'; by his definition, a person that contradicts traditional leadership personalities, was unforeseen. This speaks to historical ideologies of what 'makes' a leader. There is an allusion in this statement that the researchers expected to reaffirm the archetypal leader and that in actuality they were presented with a leadership personality that was in conflict with assumed or pre-existing notions of what a leader is.

The researchers involved in Collins' project found that, rather than the stereotypical 'larger than life' individuals one might expect to be prominent in successful business, the 'leaders of the 'great' companies were directly oppositional to this preconceived idea. They are described as 'shy, unpretentious and eccentric' (Collins 2013:4). For the purpose of my research into leadership, this aspect of Collins' research is of particular value. The attributes of level 5 leaders described here could be linked with the archetypal characteristics of the 'artist'.

Historically, the arts have borrowed from frameworks emerging from the commercial sector for understanding leadership. One example of this sector link is Arts and Business, founded in 1976 to 'develop private and public sector partnerships with the arts' (Arts and Business n.d). It is an organisation, which aims to:

> Encourage and stimulate business support of the arts – via
> partnerships, investment, advice and leveraging corporate

expertise to support growth and capacity in arts and cultural
organisations. (Arts and Business n.d)

The language used to outline the objectives of Arts and Business illuminates a relationship between the arts and business sectors. The notion of 'leveraging corporate expertise' is suggestive of a power hierarchy between the two fields. Business provides power and gravitas to the arts and in return the arts can inform business structures with 'softer' skills, such as effective communication, personal interaction and wellbeing. Collins' research and subsequent findings indicate a shift to citing 'artistic' or creative traits as key elements of high-level leadership rather than a subsidiary activity to support more traditionally recognised leadership.

Collins introduces the concept of paradoxical characteristics found in what he terms as 'Level 5 leaders'. Collins presents the following equation; 'Humility + Will = Level 5'. (Collins 2013:4). Here Collins is offering a mechanism for 'good' leadership expressed almost in mathematical terms. This is synonymous with the commercial sector and somewhat at odds with the collaborative approach generally associated with the arts. There is a sense of the advertorial in Collins' terminology, intended as a solution or method of successful practice. The relevance of this for research concerning the development of disabled leaders is that an over simplification of the process of leadership, allows little space for leadership development on the terms of the individual. This thesis postulates that in order to accommodate more disabled leaders, it is crucial to account for the differentiated needs of the individual in terms of progression, rather than adopt a 'one size fits all' ideology of leadership.

There is a departure evident in Collins' research from traditional or clichéd perceptions of effective leaders as ruthless or self-seeking individuals. Collins' level 5 leadership rejects the idea that in order to succeed, a leader must be brutal in their dealings with others or isolated in their pathway to leadership. Collins proposes that the duality of level 5 leadership originates from a juxtaposing of 'personal humility and professional will' suggesting that a 'typical' level 5 leader is modest, often crediting others or teamwork for the success of their business. In parallel to this they also demonstrate an unfaltering determination to produce results in their field.

In evaluating the qualitative aspects of his research Collins' offers anecdotal findings to support his concept of paradoxical leadership qualities. In the example of three 'level 5' leaders cited in this paper, there is a shared sense of 'success against the odds.' In these examples each individual has overcome adversity, ranging from childhood poverty to serious medical diagnosis. Collins' suggests that 'significant life experiences' could be responsible for the emergence of level 5 leadership traits.

From a research perspective this idea is problematized by the fact that it cannot be known if the other 'leaders' in this study chose not to disclose 'life events.' Furthermore, that they did not perceive those life events to be significant in their progression. It is also possible that the level 5 leaders may have developed the same characteristics regardless of key events in their life. Collins acknowledges this where he suggests a difficulty in compiling a definitive 'list' of what makes a level 5 leader. He goes on to allude to an 'inner development' of an individual that could turn them from a 'good' to a 'great' leader.

Collins' argument is that effective leadership is an almost ethereal concept where leadership is part of a lived experience or an embodied pathway, informed by what we have experienced and how we react to this and those around us (noting that notions of lived experience and embodiment are directly linked to the phenomenological). Collins makes an interesting observation based on a disparity between those who he suggests possess the 'level 5 seed' within them and those who do not. This is a difficult analogy, and highly subjective from the researcher's (Collins') position. Author and leadership consultant, J.A Conger comments on predisposition towards leadership thus:

> Many factors shape the extent to which an individual becomes a leader, including genetic predisposition, family environment, school experiences, hardships, job experiences, bosses, organizational incentives, and training. (Conger 2004:136)

Conger is suggesting that leadership is not solely inherent in an individual, nor is it exclusively a result of social, cultural or economic factors. Rather, it is all of these. He elaborates on this point by proposing that leadership qualities are not

static, suggesting that effective leaders must adapt their leadership 'style' to the context in which they are leading. In relation to my own research this is illuminating. Dance could be an ideal environment for developing leaders who are able to adjust their leadership style to a variety of scenarios.Relationships and human interactions are core to dance as an art form. Whilst some forms emphasise touch and adapting to work in partnership with others (such as contact improvisation), dancers need to develop expertise in negotiating with and adapting to other bodies in space. These relationships are part of an intricate framework of practice. They are multifaceted and extend beyond the practice of dance to relationships with viewers and external participants. Dance is a physical practice and touch is an integral part of dance interaction. It could be proposed that physical communication through touch gives people working in dance an advantage in leadership terms. Positioning them to listen, understand, and even transcend the limitations of verbal communication to express leaderful practice in a way that can respond to different circumstances and individuals.

5.3 Body Communication: The Look of a Leader

If body communication is key in the way in which we express our ideas and how we are perceived and in return perceive others, what does this mean for the impaired body and its facility to communicate non verbally? Psychologist Michael Argyle offers an example of body language as a means of asserting oneself as a leader:

> A person may succeed in dominating another by the use of such
> non-verbal signs as standing erect, with hands on hips, not smiling
> and speaking loudly (Argyle1988:4)

Argyle is suggesting that 'standing' is a key signifier of 'dominance' in terms of bodily communication. The physical action of being upright elevates a body to a position of being in charge. Argyle also refers to 'hands on hips' and 'speaking

loudly' these are all within the canon of a 'normalistic' body vocabulary, discounting individuals who speak quietly, or 'differently' or not at all, and those without hands.

The discussion in this chapter is concerned with exploring these stereotypes and questioning whether a non-normative body is immediately problematized by its 'difference' in the context of existing theories of non-verbal communication. It will also consider the potential to interpret the quality of 'standing erect' or other recommended gestures of power and leadership into an alternative body based vocabulary.

Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's theories of gesture as an embodied experience (1945-1962) and Mauss' work on Techniques of the body (1973) I will examine non-verbal communication in people with impairments. This notion will be considered within the context of existing frameworks of understanding body communication. Initial research (Merleau-Ponty, Mauss, Argyle 1988, Lovatt, 2013) suggests that scholarly exploration concerned with a 'differentiated' body communication; or ways in which a disabled body communicates is notably absent from much of the available work in this area. There is some emphasis on non-verbal communication as a valuable therapeutic tool for more effective communication with individuals who do not communicate verbally. Therapist Phoebe Caldwell describes a process she has developed called 'intensive interaction' as a practice which 'combines the assessment of body language with therapeutic approaches in the care of people displaying severe challenging behavior (Caldwell 2010).

Within the field of psychology there is research that indicates much of what we 'say' and 'understand' derives from communication shared from body to body. These theories are largely based on an assumption of a 'normative' body; the impaired body is largely disregarded. For example, in the quote below, author of 'Body Language and Behavioral profiling' Mark Ford offers a view on non-verbal human communication as central to the expression of thoughts and ideas:

> Non-verbal communications…express feelings, attitudes and thoughts that are arguably the most important dimension of the intercommunication equation. They are more personal and subjective than the objectivity of verbal speech. (Ford 2010:1)

It should be noted that authors such as Ford do not consciously omit the impaired body from their exploration; rather there is a lack of focus on the requirement to re-think theories of non-verbal or body communication for a 'different' or impaired body.

In the same way that humans generally communicate through a shared verbal vocabulary; theories of non-verbal communication suggest that there is a language that can be read and interpreted through the movement, gestures and placement of our bodies in space. What then, are the implications of this when the body is impaired? What if a body looks, sits, stands or presents itself in a way that does not conform to normative ideologies? Are these bodies communicating in a 'half' language or even communicating something unintentionally through the body's subconscious patterns of movement?

The absence of the impaired body from the literature relating to body communication (information based and scholarly writings) has led to the location of the disabled body as peripheral to this framework of communication. If crossing both arms across the front of the body signifies a 'closed' stance or discomfort, how can this be translated for example in a person without arms? Or is a wheelchair user always passive due to their seated position?

Gestures, posture and specific ways of moving that are often part of the experience of disability are also indicators of 'weakness' or subservience within a traditional framework of body language. Shaking can be read as nervousness, a head down or 'stooped' position may be interpreted as lacking confidence. If an impairment results in certain physical attributes or stylistics then the existing language of body communication may not available to certain individuals.

'Effective' Leadership is often linked to body communication, specifically how physicality and body language are key factors in how we are perceived by others. In 2006, Social Psychologists, Susan Fiske, Amy Cuddy and Peter Glisk undertook research aiming to examine how competence was understood through readings of various social and cultural groups and individuals in these groups, including people with disabilities. The researchers employed qualitative and quantitative frameworks to explore key markers in the perception of competence. In the context of my study, this research presents some useful findings, stating that:

> People who are older, physically disabled or mentally disabled are viewed as warm but incompetent. These groups elicit pity and sympathy, which are inherently ambivalent emotions that communicate subordinate status but paternalistic positivity. (Fiske, Cuddy and Glisk 2006:80)

Their analysis implies that a body unable to adapt to this 'leadership' body communication will be less effective in conveying leadership qualities and inspiring others to follow them.

The lack of reference to the disabled body in theories of non-verbal communication therefore has the potential to neglect potential or aspiring leaders who have a disability. Dominant views of non-verbal communication reflect an essentially ableist framework of understanding. Much thinking in this area cites gestures and attributes linked to impairment as weakness. Consequently, the disabled body in this area of psychological readings of the body seems to be unable to assert qualities or properties of leadership.

The notion of 'body capital' is a useful concept for exploring non-verbal communication and people with disabilities. Sociologist Rob Moore draws on the thinking of philosopher Pierre Bordieu (1930-2002) suggesting that capital can be an embodied phenomenon described here as:

> Incorporated within the corporeality of the person as principles of consciousness in predispositions and propensies and in physical features, such as: body language, stances, intonation and lifestyle choices. (Moore 2012:102)

Prior to verbal communication an assumption is being made about a person's position or capability – and this defines/accrues body capital. In the field of Disability Studies this is a widely researched area, that the way our impairment is perceived or 'read' by others is key to how we are perceived as a person in the world. For

example, as Garland-Thomson suggests, the reading of our body by others informs assumptions around ability or lack of ability and status in the world:

> Observation has been used to lasso the outlaw aspects of human variation into constricting categories and to diagnose differences as pathology. (Garland-Thomson 2009: 49)

In the example of people with a physical impairment body, capital is largely informed by pre-conceived notions of the narratives surrounding disability and the social status afforded to disabled people. There is a link here with notions of value attached to the body, the non-impaired body holds a higher value than an impaired body in its ability to read and be read in a framework of normative body communication. The disabled body problematises this system of communication and aas such has been categorised as a body that is interpreted through societal classifications of the disabled body. In other words, within these classifications in non-verbal terms, the disabled body communicates a need for care or a narrative of tragedy or trauma. The disabled body is thereby interpreted through an ableist framework of understanding rather than through a non-verbal vocabulary of its own devising.

5.4 Practice as Leadership: Considering Collaborative Models

Returning to models of leadership, Leadership scholar Joseph Raelin offers a perspective on the practice of leadership in his 2011 paper 'From Leadership-as-Practice to Leaderful Practice.' Within this text Raelin frames an exploration of leadership with his concept of Leadership-as-practice (LAP). This idea is presented as oppositional to leadership models within an individualistic paradigm. There is some parity here with Collins' rejection of the traditional 'hero' or 'lone ranger' model of leadership (Collins 2001). Raelin offers an alternative perspective by suggesting that leadership can be examined not through the personalities and attributes of the individual, but by analysing 'where, how and why leadership work is being organised' (Raelin 2011:196). Raelin defines practice as 'a cooperative effort among participants who choose through their own rules to achieve a distinctive outcome'

(Raelin 2011:196). This differs significantly from traditional 'Great Man' (Kets De Vries 2013) models of leadership within which leadership is perceived as an intangible phenomenon existing in some individuals but not in others. Raelin's view that all invested parties contribute to leaderful practice offers a useful framework for exploring leadership in the field of dance and disability.

Raelin's suggestion that leadership is not something which occurs separately from practice, rather that it is embedded within it forces a re-consideration of leadership as existing within an individual. He is proposing that it is not the disposition of one or two people that make leadership happen but the shared practice of a 'community' where leadership emerges. Raelin opposes an ideology of leadership as an innate knowledge or ability. He rejects traditional leadership models where 'knowing' exists within the mind of the 'knower.' By introducing a model of leaderful practice, Raelin questions a dualist framework with subject and object at its centre. In his proposed model of leadership, the path towards leaderful practice is a shared venture with different roles played by individual participants. There is an interesting parallel here with leadership in the arts. Different aspects of dance practice could be defined as communities of individuals with shared aims. These aims vary depending on the context, for example training in dance, making dance and touring dance works. Subsequently, leadership in dance could be viewed as a practice, which is embedded in the 'everyday' tasks of the art form as a whole (technique class, improvisation, choreorgraphic exploration, and so on). In the example of the creation of a dance work, each party; dancer, choreographer, designer, producer, plays a role in the process of leadership. Using Raelin's framework, it is not one or two people who lead in a scenario such as this, but all parties working collectively to create a 'leaderful' environment. It must be noted that dance history would suggest that within this 'leaderful' community' there are individuals who would identify as leaders in the singular sense. In a controversial statement produced by Akram Khan, Lloyd Newson (DV8) and Hofesh Shechter in April 2013, Khan states:

I am concerned that somewhere, somehow, the training the
young dancers go through in the UK is not supporting them in the

rigour, technique and discipline that I am looking for in a dancer.

(Khan 2013)

Khan's clear distinction between himself as dance-maker and decision maker and the dancer as someone he is 'looking for' is suggestive of his self-identification as a leader. This comment indicates that Khan is positioning himself as 'expert' and 'leader-like.'

Using Raelin's model to explore disability and leadership is complex. In simple terms, it is because disabled leaders are in a societal minority. For the purpose of interrogating a framework of leadership as practice it is useful to explore the relationship between disabled and non-disabled people within the same community as opposed to defining disabled people as a community of their own. In relation to my own examination of disabled leaders in dance, my focus is on the development of leadership roles in an 'inclusive' environment. The notion of inclusion in relationship to leadership is interesting. The term suggests a utilitarian setting where all members have equal status. This thesis proposes that it is an environment that still requires leaders, if only as a means of instigating the term and maintaining an environment of inclusion.

To contemplate Raelin's model of LAP in the context of my research it is important to consider existing hierarchies in society that are potential obstacles to the shared investment or collective practice of leadership. In a framework where individuals with disabilities experience limited equality, of employment, wealth and power, we cannot assume that everybody has access to participate towards a shared goal. In the context of this research, this is particularly valid. How can an aspiring disabled leader contribute to leaderful practice if they cannot enter the 'community' in the first instance?

5.5 Dancers as Leaders: From 'Following' to Leading

Few dancers are propelled into leadership roles at the start of their career, some may be cited as 'future leaders' and supported accordingly, but it would be unusual not to progress through key developmental stages first. I propose a

simplified account of theses stages, as (i) an introduction into dance - seeing ourselves reflected in existing dance structures, (ii) initial training in dance, (iii) further training in dance, (iv) employment in dance, (v) autonomy in dance. This staged process is problematic for the aspiring disabled leader, without access to the formal developmental structures (university, conservatoires, mentorship, peer support). Dancers with impairments are often dependent on bespoke opportunities for progression for example, specific funding or choreographic awards; these opportunities have historically supported disabled artists into leadership positions. A question arises then about this staged process that may be a familiar route for non-disabled dancers towards leadership, but which may not be so readily available for disabled dancers: Does leadership feel more 'valid' if you have taken the same route as everyone else and in practical terms do you miss out on certain skill development by taking a different journey? The tension inherent in this question is central to the development of disabled leaders in dance and seems to point towards a need to examine and acknowledge the legitimacy of individualised pathways to leadership.

Dian Hosking, Professor of relational process at Utrecht University, offers a useful view on the relationship between 'leader' and 'follower' suggesting that leaderful practice 'focuses not on the makers of processes but on the processes made' (Hosking 2000:6). There is significant relevance here to the practice of dance and dance making. By focussing on all invested participants in the process of dance making rather than just the choreographer as 'maker' or leader, we can begin to address how leadership in dance is perceived and subsequently offer greater progression for individuals. It must be noted that Hosking's ideology accounts for the development of all dancers not just those identifying as disabled.

Raelin supports this ideology in his suggestion that relational bonds do not necessarily stem from one individual's reliance on another, rather that 'action and decision can derive from mutual and collective interactions' (Raelin 2011). He expands on this theory in his discussion of agency and social change. Introducing the notion of peripheral alliances, Raelin describes a scenario wherein: 'a particular group may intentionally or unwittingly form a splinter group working in contrary ways to the presumed mission of a community' (Raelin 2011:7). There is an interesting parallel to be made here with 'mainstream' dance and the dance and disability

sector. With particular reference to the concept of agency and social inertia Raelin suggests that conversations emerging from 'new' groups have the power to set new agendas and challenge assumptions within an existing community, stating that:

Those who participate in this 'leadership-as-practice' may advance or restrict the effort, which in turn could produce either continuity or change in the original mission. (Raelin 2011)

By borrowing from Raelin's theory and applying this to the area of dance, a useful model emerges. We can see the leadership potential apparent in the practice and conversations arising from the splinter group. In this example, those invested in dance and disability. A 'leadership as practice' model enables participants involved in a shared practice to question the 'norm' or status quo associated with current dance activity. In Raelin's example, this is not the effort of one leader but the combined investment and effort of a community with a shared aim.

The implications of this for my own research are significant and provide an alternative to 'traditional' leadership qualities in dancers with disabilities; acknowledging that these traditional qualities are archetypal personal or physical traits that may be inaccessible to them.

Moving beyond these established theories, and the acknowledgement that the more traditional route towards leadership for dance artists is problematic, I argue that a radical re-consideration of how leadership is legitimised is required. Although there are many examples of leadership emerging from disabled practitioners in dance (for example, Caroline Bowditch; Marc Brew; Claire Cunningham, Unlimited 2012), as this form of leadership does not conform to traditional perceptions of how a leader looks or sounds, this practice is rarely cited as leaderful beyond the dance and disability sector. On the subject of 'recognising' leadership, leadership scholars Jackson and Barry present a valuable comment:

Leadership is like beauty – it is difficult to describe, but we certainly know it when we experience it. (Jackson and Parry: 2008:3)

This view of leadership is not unique, in-fact in the language of leadership it is a widely used concept. There is a suggestion by Jackson and Barry that leadership is an ephemeral phenomenon, not easily categorised but universally recognised.

The notion of 'alternative' perceptions of leadership, in particular recognising leaderful practice in dance has great value in validating the leadership of disabled artists who may not conform to traditional models of what a leader is. This is a view supported by maker and curator Luke Pell who, in describing his own practice and position in dance asks:

> How then, as a maker, curator, facilitator an advocate for alterity –
> in performance do I locate myself within leadership trends. I am
> interested in permeating structure and hierarchy, dissolving
> boundaries between institution, artist, audience and performer. I
> wondered if leadership could be permitted as quiet, dirty, informal,
> doing. Space making, getting lost, asking questions that should not
> be answerable. Attempting to describe the indescribable,
> emerging, staggering squinting. (Pell 2012)

Pell's offering contributes to my study in two ways. Firstly, he is supporting a re-consideration of how leadership is legitimised. He does so by proposing leadership as a changeable concept, which has the potential to respond to different environments and people. Pell describes leadership as a supportive and nurturing aspect of his practice; in his perception, this model of leadership can challenge the boundaries and hierarchies that restrict the development of the disabled leader in dance. Pell is proposing a model, which opposes leadership as an objectivist oriented concept (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003:362). It is therefore valuable to consider leadership as a phenomenon that is removed from the traditional theories positioned as well-grounded recipes for successful managerial work (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003:359). Challenges to 'normative' leadership ideologies open up possible ontological frameworks of thinking about leadership where diverse styles and therefore diverse bodies can be positioned as leaderful. By ceasing to read

leadership within a pre-existing construct of leadership expectation, the disabled dancer has an improved potential for developing leadership capabilities.

5.6 Real or Fantasy? The Construction of leadership

From a societal perspective, leadership and leaders are central to how we make sense of the world around us. Leadership structures inform how individuals perceive their role in society. We are led initially by our parents or carers; then by teachers, employers and so on. These are specific examples where leadership is experienced on a 'one to one' basis. In parallel, we are led by groups or individuals elected to lead us in society as a whole; the clearest example here being governmental leadership.

We are socialised into a culture of leadership, which starts when we learn what it is to be human and in society. The understanding of a pre-existing hierarchised system of leaders and followers is introduced at the early stages of socialisation and continues to inform the way in which we view our society, and our experiences and relationships with others. This is a simplified perspective, if we are born and all naturally accept our place in a social and cultural hierarchy, how are leaders made? If this were entirely true, leaders would give birth to leaders and followers to followers we would all know our rightful place. It is arguable that to a certain degree this is the case.,there is a clear link between economic status and opportunity, for example accessing and affording Higher Education or specialist training. Social status and cultural background are of course instrumental in how individuals experience life, and how they perceive leadership and their position as potential leaders. In relation to opportunity and access to leadership some may feel a greater sense of entitlement than others.

There is also a strong argument to suggest that some leaders grow out of a lack of societal status. There are many stories of the gritty business entrepreneur, born into poverty subsequently fighting their way up to leadership through hard work and sacrifice as opposed to a birth rite. Leadership theorists Bennis and Thomas exemplify this idea in their 2002 paper 'Crucibles of Leadership':

One of the most reliable indicators and predictors of true leadership is an individual's ability to find meaning in negative events and to learn from even the most trying circumstances. Put another way, the skills required to conquer adversity and emerge stronger and more committed than ever are the same ones that make for extraordinary leaders. (Harvard Business Review 2002)

Some leadership research proposes that leadership is a constructed ideology. Furthermore that it is constructed by theoretical suggestions of what leadership is. Professor of Business Administration, Michaela Driver, proposes that leadership identities are imaginary constructions that invariable fail. Using Lacanian notions of 'lack', it is an ontology that links the person and his desire to a want-to-be, to a lack of being (Laurent 1995:21). Driver makes the claim that ideologies concerned with personal feelings of 'lack 'are reiterated through traditional theories of leadership; suggesting that:

The holes in the leadership mirror are enjoyable in the sense of Lacanian jouissance as an assertion of who leaders are not and of how leaders and by extension perhaps followers are not trapped in an imaginary order. By extension the holes may therefore provide a transitional space. (Driver 2013: 409)

Driver's proposition that existing research into leadership presents an ontological framework of leadership that reiterates an individual's sense of 'matching up' or 'falling short' of leadership is powerful in relation to my study. Driver's challenge to models which present an 'imaginary order' of leadership allows a discourse to emerge where leadership can be re-framed to include individuals previously discounted from leadership theory and research.

5.7 Reflections of Leadership: Disabled Leaders Within Cultural Heritage

A final theme that provides a different lens for thinking about leadership in this context is the presence and representation of disabled dancers in records of cultural heritage[14]. In recent years there has been recognition that dance should be included in how cultural heritage is defined. But it is largely the case that dancers with impairment are limited to historical references to 'Freak Show' within which the person's disability is positioned as a 'point of interest or human variation' (Garland-Thomson 2010:49). Disabled artists therefore tend to be positioned in archival records and historical accounts as objects of curiosity or as a source of novel entertainment. The invisibility of dancers with disabilities in legacies of dance practice has meant that the current position and indeed future of disabled artists is precarious. A lack of presence in how dance work is 'remembered' and held in cultural archives places work including and made by disabled individuals in an indeterminate position; neither reflected upon nor aspired towards.

In parallel to protecting existing work made by disabled artists for future reference, there is an important point to be made relating to how we 'recollect' past works including works by disabled performers. Contemporary artists are beginning to draw attention to past performances created by and including disabled artists (Mat Fraser 2009, Caroline Bowditch 2014). Historical work has proved to be a key creative stimulus for disabled artists presenting art-works in current settings. Disabled artists from the past are being 'recovered' through contemporary practice and producing a dual effect; the artist from the past is portrayed as embodying leader-like attributes, and the artist creating the work is adopting a position of authority (equating to leadership) in determining who, or which work, is worthy of being 'recovered'. Although the practice of 'borrowing' from or re-creating dance works from the past is not new in dance there is a difference when the artists in

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[14] Cultural Heritage as defined by UNESCO is divided into 'Tangible Cultural Heritage' and 'Intangible Cultural Heritage'. The former includes immovable works, for instance, monuments and archaeological sites and moveable works such as, paintings, sculptures and manuscripts. The latter is used to describe works of art including, performance, rituals and oral traditions. (UNESCO 2015). Dance is an 'intangible' part of cultural heritage, as such, framing it within historic cultural contexts is complex. By its nature it is an art form, which resists concrete definitions. As with many art forms, dance is open to the interpretations of both the performer and the viewer. What is unique about the performing arts is the potential for each encounter to alter the work and thus the interpretations.

question are disabled. The use of the past as a stimulus for creative practice has a political-social weighting when the impaired artist is at the core of the practice. This practice offers a re-imagining of historic works including a re-framing of disabled dancers from the past. In his 2009 solo *From Freak to Clique* Mat Fraser explores historic portrayals of disability in performance. In the example of Caroline Bowditch's 2013 work *Falling in Love with Frida,* Bowditch uses the disabled visual artist Frida Kahlo as a creative resource. In the work she not only offers a perspective and insight into Kahlo's life and work through dance; she also uses Kahlo to frame an auto-biographical reflection, describing the piece as 'a reflection on Frida's life and my own' (Disability Arts Online 2015). Bowditch and Kahlo are two disabled women, generations apart, but somehow joined by their corporeal experience and their art. *Falling in Love with Frida* is dualistic in its retrospective empowerment of Frida Kahlo and in its empowerment of Bowditch as an autonomous artist, and leader.

In relation to leadership development, exploring the relationship between disabled artists practicing currently and their disabled predecessors is thereby important. Both Fraser and Bowditch are identifying themselves within a 'community' of artists as located within various time periods. Revisiting and 'recovering' the work of artists from the past validates their work, positions them within the context of cultural heritage and thus allows for a re-consideration of their value and position in dance. What emerges is a mutual enablement. By drawing attention to lineage in the work of disabled dance artists, artists from the past who have previously been rendered invisible return to find their place within the work of contemporary disabled dance artists.

5.8 Embodying Leadership: Anecdotes on Feeling Leaderful

So far in this chapter I have drawn upon various theories of leadership. Some originate from a business model, where thought is given to what constitutes a 'truly great' leader (Collins 2001:1). Some reference has been made to the philosophical theories that explore what is meant by leadership and how leadership is informed by and informs our existence in the world. Although disparate in many ways there is a commonality in how leadership is discussed and there seems to be a consensus that

it is a 'real' phenomenon, something that can be aspired to, even measured and evaluated.

By drawing on a range of theories and perspectives on leadership I seek to argue that leadership is a transient and movable ideology and that we may shift between leading and 'following'. Additionally, my aim is to identify where I recognise leadership located in existing dance practice and what kind of opportunities are available to develop leadership capability to develop a leaderful position in dance. The following is a passage of my own reflective writing written during a two week practice-research period in February 2015. The writing points to the tensions present in my own subjective position as a leader. The purpose of this writing was to attempt to 'capture' my thoughts about the processual nature of leadership development. The writing was not attempting to theorise or argue for a point but emerged directly out of a teaching/making studio-based experience that prompted me to question my own role within that context.

Sometimes I have felt leaderful in my practice and associated research. Sometimes I have felt lacking in the skills and experience to lead, including leading myself and making decisions regarding my own creative processes and self-development. If leadership is a tangible thing that we can be 'in' or 'out' of how do we recognise it when we are 'doing' it? In dance, I see 'accidental' leadership in action, not necessarily a conscious choosing to lead, more a being in the right place at the right time, or longevity as the key to leadership in dance, a rite of passage if a career in the sector is maintained.

Prior to this doctoral study I would have described myself as a leader, or at least answered yes if someone had asked if I was a leader. However the further down a route towards recognising my own leadership I am, the greater awareness I have of my own insecurities and self-doubt. In terms of my dance career to date, I have embarked upon academic research, progressed my creative practice into the development of a duet. successfully applied for funding and continued to teach across a range of contexts. This is in parallel with my 'non-dance' life, which carries on with the same demands. What interests me is that I don't feel more like a leader

with these developments, actually I feel like I am in chaos, an existence without edges, always shifting from one task to another, from thought to page, page to studio and vice versa.

As I extend this reflection to those around me, in and out of the dance sector. I see that most of the people I encounter are juggling in the same way, shifting from role to role. This seems particularly prominent in dance. We are rarely, 'just a teacher', 'just a producer' or 'just a dancer.' In other words, longevity and success in dance requires us to undertake a number of guises. Is this leadership in dance? A 'chaos' of creative juggling and changing positions. If I apply this to my own practice and research this affords me a new perspective on my own position as a leader in dance. In the edgeless nature of my work I may not conform to a prescribed ideology of leadership, in reality however, I am leading all the time.

In continuation of the notion of leadership as shifting and changeable from moment to moment and situation to situation, as I reflect on my own recent practice and think about leadership, I wonder if leadership is a state of mind.

This writing led me to ask; Is leadership experienced in the moment of leaderful actions or is leadership the feeling that we are able to 'lead' something? Choreographer Caroline Bowditch refers to herself as an 'accidental leader' (Bowditch 2012) in dance. This prompts the questions; did Bowditch 'elect' to lead or was she labelled a leader by others? Did she think of herself as leader, which led to her becoming perceived as one or did she act in a leaderful way that caused others to call her a leader? This then links to the recurring question that emerges when exploring leadership in different contexts, are leaders born or made? And in the context of dance and disability, is Bowditch a born leader who would lead in any scenario or did her practice in dance make her a leader? This is of particular importance to this study. If there is a lack of disabled leaders in dance, what can dance do to develop disabled leaders or provide opportunity for 'born' disabled leaders to take on leadership positions?

In my own experience, feeling like a leader is a fleeting sensation. As soon as I am aware of acting or thinking in a way that suggests leadership qualities I can be equally struck by a sense of 'not knowing' or deference to greater experience. What I

have found since undertaking my own research is that this might be leaderful in itself, recognising what I do 'not yet know' pushes me to learn from and listen to others. In this way pathways to leadership are not linear; rather a deviating and changeable path. At the centre of this thinking is my own belief that I 'can' lead and that I have something to share or show that is valuable to the dance sector generally. The obstacles I encounter and moments of self-doubt are perhaps not a barrier to leadership but the things that makes me a better and more reflective and authentic leader.

5.9 Gatekeepers to Leadership

So where does this take us in terms of leadership? Research has so far shown that leadership is hard to define in any specific field; with the exeption of 'formal' leadership roles (director, manager), that are largely confined to organisational contexts, this is the case in dance , including the field of disability dance. Leadership is ephemeral, even slippery as a concept: the conditions that will support a pathway towards leadership, and that will support an individual claiming leadership, are not easy to describe. It does appear from evidence gathered thus far that disabled dance artists are disadvantaged in terms of leadership development in dance. This is the result of a number of factors including physical appearance, opportunity for development and a current lack of existing disabled leaders as role models in dance. Leadership in dance may be ascribed to particular roles in dance such as: director, choreographer, programmer, and funder, which provide something of a framework for considering leadership positions in dance. But these roles are generally fulfilled by non-disabled male leaders. One other factor that might inhibit the development of leaders in the field of disability and dance is that people in these roles in dance act as gatekeepers to leadership for disabled artists.

The concept of gatekeepers presented here is applied to both theoretical and practical contexts. Within professional dance practice the gatekeepers hold positions of power. They are the decision makers, agents for funding, choreographers, artistic directors and programmers. It is the people in these positions that 'decide' who participates in dance and how.

Within the academic environment the gatekeepers might be thought of as the policy makers within higher education structures, and the agents for delivering teaching within educational contexts. Curricula and academic foci have an impact on the participation and development of the disabled dancer in a training environment. Even to gain entry to a training course in dance the application and audition processes are informed by traditional conventions and ideologies in dance, notably ballet and formal technique classes, many of which exclude dancers with impairment, The presumption that the applicant will have previous dance experience and knowledge is also a central element in accessing higher-level dance training. In 2010, Candoco's *And who Shall go to The Ball,* choreographed by Raphael Bonachela, became part of the set study[15] syllabus for GCSE[16] dance in the UK. Prior to this there was no representation of disability within the formal frameworks of dance qualification in the UK. A lack of representation in dance has led to feelings of exclusion amongst many disabled dancers.

In an environment where non-disabled gatekeepers are making decisions about how dance is accessed, performed and understood, the dancer with a disability is automatically marginalized to the position of invitee. Their access to and development in dance is dependent on the actions of established non-disabled practitioners. There is an absence of autonomy here that is detrimental to the development of the disabled artist. If access is 'given' based on the terms of a normalised ideology in dance, a consequence is that the same 'voices' or gatekeepers are positioned to distribute the development opportunities for dancers with impairment. There is a perpetuation in this scenario of the disabled artist as 'grateful' recipient as opposed to a leaderful and self-directed practitioner.

5.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that disabled people are largely absent from discourses regarding leadership, including philosophical writing, instructional texts and scholarly research into the subject. Moreover, there is clear

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[15] The Set Study element of GCSE Dance requires the teacher or school to choose from selected dance works. The students then study aspects of this through theoretical and practical tasks.
[16] General Certificate of Secondary Education.

evidence that 'traditional' frameworks that examine bodily non-verbal communication exclude any recognition of the impaired body and how different bodies might prompt a rethink of whether a particular body type equates with leadership. The absence of disabled dancers in the records of cultural heritage is a factor that contributes to what seems to be detrimental to progression into leadership for dancers with disabilities. The lack of representation of disabled people in discourses of leadership more widely propagates the perception of the impaired dancer as an object of curiosity rather than as an autonomous artist, capable of aspiring towards and achieving a position of leadership.

Chapter 6 will offer a continued exploration of leadership in practice and test out some of the propositions emerging from this chapter through in-depth case study research involving three disabled dance artists. The case studies will examine the perceptions of these artists surrounding their own leadership capability and dance leadership in more general terms.

Chapter 6 – Exampling Leadership

6.0 Introduction

Despite existing research into dance and disability (Whatley, Benjamin, Aujla and Redding, Verrent), there remains a lack of research specifically aimed at giving voice to disabled dancers aspiring to train and work in contemporary dance. In order to explore current practice and perspectives in the field of 'inclusive' dance, it is necessary to record the perceptions and reflections of people with disabilities who are currently involved in dance.

The notion of 'giving voice' to dancers is not unique. For example, in her study, *The Voices of Young Women in Dance* (1990) researcher Susan Stinson adopted a hermeneutic approach in her interviews with female dancers to encapsulate their dance experience in their own words. In *The Body Eclectic – Evolving Practices in Dance Training*, artist-researchers Bales and Nettl-Fiol use interviews with dancers to identify challenges and offer solutions to questions facing dancers in the current climate (2008). Also, in the 2011 book, *Wise Body: Conversations with Experienced Dancers* Fergus Early and Jacky Lansley present the personal voices and words of 12 mature dance practitioners (Early and Lansley 2011:11). Within this text the authors argue that in much dance research:

> Discussion of the complex and varied languages of the body in
> dance, the science of its craft and the knowledge distilled within its
> lore has been somewhat neglected. (Early and Lansley 2011:11)

Despite an explicit attempt to represent a diverse range of perspectives in the above book, the authors omit the disabled dancer. There is reference to a range of dance styles, experiences and global differentiation. The omission of interviews with disabled artists highlights a number of factors. First, this book is a resource concerned with experienced dance practitioners; it is not surprising that the authors might have found established disabled dance artists harder to access. This is perhaps due to a relatively recent focus on dance and disability and the fact that many dance artists with impairments are still 'growing up' in professional dance terms. In addition to this there is still a separation between 'disabled' dance and

'mainstream' dance, therefore it is possible that a book addressing 'mainstream' practices may feel justified in excluding disability[17].

In many ways these examples of research resonate with my own. There is a shared intention to capture the perceptions and reflections of the individual dancer through exploring their practice and experience in dance. Bales and Nettl-Fiols provide an overview of different periods in dance by identifying prominent teachers, venues and training techniques.

Presenting a picture of dance practice at specific moments in time, combined with the informal tone of person-to-person interview, seems to afford this research an accessibility often lacking in studies resulting from analysis of secondary findings. One caveat of the work of Bales and Nettl-Fiol and a caution for my own case study explorations, is that the resulting findings are based on and refer to codified dance practice. If research findings are focussed narrowly on specific dance practices and make reference to dancers and dance practices existing within the same community of artists, teachers and practitioners, then we risk limiting the text to a particular community of readers. There is a risk that by making an assumption of a shared historical knowledge and understanding of the language used to talk about specific aspects of dance practice, we limit the readership. In the case of Nettl and Fiol's text, readers without sufficient knowledge of key techniques and associated practitioners are immediately alienated by a language that is highly specific for instance the Judson Church Era[18] and Klein Technique[19] and dependent on a prior knowledge of dance training. In my case study research there is potential to adopt a dialect that is synonymous not only with a 'language of impairment' but also with my pre-existing relationships with the participants. Doing so automatically marks a distinction between those who 'speak the language' and those who do not.

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[17] It is interesting to note that Early's work as Artistic Director of Green Candle focuses on inclusion and diversity and aims: 'To bring dance as participation and performance to children, young people and older adults in our community. And through dance, to create healthier people and healthier, more integrated communities'

[18] Judson Church era refers to a period between 1962 and 1964 when a collective of New York based artists including Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, Meredith Monk, Lucinda Childs and Yvonne Rainer performed at the Judson Memorial Church, in Greenwich Village, New York using the title *Judson Dance Theater*. This period is often linked to the emergence and development of key practitioners of contemporary performance and dance in current contexts.

[19] The Klein Technique is a body-based practice centred on alignment and body connections. Devised by US based dancer Susan Klein in 1975.

It is the aim of my research to extend my findings beyond the contemporary dance sector into a wider exoteric readership, including the broader dance sector and readers beyond the arts. It is my hypothesis that obstacles in the way of the disabled dance artist aspiring to leadership exist not only in the field of dance, but are ingrained in our societal and cultural frameworks; this must be accounted for when considering the audiences and readers of my research.

Anthropologist Geyla Frank sets out to 'give voice' to Diane DeVries in her 'cultural biography' *Venus on Wheels* (Franks 2000). This is a useful study and one within which both the subject's 'voice' and the relationship between researcher and subject are interrogated. Franks offers much to my research and my case studies. It is important to note that as with much research relating to disability, Franks' study emerges from an established non-disabled researcher choosing to examine the experience of impairment within an existing research portfolio. Research of this nature is typical of research into dance and disability. The researcher voice is 'normative' and the subject 'impaired'. There is clearly value in this research for bringing focus onto a key area of study. It is problematized, however, by its perpetuation of an ableist hierarchy, where the 'leader' is 'non-disabled' and inevitably the findings are presented within a bias of the 'norm' versus the 'other'.

In this case study section of my research, I am offering a unique approach, as a disabled artist-researcher with disabled dancers as participants in my research. I am a researcher in this field, but I am also indigenous to the field of research. This is a previously unchartered area in dance and disability research, which is especially pertinent when examining leadership in dance, more specifically the development of leadership roles for disabled dance artists.

My aim is to capture the views of existing and potential disabled leaders in the dance sector. Through ethnographic and anthropological methods I will aim to portray a realistic picture of the experiences of people with disabilities participating in dance. Examination of the perceptions and lived experiences of these artists will enable further research into the sector and highlight strategies for the future development of dance and disability. My position as an 'insider' to this research added to my proximity to the case study participants and will inevitably inform the research. This complex stance as researcher not only offers a unique opportunity, it

must be noted that it will also bias the exploration. As research scholars Hammersley and Atkinson suggest 'going native is a common danger' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:87) in ethnographic research. In relation to the ethnographic nature of my case study research Hammersley and Atkinson offer a useful insight, postulating that:

> Not only may the analysis be abandoned in favour of the joys of participation, but also even where it is retained bias may arise from 'overrapport' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:87)

The inevitable bias that results from prevailing relationships and an existing rapport with participants is an important consideration. The participants are likely to share things with me that they might withhold from a 'neutral' researcher, which gives the research a unique perspective. In an attempt to support my practice and research, they may respond to my questions in a way that they feel will make my findings more interesting or favourable. They might answer in a way that aims to 'prove' the hypothesis of this research. My research focuses on three artists as case studies. These individuals have been specifically targeted as dance artists with impairments at various stages of a career in dance. The aim of this is to offer comparison between the individual artists, noting shared experiences and differences according to various factors such as age, gender, and social and cultural background. References are also made to dance artists who are not specified as case study participants to augment my observations.

Using observation and interviews my study explores and analyses each individual's perception of their field of dance and disability and how they feel they are perceived by the dance sector at large. I use leadership as a key theme for the interviews and observation to examine where each person sees their role in a framework of leadership in dance.

My choice to use case studies as a research tool is a deliberate attempt to capture the 'first-hand' experiences of the participants. This anecdotal and personal data offers insight into the primary questions of my research. The voice of disabled dance artists is often 'diluted' by a standard framework of academic research. It was important in my research that the voices were authentic and where possible not

translated to conform to a pre-existing etymology of dance research. The participants involved in my research are not academics; their work in dance is primarily practice-based. My objective was to maintain their own voices as they talked about their experience in dance. All the three artists involved in my study are known to me and to each other. My friendship with each of them gives this research access to forms of communication that are informal and honest. The artists are Dan Daw, Welly O'Brien and Kimberley Harvey. It is important to note that all of the three participants in this study have trained and worked with Candoco Dance Company at different points in their careers; this shared experience will inevitably inform their individual perceptions around leadership in dance in general terms and more specifically their own position as leaders in the art form. To diferering extents, it is likely that their views will be framed by their experience of the company and their understanding of its ethos. All comments included by the three participants are taken from interviews, observations and conversations that took place between 2013 and 2016, unless otherwise stated.

6.1 Dan Daw

This case study will examine Daw's position in dance and his passage into the professional contemporary dance sector. Through interviews and observations I will give space for Daw's voice to emerge into my own research, in doing this, the artist's voice will become central to my thesis. I will reflect upon Daw's experience in dance and his perception of his own position and the position he aspires to within the dance field. By locating himself within the dance field the case study will also capture Daw's view on the dance sector in more general terms.

I will draw from a series of interviews with Daw. These range from informal conversations, emails, telephone calls and more formally structured dialogues between Daw and myself that took place between January 2013 and November 2015. In addition to these, I will reflect upon and evaluate my observations of Daw in practice. Direct quotations from Daw in this work are taken from one-to-one interviews that took place in 2014 and 2015. At the start of my research, I

approached Daw, asking if he would become one of three case study participants. He agreed and at the time provided a list of dates where I would be able to observe him in production and rehearsal. The reflections in this chapter include studio observations, in Peterborough (METAL) and London (Trinity Laban) that have taken place over a period of two years (2014/2015).

6.1.0 About Dan Daw

Dan Daw was born in Whyalla, South Australia in 1983, where he lived with his mother and younger brother. Daw was born with Cerebral Palsy and states that he was always encouraged towards independence. He was pushed to do what his peers were doing. There was little compensation made for his impairment. He recalls walking to school on his own aged six because "it was the done thing". Daw clearly cites his mother and grandmother for instilling in him an attitude of 'just going for things'. Daw states that his mother always had an expectation that he would do as his peers did.

> She never molly-coddled me, she let me fall over, and make
> mistakes and be naughty and be punished. (Daw 2014)

The idea of 'molly coddling' here is important. There is a narrative of 'care' often associated with disability; I am drawn to Daw's experience in this respect as my own upbringing was also informed by an expectation that I would, as Daw states 'just do it' (Daw 2013).

In the context of this research into leadership, these early years are important when looking at Daw's route into and subsequent practice in dance. He has not felt that dance is 'off limits' for him. This is contrary to much research suggesting that attitudinal barriers to dance participation come from disabled young dancers themselves, from peers, parents and carers, teachers, companies, audiences, and critics (Aujla and Redding 2013:4).

Daw first encountered formal dance classes at the age of 13 with D'Faces Youth Arts Company. These classes were used as preparation for creative and

developmental tasks or company rehearsals. Daw describes his involvement with this organisation thus:

> In my teens, it was something to which I was committed, gave me
> so much happiness and was so much more than a weekend filler –
> a disabled young person living in a rural Australian centre,
> accessing the arts gave me a purpose and created a sense of
> community and belonging. (Daw 2015)

This sense of dancing as a way to integrate with his community is important. Daw is not referring to a scenario of integrating disabled people into dance; rather it was his dance activity that strengthened his feeling of belonging to his community. It is noteworthy that D'Faces was not an 'inclusive' organisation, it was a collective that aimed to develop arts practice for young people in a specific location. It was Daw's choice to become involved and to subsequently commit to the organisation.

I asked Daw about his memories of 'informal' dance as a child. I wanted to know how he felt about dancing and how this has informed his current feelings about dance. He describes dancing with a girl who lived in his neighbourhood:

> We used to take it in turns secretly choosing a track to which the
> other would 'perform' an improvised solo. We were no more than
> nine or ten (Daw 2015)

Here Daw is describing a familiar scenario of children giving impromptu performances and using dance and movement as an integral part of their play. This reiterates Daw's perception of dance as 'available' to him. This is perhaps to be expected. His grandmother opened and managed the first Ballet school in Whyalla where his mother was a student. He was surrounded by dance from a very early age. Daw recalls:

Sitting watching my mother rehearse her routines under the choreographic
eye of my grandmother at the Whyalla Calisthenics Club. (Daw 2015)

The way in which Daw describes his introduction to dance is notable in that it is
'typical' of a childhood interest in dance. Much existing research concerned with
dance and disability highlights socially and culturally constructed ideologies of a
'normal' dancer along with perceptual and attitudinal barriers as obstacles to dance
participation (Aujla and Redding 2013). In the case of Daw this does not seem to
apply. His early interest in and enjoyment of dance has been nurtured and directed.
He does not feel like an intruder borrowing from an existing vocabulary in dance, he
feels entitled to participate and develop on his own terms.

Daw studied SACE's[20] in English, Japanese, Drama, Social Studies
and Information Technology. Following this he auditioned and was offered a place
on a Bachelor of Creative Arts Degree at Flinders University - Drama Centre.
Throughout the three years of study Daw studied a range of subjects including:
acting for stage and screen, movement, voice, singing, script analysis. During this
period (between 2002 and 2005) Daw's interest in dance grew and he began
participating in workshops and classes with Restless Dance Company (AUS), a
professional theatre company based in Adelaide who "collaboratively create
outstanding inclusive dance theatre informed by disability" (Restless Dance theatre
n.d).

Daw was employed by Restless Dance Company until 2005; he also worked
with No Strings Attached – Theatre of Disability (AUS) in 2004 and Frontline Dance
(UK) in 2005. During his role as a dancer with Candoco, between 2010 and 2014,
alongside performing he was also employed by the company as an assistant
producer throughout 2013. Between 2013 and 2014 he was a guest dancer with
Swedish based Skånes Dansteater. In 2014 he established Dan Daw Creative
projects: his most recent work being, *BEAST* a solo made in collaboration with
Martin Forsberg and Jenny Norberg. In 2015 Daw was made a BBC Performing Arts

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[20] South Australian Certificate of Education, equivalent to UK GCE A'Level (General Certificate of
Education, Advanced Level)

Fund Fellow 2015 in partnership with South East Dance; a charity committed to developing performing arts talent across the UK (BBC 2015).

6.1.1 Self-Certified Leadership

Daw's career in dance so far indicates that he feels entitled to choose to train, work and progress in dance. This is fundamental to his perception of himself as a leader and his acceptance that others see him in a leadership capacity, illuminated by his response when I ask if he sees himself as a leader.

> I am a leader, but I don't do what I do to be a leader. What I do and the way I do it makes me a leader. (Daw 2014)

This statement indicates Daw's confident belief in himself as a leader. He is alluding to unconscious leadership. There is distinction here between this and accidental leadership (Bowditch 2013). Daw is suggesting that he just practices instinctively and that makes him a leader. This implies that Daw leads intuitively, furthermore that he perceives the practice he udertakes to be leaderful . In his perception, leading is a consequence of his thinking and his actions.

> I've never said 'I'm a leader' I've heard 'Dan you're a leader' (Daw 2014)

If Daw has had the label of 'leader' imposed upon him, by those who have been influences in his life, has this made him feel like he is living his life in a leaderful way? It becomes clear from our conversations that Daw is reluctant to define in what way he is a leader. He is comfortable calling himself a leader and it seems leadership is something he feels is accessible to him, in his work and personal life. When I ask him how he leads he replies:

> My leadership style is based on the premise of leader as equal to
> those I'm leading, but I'm not sure I'm leading anybody. (Daw
> 2014)

This suggestion that Daw does not feel that he is leading others is an important point. He is leading without followers. Dennis Tourish offers a useful insight here by suggesting that individuals may self-verify themselves as leaders, but leader claims only find traction when they are recognised by others (Tourish 2004:80). Dan's childhood and early dance career wherein he has been told he is a leader have impacted on his ability to 'self-certify' as a leader. He hesitates, however, to confirm that he is leading others in dance. Daw feels leaderful in his practice, but I sense some reluctance from him to 'formally' label himself externally as a leader in dance.

Locating his leadership within himself and his artistic practice suggest that without the formality of a label or title of leader he feels that there is a hierarchy of leadership in dance that does not yet include him. This is compounded by Daw's implied rejection of leaders in dance when I ask him whom he sees as the leaders in the sector he states:

> It's easy for me to say who the leaders in dance aren't. Others
> would say they are, but for me they are not. (Daw 2014)

Here Daw seems to be 'rebelling' from the widely perceived ideas of who the leaders in the dance sector are. He affirms that he does not necessarily perceive those in positions of leadership as leaders to him. He goes on to cite several artists as leaders. When I ask him what makes them leaders, there is an interesting link between his response and earlier comments relating to his upbringing, where he responds:

> They all are incredibly articulate…I think they are all artists that
> make the work they want to make, rather than the work they think
> they should make and to me that is incredibly leader-like. You

know it's like – I'm just going to do this if you're with me fine, if not
also fine. (Daw 2014)

Daw is suggesting here that doing what you want to do regardless of the
perception or approval of others is leaderful This resonates strongly with Daw's
recollection of his mother's encouragement to 'just do it.' This early influence has
clearly fed his perception of what leading should be. This 'leaderful' practice he
describes is in stark contrast to his observation of some leaders as 'behind shut
doors' (Daw 2014) unaware of the reality around them.

Daw elaborates on this point by suggesting that the examples of leadership he
sees in dance are not always demonstrations of what he considers to be effective
leadership. In citing artists and his peers as leaders, Daw seems to be challenging a
traditional model of leadership as an earned status (Owen 2011:214). He is
proposing that creativity and artistry on 'ones own terms' is a leader-like practice.
There is a possibility here that Daw perceives 'formal' leadership in dance, for
example, funders, policy makers, promoters, as 'anti-art.' In dance, leadership often
requires a level of responsibility for others, in the form of teaching, artist support, or
relating to funding. I wonder if Daw's seeming resistance to 'formal' leadership
indicates his desire to maintain his artistic practice. He does not want to be
encompassed by leadership structures that will force him to put his creative and
performance work aside.

6.1.2 The Matriarchal Leader

During one interview I ask Daw what a leader looks like, his first response is
'female.' This is not surprising given Daw's description of his mother and
grandmother as important leaders in his life. Within the context of this research it
must also be noted that Daw may be influenced by my position as a female
researcher and friend. When answering my questions he may even on a
subconscious level be attempting to give me an answer that acknowledges my

position in dance and my relationship with Daw himself. When we discuss the notion of female leaders further Daw states that:

> I'm generally quite intimidated by male leaders and that stems from my childhood, having many stepdads over the years… for that reason all of my really good school friends were girls. (Daw 2014)

Daw has a history of influential female figures throughout his life. His work for Restless Dance Company was under the artistic directorship of Kat Worth. Kate Champion was director of Force Majeure Dance Company with whom Daw performed as a guest artist. Women in positions of leadership feature strongly in Daw's introduction to and subsequent practice in dance. There is a link here to a broader observation that contemporary dance is an art form where women are the majority. A 'rarity of male dancers' (Wright 2013:14) in the form has meant that male dance artists often progress to leadership positions quickly and more directly than their female peers, possibly a result of fewer 'competitors' moving towards leadership roles. There is also a potential that a general privileging of male leaders, means that in spite of their minority status, they will become leaders in the sector. Although it is not the focus of my study, it is noteworthy that there are number of factors impacting on this gender imbalance, for example, motherhood, career aspiration and societal gender bias.

The presence or absence of male role models in a person's development has been widely reported and evaluated within sociological studies (Bass and Stogdill 1990, Guiton and Marvick 1989). This study is not specifically concerned with sociological theories of male influence on leadership but in the case of Daw there is value in considering the impact of inconsistent male role models throughout his childhood and teenage years.

There is a body of research relating to attachment and leadership (Popper, Mayseless 2007). This work offers an interesting insight into Daw's attitude towards leadership. Popper and Mayseless suggest that variables in parental influence can impact on a people's capacity and motivation to lead.

> Because these children lack an idealized father figure they seek to create such an image by becoming one; furthermore, as a compensation they need to create a magnified, idealized figure, namely not "just" a father figure for their own children but a father figure in a leadership position to a large group of followers who, to some extent, are treated as children. (Popper and Mayseless, 2007)

In relation to Daw, it is possible that his desire to lead through equality and collaboration reflects his attempt to become the 'idealised' father figure, knowledgeable and fair minded. Conversely the lack of a consistent father in Daw's upbringing could have helped mould his leadership methods into nurturing, maternal leadership styles as modelled by his mother and grandmother. Although research into paternal absence and leadership has been criticised for being speculative (Popper, Mayseless 2007) and lacking in quantitative data, there is value in considering the influence of early leadership figures on Daw's leadership position in his adult life. As Castelnovo, Mayseless and Popper suggest:

> One may examine the motivation and capacity of the leader in his or her role, and look for features parallel to those found in the roles of parents; these may include the motivation to protect one's child/follower, the capacity to enhance his or her competence, the parent/leader as a role model and as a social agent representing society's rules, and so on. (Castelnovo, Mayseless and Popper 2000:28)

I have suggested that the 'go for it' attitude displayed by the women in Daw's life have impacted upon his belief and confidence in his ability to lead. He is consistent in his perception of himself as a person with leadership skills. To extend upon this Daw feels that he has a valuable contribution to make which is useful not only to his own development, but also to the development of others. I propose that it is this inherent sense of himself as a leader that motivates Daw to seek out

leadership opportunities. In the case of his practice in dance this has included making the transition from performer to producer, the production of a solo work, the writing of applications for funding for his own work and undertaking a high profile fellowship within a leading organisation in dance.

6.1.3 Aesthetics of Leadership

My study postulates that establishing disabled leaders in dance is essential to acknowledging and developing the roles and contribution of dancers with disability in the contemporary dance sector. Furthermore, I argue that the limited examples of people with impairments in leadership positions in dance are directly detrimental to the aspirations of disabled dancers at various stages in their career,I also explore how a leader in dance is expected to look and where this expectation is prominent. There is a link here to the distinct hierarchy of a dancer's training or particular dance practice, which often validates leadership. Conservatoire training institutions (Trinity Laban, UK, London School of Contemporary Dance, UK, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, UK) are positioned at the top of the hierarchy and afford graduates a currency in their onward progression in dance. Within the UK Higher Education framework there exists another hierarchy often based on location, alumni, research activity and faculty experience.

With limited access to the dominant verbal and physical vocabularies in dance, dancers with disabilities are immediately 'disadvantaged.' This leads to a hierarchy of impairment. Dancers who can assimilate most closely to the normative ideal reside at the top and those who bodies stray the furthest from this form are at the bottom. Daw suggests that an existing model where success in dance is measured within a system of norms and traditional aesthetics is unhelpful to the development of disabled dancers into leaders. He states that:

> The disabled body is seen as a different aesthetic, but it shouldn't
> be. As a dancer with a disability, I do feel the need to challenge
> the dominant aesthetic. (Daw 2014)

Daw is recognising that dancers with impairment are positioned outside of an accepted aesthetic in dance. This supports his view that current leaders in dance belong to this traditional aesthetic; white, male, non-disabled (Daw 2015). In terms of his own leadership, he tells me that as a disabled male, he does not pursue certain leadership positions because they feel unattainable for him (Daw 2015). There is a suggestion in Daw's thinking that he perceives a dominant aesthetic in dance, furthermore that the disabled dancer should not inhabit an alternative aesthetic framework. Daw is making the claim for an aesthetic in dance that accounts for a diversity of bodily aesthetics.

This rejection of the 'normal' trajectory towards leadership in dance is central to Daw's perception of his position in dance. Referring to hierarchical patterns of leadership development in dance as 'going up rungs on a ladder' (Daw 2015) there is a strong assertion from Daw that he is challenging this system. When I inquire if resisting the traditional passage into dance leadership reduces pressure to progress in a prescribed way he tells me –it does, because I can take my own path and then that's leaderful (Daw 2015).

6.1.4 Daw in Practice and Process

The following section of this chapter presents a culmination of my observations of Daw during the initial development of his solo *BEAST*. This piece is a collaboration between Daw, choreographer Martin Forsberg and designer Jenny Norberg. This is Daw's first endeavour as Dan Daw Creative projects founded in 2014. The work received a research and development grant from Arts Council England. Daw's collaboration with Swedish artists Forsberg and Norberg arose following his engagement with Skånes Dansteater as a guest dancer in 2013. This period of research took place at Metal Peterborough, an organisation that works to provide the catalyst that can transform the potential of people and places through great art and inspiring ideas (Metal Culture 2015).

Daw is in residence at Chauffeurs Cottage, Metal's base in Peterborough. The building includes a small studio space with offices and additional meeting spaces. It is an informal venue where artists are encouraged to integrate into the activity of the

organisation, there is a small kitchen which all users of the building can make use of throughout their time in residence. The three members of staff at Metal are very 'present', this seems to add to the informal nature of the environment.

As the days progress when Daw and his team arrive I make tea for them whilst they prepare to start rehearsals. I am aware that in doing so my role as observer is further cemented, also that I can never be fully objective and without bias in my reflections of the practice. On the subject of relationship between researcher and research subject anthropologist Geyla Franks describes an event shared between herself and the subject of her 20-year cultural biography Diane DeVries as follows:

> Although conducting my research in any formal sense was the
> furthest from my mind that Easter Sunday, such experiences
> provided access to information about who Diane and I were. This
> information was not based on identifying traits that supposedly
> already existed in us, but through the joint creation of a
> relationship. I welcomed closeness and felt committed to Diane as
> a friend. (Franks 2000:106)

Franks' suggestion that the researcher/subject relationship is forged and changed through interaction that occurs outside the confines of 'formal' research offers an interesting perspective for my case study research with Daw. It enables me to acknowledge that the research has fluidity and my thoughts and observations are never restricted to the moment of observation or interview. The nature of my relationship with Daw means that my reflections are both active during and impacted by the 'off record' moments of waiting alone in the studio and of knowing that Dan takes his tea with two sugars and a straw.

It is a premise of this study that my pre-existing relationship to Daw and the other case study participants will offer unique perspectives from disabled dance artists at different stages of their practice in dance. This is an area historically absent from research concerned with dance and disability. It must be noted that my personal proximity to the participants has the potential to impact on the ethical integrity of my findings. The lack of neutrality has the potential to inform both my own

reflections and analysis and the contribution and responses of the case study subjects.

Having relocated to my current home when I stopped performing on a full time basis, I rarely work in the city in which I live. I tend to commute to work with other dance organisations and people. This research period with Daw is the first time I have conducted research in my hometown. I am aware of this as I start the observation of Daw's process. I feel a nervous anticipation, that he might not like the space, or the city or the commute might feel too long. I also feel protective of my friendship with Daw, I want people to like him as I do and like his work. We are both indigenous to the same community of disabled artists. I perceive Daw and myself as occupying a similar space. He is 'my people' (Myerhoff 1978 cited in Franks 2000:13) and I am his.

As I began my period of research with Daw I questioned my own pre-conceptions. Do I see Daw as a leader? What are my assumptions about how others will perceive Daw? On the final week of research and development Daw opens up his rehearsal for people to watch and ask questions. I invited a friend and colleague to attend with a group of students. I noted my own apprehension, what will they think of his work and will they see this as 'dance'? This albeit uncomfortable self-reflection is valuable to this study, specifically to Daw's case study, by attempting not to 'edit' my responses I am better placed to utilise my own perspective as a tool for research, enabling me to challenge my own pre-conceptions and address the pre-conceived ideas of others that might impact on the position of disabled artists as leaders. Anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff comments on self-reflection in research thus:

> You study what is happening to others by understanding what is going on in yourself. And you yourself become the data-gathering instrument. (Myerhoff 1978 cited in Franks 2000:14)

As previously highlighted, existing research into dance and disability lacks a vocabulary that is based upon and located within the work of disabled artists themselves. If I do not question my own assumptions as I pursue the research, how can I expect to present findings that are original and authentic to the subject?

6.1.5 Observing Daw in Practice

As I observe Daw, I note as much as I can, recording the space and all that is inside it. I note the temperature of the studio, the acoustics in the room and peripheral noise within the venue. I don't know yet how these might inform my observations, but I am conscious of a need to note the research surroundings in my attempt to understand Daw's process as dance artist, as well as my own as artist-researcher. As outlined in Chapter 3, this position affords an element of ethnographic methodology to my research.

The following writing is a culmination of my notes used to respond to Daw's process and written as a blog. This was Daw's invitation to comment publically on my observations of the early stages of his solo in production. Chapter 1 offers a rationale for the use of blogs in my study; the following blog posts have been italicised for clarity.

Dan Daw – Beast week 1

What did I expect to see when I entered the creative space shared by Dan Daw and Martin Forsberg? What do any of us expect from our observations and viewings of, or participation in, the 'making' process?

Maybe to sit quietly in a corner, shoes off, smiling, making our faces and bodies seem open, non-intruding, approving? Or maybe to hover, notebook at-hand seeking to understand the processes and thoughts of the artists.

On entering the space on Friday it was immediately apparent that my pre-conceived ideas of viewing process would be shifted. On one of the four walls there are words, phrases, quotes and comments adorning the entire surface, they vary from philosophical ideas to descriptions of "breast feeding an eel" (or is it a breastfeeding

eel, I forget and doubt it matters).

Dan is writing on the wall and Martin is observing the impact of the process of reaching and writing on Dan's body. Already I sense a kind of fluidity between the moving and the thinking and the movement and the writing.

The artists sit me down (hang on a minute!) and ask me to answer some questions. Okay this is sort of familiar. I'll probably have some stock answers to these questions I'm a seasoned "observer" after all. Question one: "What do you want Dan's solo to look like?". This and the subsequent questions are hard. Dan and Martin are inviting me (forcing me) to consider my expectations of this work and in turn my expectations of dance work generally.

Thrown slightly, I bumble my way through the questions. My responses seem to be inarticulate and affected at the same time. I suspect the pair predicted this. It is not my answers that are valuable, but the debate concerning what we want, or expect, to see in performance and how we as viewers have a role in this exchange.

I have taken from this first 'sitting in' with Dan and Martin, the idea that we (the viewer, the audience) can change the work through our 'looking' at and experiencing it. I am charmed by Martin's recounting of his visit to the ballet with his iPod, headphones and slatted glasses, to explore how he might perceive the work 'differently'. I like this idea that rather than grumpily complaining, that we actually take ownership of our viewing. I leave the rehearsal with the strong sense that Daw's solo will not leave room for complacent viewings from any of us.

<u>*Dan Daw – Beast week 2*</u>

As I enter the studio at the start of the second week with Dan and his collaborators, the venue is notably quiet. Metal's administrator greets me. She explains that the team have not yet arrived and invites me into the studio and encourages me to help myself to tea or coffee. I make myself a cup of tea and enter the space.

I am immediately struck by the way in which this space held the creative process. The writing is still on the wall; Jenny and Martin's table is still in situ, strewn with the previous rehearsal's notes, pictures and sketches. There is a distinct feel of work being done and work still to come. I luxuriate in this moment of being alone in this space, I settle myself, thinking about where I want to be in this process, in and out at the same time, absorbing without (hopefully) intruding. As an artist and observer I am aware of that delicate balance of an 'extra' body in the room, 'too much' presence versus 'not enough'.

The three artists arrive shortly after me. I am formally introduced to Jenny Nordberg who is the designer for Branded Beast. Very quickly she and Martin sit at the table. Dan changes next to me with a familiarity typical of dancers. In this moment I am reminded of my unique position as an artist/observer/researcher/friend. I am slightly thrilled by the potential of this position to afford me some unique access to Dan's process. I am not an outsider observing an artistic process I am native to this environment. Dan and I share a language, of dance yes, of disability maybe? I am intrigued as to what this process will teach me about Dan, about myself and about performance.

Today is a 'movement' day. Martin tasks Dan with using a word or phrase to create a 'landscape'. He sets the task with a painstaking attention to detail:

"Imagine that the letters are there floating in space, that you can place yourself in the letters, so I have the 'D' here, I can attach my hip socket to that and do the trajectory of that. You can choose whether you are spelling or whether you are spelt."

Dan works silently for what feels like quite a long time. Martin sits, leaning towards him. He is watching Dan intently. I can see his eyes following each flick of a finger or shift of the torso. Jenny sketches, she is engrossed, I type in-between watching. For a second I see us a people in four separate bubbles, in the same space. There is a tangible air of creativity in the studio.

Beast – Week two, day 3.

On my second visit of this week, the artists have arrived and are just preparing to start. Dan is warming up, marking through yesterday's work. Jenny is using her laptop to research and Martin moves between a beanbag and a chair. The atmosphere feels very light today, quite removed from the intense concentration of yesterday.

There is a lot of noise in the venue, a group of volunteers have been tending to the (award winning) garden at Chauffer's Cottage and as they stop for tea, their chat floats into the studio, at one point someone starts to hoover outside; Martin and Dan laugh as the hoover starts when he opens his mouth to speak. I note that this could be an irritation to some, an interruption to the creativity. Not so here, in-fact I get the distinct impression that this is seen as part of the process.

This lightness continues as Dan explores his solo under Martin's direction – there is even a nod to 'jazz-hands' at one point. Martin walks around the space watching Dan from all angles this movement somehow makes the viewing less intense: I am reminded about Martin's earlier comments on the potential of the viewer to change the 'view'.

In this second week, I am 'hooked'. I have made a commitment to this solo, whatever it turns out to be. I know even at this early stage that I will feel connected to this work, that in some way it will speak to me and question me. I cannot say why or how, but I do know that I am intrigued to see what next week brings.

The contributions of the blog writing to this research are multi faceted; the personalised nature of the writing allows space for my own voice to become clear within the research. The immediacy of the writing has enabled reflections of my observations of Daw that are raw and immediate, rather than writing informed by a process of 'fitting' my observation into a more 'formal' framework.

It is also clear in this writing that the important details of the observation period with Daw are not lost or forgotten. Noticing and noting seemingly insignificant specifics, such as the interruptive sound of a hoover or the jokes shared between dancer and choreographer, become a central part of my reflections of Daw's process. They make my proximity to Daw and his collaborators transparent and give a valuable insight into the 'human' connection between me as artist-researcher and Daw as friend-participant.

6.1.6 Re-Connecting with Daw – January 2015

I spoke with Dan today; we had been trying to telephone each other after failing to meet the previous week. It is a Saturday morning and after completing my usual weekend tasks I telephone Daw, he is at home having a 'lovely slow Saturday' with his partner. I ask how he is and he replies that the past few weeks have been 'overwhelmingly crazy'. Daw has been in Sweden with Skanes Danstheater for much of the previous month, this has meant an extended period away from home and away from his partner, when he is home he is also regularly undertaking a two hour commute to the organisation where he is currently a BBC Performing Arts Fellow. This Saturday is the first day off for him in some time.

As we talk, Daw tells me that he is applying for a place to study for a Masters specialising in Aesthetics. He is nervous about this change of direction from his 'usual' practice. He tells me he finds the idea 'a little bit terrifying' but there is a clear determination in his voice as he talks about entering academic research. This desire has been apparent in many of my exchanges with Daw, he is eager to develop his skills and diversify his practice. I get the impression he is forward planning, or 'feathering his nest' to ensure longevity in his dance career. Daw expresses a sense that permanency in dance requires him to be more than 'just a dancer.' He seems to aspire strongly towards autonomy. This is highlighted by his resolve to keep his own creative 'vision' central to his practice in dance. The transition from dancer to a different role is a widely discussed aspect of dance research. It is generally recognised that post-performing careers can be difficult for professional dancers, having dedicated much of their career playing out the creative ideas of others and

being relatively protected by organisational framework. Dancers exiting a full time performing role may lack key pre-requisites for a 'different' career.

> I had decided that it was time to stop performing, not because I was forced to for physical reasons but because I feared the moment when I could no longer dance to the standard that I aspired to. I wanted to stop before anyone told me that I should! I also wanted to be in control of my life; as a dancer, at the end of my career, I increasingly felt at the mercy of others' whims, likes, and dislikes and I just could not take that. (Dancers Career Development 2015)

Arts producer Nelson Fernandez is describing above his transition from performing into a career in production and curating. His feeling of 'fear' of not achieving a certain level of performing is interesting in terms of perceptions of the 'ideal' dancer. There are links here with normative body ideologies in dance. Fernandez is drawing upon a perceived framework of how dance should look or feel as a measure of validating the individual dancer.

There is a resonance with Daw on the notion of being 'in control.' By expanding his practice in dance into a range of areas, Daw is developing his position in dance. He seems to be staking his claim to progression, as highlighted in our conversations about his childhood. He feels entitled to progress and to take his position as a recognised leader in dance.

In one of our conversations Daw suggests that people with disabilities are required to be more than the 'average' person to be seen as equal. He exemplifies this point with the example of Professor Stephen Hawking. Interestingly, Hawking is the person named by all the case study participants in response to the question; 'Who are the disabled leaders in society?' Daw suggests that:

> You have to be really smart, arguably the smartest man in the world, to be seen as equal when actually he's far superior to most. (Daw 2014)

This notion of exceeding expectation is prominent in my observations and interviews with Daw. He is striving for the next stage of his personal development. When I ask him when his next break from work is, he laughs and tells me not until the end of the year at least. I observe in Daw a resolve to extend his skill, practice and understanding in dance. He states that he doesn't call himself a leader - rather people have told him he is a leader. This is key to his position in dance. He has a long history of being told 'he can'. There are clearly a number of factors affecting Daw's perception of himself as a leader, a mother and grandmother determined for him to fully participate and follow his aspirations, some inspiring teachers who have modelled humility in their leadership by using humour as a tool for leading (Daw 2015). In addition, his bespoke training in dance has allowed him to experience a range of diverse approaches, each one seeming to feed into the next endeavour. As we talk I realise that Daw appears to hold onto those people he sees as positively impacting on his own practice as he progresses through dance. He has created a network of people who continue to support him and reaffirm his position as a leader.

6.1.7 Project development for BEAST 5th May 2015 – Trinity Laban, Laurie Grove studios

Today is a strange day for me. I am going to be observing Daw in rehearsal for his solo *BEAST*. The rehearsal is taking place at Trinity Laban's studios in New Cross, London. These studios are part of the original Laban centre, which has subsequently moved and been re-developed to a new site in Greenwich. This is significant for me, because this building was my first introduction to working in a professional dance context. I was never a student at Laban, but Candoco had their first office space in the atrium at the Laban Centre (as it was known at the time.) This was a tiny office, with barely enough room for the two full time staff members. It was in this office that I started my Arts Council funded traineeship with Candoco in 1996.

The building looks jaded, neglected, a poor cousin to its shiny relative bursting out of the ground in Greenwich. Initially I can't find my way in, eventually I locate the bell and I ask where Daw is rehearsing. I am sent up stairs, through corridors and

double doors where I find Daw's allotted studio. I open the door slowly in an attempt not to disrupt Daw and his team. As I enter the space it is extremely quiet. It is a studio theatre space with raked seating. There are three bodies on the stage area, all of them with their backs to me. At first I think I might have the wrong space, I do not recognise the dancers immediately. As I walk further into the room, I see Daw is in the middle of the three figures. His hair has grown and he has shaved his beard. The other bodies in the space are Susanna Recchia[21] who Daw has employed as rehearsal director and choreographer Martin Forsberg. I take a seat in the theatre. The dancers are in the middle of an improvisation led by Forsberg. He has asked them to 'imagine the teeth falling away from the gums' they are all drooling on the floor. A drop of saliva falls onto the floor from Daw's mouth, breaking the silence as it lands. Daw catches my eye and grins at me. I feel in this moment that my presence has an impact on Daw's process. Even by causing a disturbance I am part of this work. This raises a question for me of how Daw feels to be central to this research. Do I have the potential to 'frame' his leadership in action through this research?

As the improvisation comes to an end, the dancers break and begin to plan the rehearsal. I note that Forsberg sets the agenda for the day, this is done by questioning the other artists, offering a choice in the next task, but still guiding and moving the process forward. I have come to predict the phrase 'How was that?' spoken in a calm Swedish accent at the end of each exercise or run through of the solo. By 'checking in' the relationship between Forsberg and Daw becomes clearer. Forsberg is employed to lead and Dan is the employer in this context. This highlights an interesting point relating to deferred leadership. If the overall project is led by Daw, is Forsberg leading to a brief? I ask Daw during our next conversation.

> I feel equal, and I feel that with BEAST I'm accomplishing what I
> want to accomplish because I'm disbanding the notion of hierarchy
> in dance. I'm doing that by…. I'm a dancer and I choose you. Lets
> make a piece together, so it strips that hierarchy there's no now
> 'I'm above you and you're below' its like 'come on let's do this
> together.' (Daw 2015)

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[21] Recchia is a former dancer with Candoco and performed in repertory with Daw.

Daw and Forsberg negotiate through a series of polite conversations, bearing out what Daw opines. Following the improvisation, Forsberg asks 'and how was that?' Daw replies:

> I love to start the day with some kind of exercise – as a way to
> connect. I'd love to maintain that if we can. (Daw 2015)

Forsberg responds by asking Daw:

> Would you like to go deeper into something or expand your toolbox
> for future use? (Forsberg 2015)

There seems to be an assumption here that Forsberg has knowledge that he can share with Daw. He is suggesting that he can add to what Daw already knows. Forsberg is a prolific and experienced choreographer and teacher. It is likely that imparting knowledge and sharing experience informs most of his practice. In this context I wonder if Forsberg feels a responsibility to develop Daw's practice. Forsberg and Daw are negotiating leadership in this collaboration. They are shifting away from a binary mode of choreographer as leader and performer as passive respondent.

6.1.8 On BEAST

In the centre of the stage is a rectangular backdrop suspended from the lighting rig. It is about two metres wide and painted a mottled grey colour. Daw stands in front of the backdrop. He is behind a 'Censorship Stand.' This is a tall metal stand with two smaller lengths of metal horizontally attached to it, one at the height of Daw's head the other at the height of his pelvis. At the end of each of these is a black wooden square. These invite the viewer to imagine what lies behind them.

Daw's body is covered in a thin layer of white paint. He is wearing only knee-high socks and a thin strip of black material around his waist.

The lighting is focussed upon Daw; this directed light illuminates the paint on his skin. His mouth, torso, legs and feet are brought to the viewer's attention through the 'censoring' of the rest of his body. The sound accompaniment is pulsating dance music; it is reminiscent of dark clubs, crowded with bodies. I can feel the beat resonate in my body as the volume escalates and the tempo speeds up. Daw begins to move, almost imperceptibly at first. He weaves his fingers in an intricate pattern of gestures, his mouth seems to echo the movement of his body as it opens and closes. His torso begins to sway from side to side. There is something of the 'erotic' dancer in this motion. Daw seems to be demanding the audience's attention he is calling the viewer to look at him, directing focus with his movements. His hand slowly reaches down his torso towards his pelvis and disappears behind the black wooden square. This action seems both titillating and highly personal. Daw is allowing this moment of staring and wondering. There is also a strong sense of him controlling the viewing. Daw slowly emerges from behind the structure that has obscured the full viewing of his body. He moves slowly, deliberately towards a tray holding cups and saucers. The tray and its contents are painted white. Daw bends towards the tray, his fingers wrap around the handles of the tray. He waits. He seems to be gathering energy for something. As I watch I notice I am holding my breath. For what, I am not sure. Daw scans the room. There is intensity in his focus, it is not challenging, neither is it fully inviting. It seems truthful. When Daw looks at us, he seems to be looking in earnest. Watching the viewer, watching him. He lifts the tray and immediately the spasms in his body make the contents of the tray move and rattle. It is as if the tray has become an extension of Daw's own body. The sound of clinking crockery wakes me from the hypnotic gaze induced by Daw's opening solo. Daw begins to pant. His tongue hangs from his mouth and his breathing becomes audible. He fixes his gaze on the audience and singles out viewers holding their stare until he moves to the next person. He walks purposefully towards the front of the stage, continuing to hold the audience gaze. He has gathered the audience into a collective staring encounter. I notice myself willing the tray's contents to remain intact but simultaneously wondering what would happen if

they didn't? Daw lowers his body, his eyes still strongly focussed on the audience. He places the tray on the floor. He is on all fours, canine-like, panting and drooling. He moves away from the tray and pushes himself up into a standing position. Slowly his arms move from side to side in a spiralling motion. As this spiralling becomes faster, his whole body begins to move and gradually he starts to move around the stage, not quite running, but not walking either. His movement appears erratic and yet equally highly choreographed. As the solo concludes I remember Daw's comments relating to how he perceives his own aesthetic.

> For me, my own personal aesthetic is really about giving myself permission to not 'iron out the kinks'. By 'kinks', I mean the idiosyncrasies that distinguish my moving (or even still) body in space from another. In that, as a disabled artist, I resist normative aesthetics in dance. Not because I cannot, but rather because I'm disinterested in watching "perfect" bodies move. (Daw 2015)

There is a key point being made by Daw here. By not striving to 'fit into' a pre-defined aesthetic he is forcing the viewer to consider his body with its 'kinks' and idiosyncratic movements as belonging to an aesthetic of its own creation. Daw is disallowing his body to be measured against existing taxonomies. Audiences read and interpret bodies in dance through a system of constructed meanings and phenomenological frameworks of understanding, the body becomes a receptor of social meanings (Shilling 2003: 62). When a dancer with a disability is the subject, audiences bring to this encounter their pre-conceived ideas of dance and dancers, and of disability. In addition to these factors, I propose that as a result of developments in dance and disability over the last two decades, this reading now includes the viewer's assumptions relating to the 'traditional' disabled dancer. By challenging these presumptions Daw is attempting to liberate himself from the constraints of 'normative' ideologies in dance. I am including in this, 'normal' non-disabled dancers and 'normal' disabled dancers, I do so to acknowledge what I am describing as an 'acceptable' disabled body in dance, a physicality that speaks to traditional notions of the dancers body, muscular and virtuosic and is oppositional to

traditional notions of the impaired body, drooling, misshapen (Kafer 2013:134).

Daw's performance in *BEAST* presents a body vocabulary so intrinsic to Daw that as a viewer there are few parallels to draw between this work and other examples of solo dance performances This raises an interesting question of whether solo performance is a favourable or more comfortable genre for dancers with particular physicalities? It is worth considering the practice of Claire Cunningham[22], a disabled artist working primarily within the genre of solo performance. Cunningham describes her practice in dance as being about:

> My own specific body proportions and strengths… My own specific
> physicality, because of my medical condition was giving me my
> own vocabulary to make work. (Cunningham 2014)

Essentially solo material requires no negotiation with 'other' bodies nor is there a comparison or physical hierarchy being presented in the work. I speak to Daw after the preview of *BEAST* following the first period of research and development. The audience have been invited and amongst those present are producers, promoters, critics and academics. Daw tells me that the responses to the work are generally positive. He also informs me that a number of respondents felt that the work would 'sit well' in the live art or performance art genre. When I ask him how he feels about this, he expresses his frustration that his solo might not be defined as dance. He elaborates on this by telling me that 'audiences want to label work as "other" when it does not resemble dance that they recognise.' I ask Daw if he perceives *BEAST* to be dance. Absolutely, he replies I am a dancer, the solo is dance (Daw 2015).

There is a link here to Daw's perspective on aesthetics, in particular on traditional or expected aesthetics in contemporary dance. His recognition that *BEAST* is troubling for these pre-conceived ideas is key to how he positions himself and his dance practice. He seems to be consciously challenging these 'norms' through his dance practice. This is evident not only in his performance work, but also in the choices he makes in terms of professional collaborations. Martin Forsberg's

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[22] For more information see www.clairecunningham.co.uk

approach seems aligned to Daw's view of what makes a leader in dance, as those
who are challenging the aesthetic (Daw 2015):

> Dancing is a question of not to dance, of interfering with the body
> in time and space, of disobedience, and of multiple layering.
> Dancing is the fist step into hyper modernism. (ForsWorks 2015)

This quote, extracted from Forsberg's publicity suggests that he is interested in
challenging assumptions and 'norms' in dance. To describe dance as interfering and
disobedient highlights the potential Forsberg sees in dance to provoke and question.
By choosing to collaborate with Forsberg, Daw appears to believe that the resulting
work will allow room for his own questions and creative exploration. In particular, it
will answer his questions relating to his own body and aesthetic, and his position and
development as a dancer.

This parity of thinking between Daw and Forsberg comes into focus on my
second observation at Trinity Laban. Daw has just completed a run through of the
solo. Forsberg suggests that it is becoming a work that will challenge audiences and
has the potential to be 'uncomfortable viewing'. As the pair discuss this observation,
Forsberg offers the view that viewers may find themselves wanting to leave but feel
they can't because Daw is disabled. He suggests they may feel that they want to go
but they cannot, because how will that look? (Forsberg 2015). This is linked to the
idea of socially constructed perceptions of disability. When viewers encounter Daw in
performance their reading of the work is likely underpinned by their pre-existing
ideas of disabled people and their own relationship with impairment. This is an
intrinsic element of how audiences tend to view and understand dance including
disabled dancers, bringing certain expectations, preconceptions about 'difference' or
'otherness' and a particular perspective to the work (Whatley 2007:16).

What is pertinent here is that Daw and Forsberg are making this encounter
'visible.' There is no attempt being made to fit *BEAST* into a vocabulary of
performance that already exists. As I observe this aspect of the collaboration
between Daw and Forsberg I am reminded of Daw's choice to work in partnership
with Forsberg and his belief that the collaboration is an opportunity to be challenged.

That's what Martin does in this process, in a way that no other

choreographer has done, and I'm like "wow! This actually blows my

mind" because I'm really having to step up in a way it's like Martin's

going (Gestures hand) 'I've set the bar here, now, I've set it here,

now here.'(Daw 2015)

6.1.9 The Artist as Leader

When I asked Daw whom he felt are leaders in dance, he named three dance artists. They are all artists who have started their career in dance within an established company or organisation. All the artists Daw cites have subsequently formed their own companies or transitioned into autonomous, independent performance work.

There is a value for Daw in the fact that these individuals have followed their own trajectory and in his eyes doing so affords them a leaderful status by 'making the work they want to make, rather than the work they think they should make' (Daw 2015)[23]. Daw is equating independent artistry with qualities of leadership. He goes on to identify personally with the artists he has cited. Stating that:

I identify with those artists because I believe myself to be similar,

its not like 'I want to be like you. It's like, 'you're kind of the same

as me.' (Daw 2015)

In the 2009 report 'The Artist as Leader', researchers Douglas and Freemantle explore a differentiation between leadership and financial or commercial gain, and leadership and cultural value. They present an argument which introduces the theme of an 'attitude' of leadership present in artists:

Although leadership in terms of the management of production, in

relation to client/audience is important, the artistic leadership

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[23] Full quote from Daw on page 4

articulated as an attitude and approach to creativity in culture is
perceived by artists and related practitioners to be more than a
purely economic endeavor. (Douglas and Freemantle 2009: 13)

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This resonates with Daw's view that integrity and self-direction in dance are leadership qualities. He feels that when an artist makes work, which is driven by a creative interest rather than to fit a funding brief, they are operating in a leading way. Both the report and Daw seem to be proposing a new model of leadership in the arts within which the leadership structure is not defined by economics or organisational structures. In this 'alternative' model it is the art and the artists that determine leadership, argued thus:

A different construction of leadership, that for example takes into
account art's critical role in culture, politics and the economy, would
have consequences for understanding how artists can act as
leaders. (Douglas and Freemantle 2009:13)

There is a tangible value in exploring this proposed model in relation to the progression of the disabled dance artist. In the current landscape, informed by outmoded structures or advancement to leadership roles such as established education and training routes or longevity of service in the sector, dancers with impairment are immediately 'disadvantaged' in their pursuit of leadership. Without equal access to training, role models and employment, dancers with disabilities fail to be recognised and at times to recognise themselves as leaders. Within a model that recognises creativity, passion and commitment as 'leaderful', there is much greater opportunity for diversity in the ways in which leadership is defined. Acknowledging this would make room for the development of disabled artists, not only within 'inclusive' practice, but also in the wider contemporary dance sector.

6.1.10 Concluding Conversations or What Next?

During one conversation with Daw, I ask him how he thinks there could be more disabled leaders in dance. He hesitated briefly then responded that:

> I think, I really think we are at a point now where if disabled artists
> want to be leaders they can be. (Daw 2014)

I note that I feel surprised by this response, maybe a little disappointed. Daw is suggesting that the primary barrier to leadership for disabled dancers is the dancer him/herself. I ask Daw to expand on this answer and he tells me:

> Sure, it's like, we have Unlimited, we have disabled leaders,
> disabled artists as leaders, so we now have that point of reference.
> (Daw 2014)

The idea of reference points is important. Daw is supporting the notion that access to role models and a place in a shared cultural heritage is central for progression into leadership in dance. Daw cites Unlimited[24] as one of these reference points.

> Unlimited offers talented disabled artists funds and mentoring
> support to develop, produce and show ambitious work. The aim of
> Unlimited is to embed work by disabled artists within the UK
> cultural sector, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of
> disabled people. (Unlimited 2015)

As a practising artist Daw clearly feels that the creation of a bespoke opportunity for funding and development for disabled dancers has been integral to the perception of these artists as autonomous and leading in their field of work.

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[24] Unlimited works in partnership with Shape and Artsadmin offering commissions and development for disabled artists, funded by Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales and Spirit of 2012.

There is also a suggestion in his response that leadership is not something that is given, rather it must be sought out and aspired to. Daw goes on to offer examples of leadership 'in action':

> I really think it is out there so so much actually, again like Unlimited like work produced by Claire (Cunningham) and Caroline (Bowditch). Like Candoco going into schools so there are these disabled leaders in the sector but we need to be infiltrating into schools, like the Raphael Bonachela work is a form of leadership, so I really think we are now at a point where people know. If they want to know how to be disabled leader then the resources are there to show they can be. (Daw 2015)

I sense Daw's frustration as we continue to talk about this. I am reminded of his earlier comments about the importance of just 'getting on with it' or 'following his own path'. He seems to be alluding to this in the above comment. The opportunities are there, he believes, or at least more visibly than they have been historically. His view is that disabled artists have the resources, they just need to use them. Daw's emphatic view that leadership positions are achievable for disabled dance artists is in contrast to much research that begins from the view that their are obstacles in dance for dancers with disabilities. He is offering a radical alternative to the general positioning of the disabled artist as in need of acceptance into an existing framework. Daw seems to be suggesting that aspiring disabled dancers must initiate their own pathway into leadership. This active self-promotion is prominent in my case study research with Daw. He consistently expresses the view that he is a leader and that he can envisage himself progressing in dance and maintaining longevity in the sector:

> In the sense that I see myself… when I retire it will be from dance as an art form. Dance, as an art form is where I'm staying. (Daw 2015)

On my final day of observation at Trinity Laban, Daw and I leave the studio and go for coffee in a nearby café. I record our conversation for later transcription. In our recent telephone conversations I ask him why he is considering undertaking a taught Masters course at Brighton University and what his rationale is for this choice. His answer is illuminating in terms of his perception of his current position in the sector and goals, not only for his future in dance, but also for other disabled dancers:

> For interest and also as a way to launch into a PhD. So I might take a role as a lecturer on a dance course and that will set students up in a way that just isn't available at the moment. That links to the notion of role models then it will be that disabled dancers, disabled young people will say 'look! the dance lecturer or head of dance faculty is disabled, I could totally apply and I could totally audition.' And in that sense, in that sense I just want to change things[25]. (Daw 2015)

In this answer there is something of great value to research concerning disabled dance artists. Daw's desire to pursue an academic career is not unusual for a dancer of his age and experience. In many ways this is an 'expected' trajectory in dance. What is less typical is his highly emotional response to describing out loud a scenario where disabled dancers can look to high profile organisations in dance and see themselves represented. This is unique to the experience of dancers with disabilities. Daw's reaction highlights his frustration that the developments and opportunities he described at our last meeting are in place and yet there are still minimal representations of disabled artists in leadership roles in dance. I ask him how improving the visibility of disabled leaders in dance would change things and what a conscious recognition or labeling of disabled people in dance would make on disabled dancers as leaders. He agrees and concludes our conversation by stating that:

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[25] At the end of this statement, Daw starts to cry indicating that he knows the value of disabled dancers taking up leadership roles in dance. As he is talking to me, I know how he feels. After all it is the same feeling that motivated me to undertake this research.

> So, yeah it's all about provoking change. (Daw 2015)

There is some contradiction here to Daw's earlier statements. He has suggested a need for personal proclamation of leadership. He advocates not waiting to be given leadership, but seeking out the resources that are already in place. In this last conversation there is an implication from Daw that the resources are not always as 'available' to all. The impression I get from Daw is that leadership for him is complex. He seems to reject traditional models of leadership as something available to some and not to others.

There is a difference in Daw's perception of himself as a leader and his view of leadership opportunities for others. He is able to apply his mother's 'just do it' approach to his own development. In some contrast to this he is also clearly empathetic towards and somehow bonded to dancers with disabilities who do not yet have access into leadership roles in dance. In our earlier conversations Daw dismisses my suggestion that he is a 'pioneer' in dance and disability. However, there is an indication in this comment that he feels some responsibility to model leadership for future generations of disabled dance artists.

6.2 Welly O'Brien

6.2.0 Introduction

Eleanor O'Brien was born in 1975 in Brighton, she is the youngest of three sisters and gained the nickname Welly due to her constant wearing of a pair of wellington boots, the irony of this title is not lost following the amputation of her right leg in 1993. O'Brien attended a local catholic school in Brighton. Near the end of her school career she talks about how she had started to consider training as a nurse, she liked people and was empathetic to others. This empathetic personality is important to note as a characteristic O'Brien sees in herself prior to losing her leg. O'Brien decided to take a year out of education and training, and travelled with two friends to India. The purpose of this chapter is not to focus on the details of O'Brien becoming disabled, however, it is useful to highlight that it was on this trip that she was injured and subsequently lost her leg. This is noted for the influence it may have on the analysis of indicated changes in O'Brien's perceptions before and following the trip.

On her return from India, O'Brien entered a period of physical recovery. During this time she remained in Brighton, living away from her parents and the family home; she lived in shared accommodation and undertook a part-time job as a cleaner. By chance, she was cleaning the home of a woman who was the stepmother of Adam Benjamin (co founder of Candoco Dance Company). This meeting led to O'Brien's introduction to contemporary inclusive dance, and Candoco Dance Company, which was in early development at that time.

This chance encounter led to O'Brien attending a one-day workshop with Candoco. This was a time in dance before much focus was given to questions relating to access or equality of participation. The primary questions being asked by Candoco at that time were: Is this possible? What happens if we try and work together? Following this initial encounter with Candoco, O'Brien was invited to a number of subsequent workshops and residencies. It was during the 1996 Summer School, held at Stoke Mandeville hospital, that O'Brien and I first met and our professional and personal relationship began. In the context of this study there is a

value in highlighting this. My observation of O'Brien and interpretations of her interviews and practice are informed not only by what I am seeing, hearing or reading in that moment, but by years of connection to O'Brien as a colleague and friend. Professor of Social Research, Martyn Denscombe offers some insight here:

> End products, outcomes and results all remain of interest to the
> case study, but if attention were not given to the processes which
> led to these outcomes then the value of these outcomes would be
> lost. (Denscombe 2002:62)

Denscombe is highlighting the value of the holistic approach commonly associated with case studies as a mode of inquiry. As noted in the introduction to chapter 6 (see p106) this is amplified in my research by the fact that my relationship with and proximity to my subjects does not begin and end within the research period. This raises ethical considerations such as a responsibility towards the participants and how they are presented within the study. There is also a requirement to negotiate the boundaries of the research, for instance where do I shift from friend to researcher and can I be both? With these concerns in mind, my research demonstrates how this shift can be productive in getting 'beneath the surface' of the words and presenting the genuine voices and experiences of the artists involved in my study.

O'Brien joined Candoco as a full-time dancer and teacher in 2000. She was invited to join by the artistic director of that time Celeste Dandeker. O'Brien refers to this as the longest audition process possible, as she had been involved in many workshops and small performances with the Company before her invitation to join. It is important to note that this took place in an era where there were very few 'professional' disabled dancers and it was common for Candoco to invite artists rather than use formal auditions. Co-founder Celeste Dandeker-Arnold[26] gives an insight into this time:

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[26] Celeste Dandeker-Arnold, formerly Dandeker.

> When Candoco Dance Company was founded in 1991, the
> disabled dancers who became members, apart from myself, had
> no previous dance training at all. They literally learnt on the job.
> The company was lucky to retain the core group of disabled and
> non-disabled dancers for the next nine years forming a strong
> performance and education programme. (Dandeker-Arnold
> 2015)

Dandeker-Arnold describes O'Brien's introduction to and subsequent employment with Candoco:

> Welly O'Brien was a particularly talented young disabled dancer
> who attended many of our workshops. In 2000 when we were
> seeking new disabled dancers, Welly was the obvious choice of
> dancer to invite and did not need to audition. Her experience and
> training within the company plus her natural talent as a performer
> and teacher was exactly what Candoco needed. (Dandeker-Arnold
> 2015)

This 'bespoke' training was typical of the time. Disabled artists were pointedly absent from UK dance training and performance. Dandeker-Arnold's reference to 'on the job' training highlights the route into the profession for O'Brien and many of her peers. Although this tailored training has been a useful route into practice for many disabled dance artists, it does not account for the accreditation of a formal training in dance. There is a perceived hierarchy in dance training: historically, conservatoire training is competitive, expensive and accessible to only a minority of dance students. University training in dance is however accessible to a wider population of dancers. There remains a distinct currency held by a 'higher' level training. This is problematic for dance students overall, both in terms of choice of training and potential progression and employment in dance. This problem is amplified for disabled dance students. They are not only limited by an existing hierarchy but also by the normative template for dancers, which dominates the industry as a whole.

O'Brien toured with Candoco between 2000 and 2004, performing in a repertory of work by choreographers including Fin Walker and Javier de Frutos. During this time she also taught in a range of settings as part of her role. This included choreographic residencies, INSET[27] training and one-off workshops. O'Brien talks about learning 'on the job.' My own recollections of working alongside O'Brien at this time is that at the core of her performance and teaching work was a deep interest in the individual and a great sense of offering 'fair' opportunities. I recall a number of times when O'Brien would always stay behind to talk to audience members or workshop participants. There was nothing of the ambitious, self-confident creative (Fink and Woschnjak 2011:755) about her, as a performer she saw this connection with people as part of her job. There is a link here with O'Brien's early ambition towards nursing and a career working with people in some way. There was a curiosity in O'Brien and an interest in other people's journey in life that would seem to be a crucial part of her personality. I make this point to differentiate O'Brien's story from the archetypal tale of a person acquiring an impairment and dedicating their work and life to helping others. Her empathetic nature and sense of equality was established long before she lost her leg.

6.2.1 The Look of a Leader

Part of the focus of my research is concerned with physicality, bodily aesthetics, and leadership, therefore each case study participant was asked to consider what a leader looks like. O'Brien describes leaders as 'holding themselves in a confident and strong way'. She elaborates by adding that a leader does not look 'meek and mild'. She states that there is a 'presence' (O'Brien 2014) that makes us trust this person and want to follow them. There are interesting points here, O'Brien is suggesting that if a person possesses certain physical and personality traits they command our trust and we will allow ourselves to be guided by them. In addition O'Brien is suggesting that there is a quality in a leader that cannot be easily defined.

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[27] In Service Education and Training – Commonly used in education and training environments to develop skills and knowledge in specific areas. Candoco regularly deliver training in schools and colleges focussed on provision in dance subjects for disabled learners.

It is clear from our conversations that O'Brien has few pre-conceived notions of how a leader should look. She is reluctant to describe the physical appearance of a leader. In her response she offers a view on the 'feel' of a leader:

> I don't know, I think they would have to have a 'ballsyness' in them
> I think that's the only trait, other than that they could be anything
> else. They would have to have some kind of ballsyness, presence,
> strength in how they're delivering, but that could be through power
> point presentation or film or through anything, but I think they would
> have to be strong in the way they are delivering through their voice
> or how they are presenting themselves. (O'Brien 2015)

O'Brien is indicating that aesthetics are less important in leadership than presence and strength of character. She is describing a self-determination that surpasses a physical or bodily appearance. The suggestion that leadership is synonymous with strength is central to O'Brien's responses. Her position as a person with a disability is interesting here; she is not alluding to a hierarchy in leadership. For O'Brien the leader in question can be disabled or non-disabled, it is their presence and determination that draws them apart as leaders. This stance suggests that O'Brien operates within a framework of equality; the disabled leader has equal status to their non-disabled counterpart.

O'Brien's comments are useful in exploring leadership potential for disabled artists. As a disabled performer and teacher she perceives herself to be in a following role, describing herself as a 'cog in a wheel' (O'Brien 2014). As a dancer employed by a number of organisations and individuals, she sees herself as part of a bigger 'machine' or network of others. I ask her; if she sees herself as a cog in a wheel, how does she perceive non-disabled dancers? She responds 'cogs in the wheel' (O'Brien 2014). This offers an important insight into O'Brien's view of her own position in dance and of the position of dancers in more general terms. She is not differentiating between disabled and non-disabled artists. For O'Brien, as with Daw

she perceives a hierarchy in dance leadership not amongst dancers but in the wider systems of employment in dance:

> I think it's the same as most places, it's hierarchy, so people like managers, artistic director, tour manager (not so much tour manager) and I've noticed that in every company I've worked with. (O'Brien 2015)

O'Brien makes one interesting distinction when we discuss leaders in dance; the first example she offers is Adam Benjamin, co-founder of Candoco. This is perhaps unsurprising, as it was Benjamin who introduced her to contemporary dance. She develops her answer by suggesting that:

> I guess Adam (Benjamin), it felt like he was a leader, because he had a strong voice and he really believed in what he was teaching in, what he was spreading the word about – I think in his and Celeste's relationship he was the voice, but she was quietly steering stuff. (O'Brien 2014)

Importantly, in this example Dandeker-Arnold ('Celeste') as a disabled woman, is positioned as a steering influence, rather than an outward leader. O'Brien comments on the subject of male and female leaders:

> Yeah, yeah but I think men like being leaders so I think quite often in a man/woman relationship I think the men want to lead – and I think women go into that role of letting them, because they think if it makes them happy being in that role, then they can go ahead and do it. (O'Brien 2014)

The question of gender in leadership research is well documented. Feminist thinking has challenged leadership research as in the 'Study of Great Men' (Klenke 2004:1), which focussed on political and business models of leadership. As

discussed by Klenke, the canon of feminist research has introduced ideologies where the positions historically held by women in social movements and the family (Klenke 2004:2) are cited as leaderful. This idea supports O'Brien's comment relating to the 'steering' figure behind or alongside the leader. She sees Dandeker-Arnold as holding a leading influence without being explicitly situated as a leader. There is an idea emerging from O'Brien that in parallel to confident strong and 'ballsy' (O'Brien 2015) leaders there are quieter individuals 'steering' thinking and activity.

6.2.2 Born Leaders

In her use of a 'presence' to describe a person leading, O'Brien seems to be saying that there is just something in an individual that simply draws us to them. O'Brien suggests that even if a person is 'looking down' they can still have this presence. There is something almost other-worldly in this description, an intangible quality that suggests leadership. There is a connection here with ideologies of natural born leaders as described below:

> The natural born leader notion is hard to discount. When people demonstrate dramatic initiative, when they easily figure out what needs to be done, and when they effectively influence others, we assume they are "born to lead". At some level, we want to believe in natural born leaders. The notion fulfils our romantic need for heroes. We desire larger-than-life characters to inspire us. We want to know there are some people who can bear any burden, overcome any obstacle, win any fight, and succeed in any situation. (Blank 2001:7)

In his 2001 paper, researcher in organisational behaviour, Warren Blank, is supporting O'Brien's suggestion that certain individuals are more adept at being leaders. What is useful is the way in which his theory highlights O'Brien's deference

to these individuals. In our conversations she expresses the view, more than once, that she does not see herself as a leader. O'Brien cites her partner as a leader in their relationship. She describes several of her peers as leaders. Blank's view that we seek inspirational individuals to lead us reflects O'Brien's perception of a 'them and us' phenomenon, where some people are leaders and some people are not. Blank extends this theory to suggest that there is something 'comforting' about this scenario:

> The idea that such people exist offers a sense of security, provides a degree of hope, and sets a model for us to honour and strive for. In our quiet, inward moments, we all know our limitations. We take comfort in the notion that somewhere out there, natural born leaders exist who can guide us beyond our limitations. (Blank 2001:7)

There are implications here relating to disabled artists undertaking leadership roles in dance. If the 'natural' leaders are non-disabled then the disabled artists are automatically positioned as the 'protected followers'. With a lack of disabled leaders in dance there is a subsequent imbalance of who 'sets' the example and who is following. O'Brien extends this thinking in suggesting that there are different types of leader but that they will all demonstrate presence and self-confidence. When asked to elaborate on the types of leader, O'Brien offers 'strong male leaders' as her first example, and adds that children can be leaders in their own context. She also cites female leaders as a type in their own right. There is a suggestion here that leadership is not learnt, rather that it exists within the individual and emerges in different contexts at different stages of a person's life. This is clear in O'Brien's mentioning of children as leaders, she seems to be emphasizing that even in the playground a natural urge or affinity to leadership will emerge. It may follow that this perception could limit our ability to see ourselves as leaders.

O'Brien's belief that leadership is an inherent aspect of certain personalities seems to distance her further from recognising leadership in herself. She seems to be resisting the responsibility of leadership in her suggestion that it simply is not part

of her. There is a connection between leadership and responsibility that resonates with research into disability and dance. As this research has highlighted, a hegemony of 'normative' bodies and a system of 'care' for people with disabilities means that non-disabled people in dance may feel 'responsible' for disabled dancers. There is an important point here, if responsibility can be translated into leadership, those with responsibility are automatically positioned as leaders and those seen as requiring 'care' are placed in a deferential and 'led by others' position.

6.2.3 Dancers as Leaders

O'Brien's experience as a dancer seems to have informed her perception of leadership in dance. She does not identify as a leader herself and suggests that leadership roles in dance are the domain of producers, directors and people in managerial positions. She offers 'business-heady' (O'Brien 2014) as a characteristic of a leader. O'Brien is making an important distinction here between the creative dancers and the leaderful managers. As mentioned previously she perceives all dancers, disabled and non-disabled as 'cogs in the wheel' (O'Brien 2014). This distinction suggests not only an equity between dance artists but also a scenario where managers lead and dancers follow. O'Brien furthers this by adding that in teaching contexts there are opportunities for dance artists to lead, but that these examples are limited to the activity and do not extend into the dance artist being a leader in more general terms:

> They (dancers) are leaders but they're not actually leaders, in the
> hierarchy of all doing different things they're not at the top. You
> know they'll be leaders in a workshop or teaching or making work,
> but, but I don't think they're leaders. (O'Brien 2014)

O'Brien's perception of a 'top' is key to her thinking around leadership and the role of dancers within the professional dance industry. She acknowledges that dancers are leaders when they are teaching a class or workshop, but this does not constitute them as leaders in their overall position. There is a temporality to their

leadership that is limited to certain activities in dance; it exists in the practice and not in the person. There is an indication in this comment that O'Brien might not see dance as a leaderful activity. She is suggesting that the relational and inter-subjective nature of dance is fundamentally not associated with leadership. Her perception of leaders is of 'strong' (O'Brien 2014) individuals with something that draws them apart from others. For O'Brien there is something untouchable about leaders. There is an interesting link here with Daw's description of traditional leaders as 'behind a desk' (Daw 2014), both see elements of leadership as hidden and operating from a place inaccessible to them.

Where Daw and O'Brien differ is in their relative position to this perceived lack of access. By dismissing these imagined leaders as ineffectual, claiming that 'others see them as leaders, but for me they are not' (Daw 2014), Daw is making a claim for leadership by presenting an alternative version of a leader in dance. O'Brien, on the other hand suggests a degree of resignation at the situation, she has no explicit desire to 'lead' in a formal sense in her dance practice. It is important to note here the factors that differentiate the two case studies. Although they are both disabled artists with a vast and varied experience in dance. O'Brien is a mother, she is 10 years senior to Daw, she was introduced to dance by a chance encounter. There is something almost 'accidental' about her route into and subsequent practice in dance. Often when we speak, O'Brien tells me that the current performance job will be her last. She claims to feel 'too old' and worries about preserving her body for future health.

Daw on the other hand is planning for leadership. He sees his future as a leader in dance. This seems central to his challenging of dominant leadership roles in dance. O'Brien lives her life in dance project by project; each one is potentially the last. The fluidity of O'Brien's career in dance is important when considering her view on leadership. O'Brien trained 'on the job' and moved easily from one project to another, without the audition process. It is possible that O'Brien feels her position in dance is 'charmed.' Without a sense of 'earning' the work through traditional pathways, O'Brien could feel a degree of instability in her career. She does not aspire to leadership or recognise her practice as leading. There may be a sense of self-protection by denying leadership as she feels it is not her earned reward.

Another key factor impacting on Daw and O'Brien's different perspectives on leadership relates to gender. As a man, Daw might, in some way, feel part of existing leadership structures. Whilst there remains a lack of disabled leaders as role modes in dance, there are many examples of men holding leading positions within the sector so Daw may be said to have some advantage over O'Brien because of his gender. O'Brien tells me that a barrier to her confidence to lead or see herself as a leader is linked to a lack of self-belief. She suggests that:

> I've had people believe in me and everything, but I don't believe in myself. (O'Brien 2014)

This is key to O'Brien's reluctance to describe herself as a leader. She is equating self-belief with the potential to lead others. As stated earlier, believing in one's own ideas and oneself is a key characteristic of a leader. In the comment above, it is interesting that O'Brien clearly implies that other people in her life have believed in her. She also states that this support and encouragement from external parties has not impacted on her own belief in herself.

O'Brien comments that self-belief is important in developing leadership skills. In fact without an internal sense of one's own strength, input from others, according to O'Brien, has little impact. From my position as researcher and friend I see this dilemma manifested in O'Brien. From the outside, I see a strong woman and mother, consistently employed in both performing and teaching roles. She is very well respected in her field. Yet for O'Brien she feels 'lucky' to be offered roles in dance rather than feeling this is the result of her practice. Interestingly O'Brien volunteers the statement that her lack of self-belief is not something that she associates with her disability. The fact that she chooses to add this caveat suggests that she can imagine others may think an impairment can lead to low self-esteem and is quick to clarify this is not the case.

> I think I've always been like that, not much confidence in myself, since I was born and that's nothing to do with my disability. (O'Brien 2014)

Again, there is evidence here of O'Brien's belief that some people are 'natural' leaders. By stating that she has felt the same lack of self-confidence both prior to and following losing her leg she is suggesting that her impairment is not associated with her reluctance to identify as a leader. O'Brien does, however, go on to add that even though she recognises a lack of self-confidence from an early age, acquiring her disability has impacted on her sense of self-assurance.

> In some ways I feel more confident since I lost my leg, because I feel like I've just got to get on with life, because I know I've had to struggle a bit, you kind of go no-one is going to do this for me, you know, I've got to walk up that hill or get there or learn to walk, you know that's me that did that – so I think I do feel a bit more confident, but then there's the whole thing about falling over like looking a bit silly walking a bit funny has added to my confidence being quite low, its made my confidence low. (O'Brien 2014)

This quote illuminates clearly the duality of the impact on O'Brien's self-confidence and perception of herself as a person 'in command'. Interestingly, they are both examples that relate to O'Brien's movement. By acknowledging a sense of achievement in her physical accomplishments O'Brien is expressing a pride and sense of her ability to do things autonomously in spite of physical pain or practical obstacle. There is a connection here to the narrative of overcoming trauma mentioned previously. However, it should be noted that the empowerment is more significant when this narrative is employed by a person with a disability, as opposed to being projected onto disabled people through a normative gaze.

O'Brien feels proud of herself and in saying 'It's me that did that' (O'Brien 2014) she is highlighting a perception of herself as strong and capable. There is an important point here relating to acquired or congenital impairment. Having lost a leg and experienced a period of rehabilitation and adaptation, O'Brien perhaps feels a sense of achievement in this, not necessarily overcoming her impairment, but attuning to her 'new' body. Those born with impairment, myself for instance, know no

other body, I have not had to adjust to a new physicality. I have had to adjust my one-handedness to a two handed world. In this text extracted from a piece about disability and happiness, disability scholar Tom Shakespeare offers a useful perspective on acquired and congenital disability:

> Even if life is sometimes hard, we are used to being the way we are. For people who become disabled, there's a typical trajectory. I can say this from personal experience, having become paralysed in 2008. Immediately after the onset of injury or disease, one can feel profoundly depressed, and even contemplate suicide. Yet after a period of time, people adapt to their new situation, re-evaluate their attitude to the disability, and start making the most of it. (BBC 2014)

In the second point made by O'Brien, she suggests that her confidence has at times lessened when she perceives herself to look 'silly' (O'Brien 2014). She links this to the way she walks or when she falls over. This resonates with my personal view of not 'fitting in' to normative body representations in the world. I perceive my 'way' of undertaking everyday tasks as drawing attention to my impairment and forcing others to assess me within a spectrum of 'normal' bodies. O'Brien too, feels that her walk marks her as 'different' or her occasional falling, labels her as weak or 'unable'. These are moments when the dominant norm impacts on the self-perception of people with disabilities. O'Brien and Daw along with many other physically impaired people may feel pride in their own bodies and their body's capability, however, in the real world when they are 'judged' against a strong stereotype of 'normal', 'capable' or 'strong', this can quickly effect a person's sense of self as robust and leaderful in their own right.[28]

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[28] The feeling being 'judged' within a normative scale is one which I share with O'Brien and Daw.

6.2.4 The 'Nice' Leader

During one conversation O'Brien comments that 'you have to be a certain type of person to work with disabled dancers' (O'Brien 2014). There is something key here in O'Brien's distinction of working 'with' disabled dancers as separate to dance in general. There is also an indication here that the person in question is a non-disabled individual wishing to work with disabled artists. In contrast to some of her comments, she is alluding to an existing binary of 'disabled' and 'non-disabled' dancers.

The question of what motivates a non-disabled dance practitioner to explore working with, next to or for disabled dance artists, is essential to this study. As suggested in the Introduction (see p56), a history of therapeutic dance practice has informed the emergence of 'inclusive' dance. In relation to the development of disabled dancers as leaders, this is an area worthy of investigation. If the relationship between the non-disabled artist and the disabled dancer is based on a framework of 'care' or facilitation this is problematic when the disabled dance artist pursues a progression away from this dynamic into more self-directed and autonomous practice. O'Brien's extends her thinking by stating that:

> Because I think you have to be someone who is a bit intrigued by
> difference. Because I think if you're going to be someone who
> works with Matthew Bourne or whatever that's the aesthetic you
> like. So you're probably not that interested in working in a mixed
> abled and disabled environment. Maybe you are, but I think you
> know, and I think that's fine and in my experience most people who
> work in inclusive dance are really nice people. (O'Brien 2004)

The divide here between 'normal' dance and dance including disabled artists is apparent again in this statement. O'Brien draws a distinction between two aesthetics, one associated with traditional models of a dancer's body and the disabled body in dance as another. O'Brien seems to be suggesting that non-disabled artists choose to work with disabled people and others choose to practice in

a field where disabled artists are not included. This suggestion confirms much of my own research, which indicates that despite important developments in the dance sector, work made by and including disabled artists remains marginalised.

It could be suggested that dance and disability is positioned as an independent genre in dance; through the proliferation of pedagogy and training focussed on 'integrated' dance[31] and an increase in bespoke funding opportunities[32], and furthermore that it is a sub –sector of dance that students and practitioners can elect to study and work in, or not. Consequently I argue that disabled dance artists find they are positioned within this 'imagined' genre rather than within the broader contemporary dance field, thus limiting their potential for development and for being treated equitably. O'Brien's description of the 'intrigued dancer' is important. It speaks to notions of disability as a phenomenon of curiosity. This idea is reminiscent of a canon of anthropological research, which aims to explore a new culture from within to discover and inform existing practice. The idea of the intrigued dance practitioner is highlighted in O'Brien's comment below:

> I think you can be intrigued, like Maria[33] [a dancer with whom Welly
> has worked] she is really interested in different bodies and how
> they work, so I think you get people like that, not being nice and
> 'carey-sharey' they are interested in how that difference comes
> across on stage. Or they like that difference you know and I think
> there's less of that 'carey shareyness', its still there, but less.
> (O'Brien 2014)

Exploring the motivation of a 'non-disabled' dancer to 'work with' dancers with disabilities is crucial in understanding the current and future roles held by disabled dance artists. It could be argued that being 'intrigued' by bodies in their multiple forms is an essential part of what 'makes' a dancer. It is bodies that are the

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[31] For example the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) offers a module titled *Inclusive Dance Practice* as an elective module on their Masters in Education (dance teaching).

[32] For example *Unlimited* offering mentorship, support and funding for disabled artists making work in the cultural sector, for more information see http://weareunlimited.org.uk/about-unlimited/

[33] Name has been changed

manifestation of the art form. O'Brien is drawing a line between a genuine interest in the dancing body, a desire to explore how each body works and the 'carey-sharey' approach often synonymous with therapeutic dance practice. In relation to the relationship between disabled and non-disabled people Tom Shakespeare makes the observation that:

> A relationship with a disabled person may be perceived as asymmetrical, it may be assumed that the non-disabled person will not derive any personal benefit from the relationship. (Shakespeare 2014:196)

The notion of these relationships as 'asymmetrical' is useful when exploring 'inclusive' dance. There is a dominant ideology of 'normative bodies' (Burt 2004:29) in UK dance history, therefore in these collaborations is it possible that the non-disabled artist may feel that they are 'giving' to the practice rather than developing their dance skills on equal ground? This might be considered a cynical proposition, however, it is reflective of the current landscape in professional dance training and practice. Disabled dancers are not the 'norm' and working in an 'inclusive' context is often presented as a choice made by non-disabled dancers. This choice may be made for a number of reasons, including the integrity and work of the disabled artists, a favourable employment contract, interesting tour or an interest in equality of access. What seems concrete here is that encountering impairment in dance training or practice is unlikely to be 'accidental' given the low numbers of disabled dance artists currently training and practicing. O'Brien suggests that Leadership requires a person to 'be bold and completely believe in what they are saying' (O'Brien 2014). Consequently if the disabled dancer is in a collaboration with a non-disabled person or a disabled dancer's body is next to a 'normal' dancer's body, the impaired dancer is more likely to be 'cast' as follower or learner rather than leader. Our relationship to other bodies is key to understanding our own body and experience of the world. In dance this has particular pertinence. Dancers explore their sense of bodily self through proximity to others, through touch, shared movement and collective practice. As dance practitioner and theorist Sondra Horton-Fraleigh suggests:

> As a dancer I am both universalized (like dancers in every culture
> and time) and personalized (I am my own unrepeatable body; I am
> my own dance)… I move beyond the confines of persona (meaning
> mask. Or that which appears evidently personal about me) to union
> with the larger aesthetic purpose of the dance and communion with
> others. The magic here is that the self is surpassed toward the
> dance and toward others. (Horton-Fraleigh 1995:29)

Horton-Fraleigh offers a valuable comment here, presenting dance as an encounter, which transcends 'functional' bodies and bodily communication. Understanding of the body is formed through our relationship to other dancers and audiences. As noted earlier in this chapter, this is in contrast to 'traditional' conditions that promote leadership (see p135). We are reflected in and by each other and our differences and sameness are brought into focus. In this scenario the 'normality' of the non-disabled dancer is amplified by their proximity to the 'non-conforming' dancer's body. The encounter with the disabled dance artist is normalising and reassuring. As Shakespeare proposes:

> Disabled people enable able-bodied people to feel good about
> themselves: by demeaning disabled people, non-disabled people
> can feel both powerful, and generous. Disabled people, on the
> other hand are viewed as passive and incapable people, objects of
> pity and of aid. (Shakespeare 1994:222)

This study does not aim to alienate or undermine the important role of the nondisabled dancer in both the historical development and current position of the disabled dance artist. There is, however, a significant lack of research in dance that questions leadership roles for disabled dancers. Through an evaluation of the motivations of initiators of 'inclusive' dance practice and the relationship between disabled and non-disabled practitioners it becomes possible to envisage clear routes into leadership for dancers with disabilities and the potential barriers to these roles.

6.2.5 Feeling Better- Leading Better

I asked O'Brien whether her disability impacts on her perception or self-certification as a leader. She responded that if she didn't have one leg she thinks she would be a better teacher (O'Brien 2014). I ask her to extend this response and she adds that she would feel more upright. There is a link here to O'Brien's comment that:

> When I'm teaching, I really struggle when I don't have my leg on –
> and I'm on the floor and people all looking down at me so how can
> I have voice if they're all looking down at me? (O'Brien 2014)

This response indicates two things; firstly that O'Brien cites teaching as a leadership activity. This is reiterated when she describes teachers in whom she trusted and believed in (O'Brien 2014). The second indication here is of O'Brien's association of stature with leadership. She is signalling the value of not being on the floor whilst in a position of leadership or teaching. When I ask her if leaders need to be tall to command authority, she replies:

> Erm not taller, because Caroline (Bowditch) has it and she's tiny,
> maybe it's just about being on the floor. Maybe it's like… because
> if I'm in a wheelchair I don't feel it. (O'Brien 2014)

Here O'Brien seems to be suggesting that it is not height or size that determine leadership. By using her own teaching practice as an example, she is describing a 'struggle' to feel like a leader, when she is seated and others are standing. I propose that O'Brien sees leading from the floor as problematic due to her perception of being lower down as weaker and lacking in authority. There is a connection with O'Brien's idea that leaders have a certain 'something' or a spark that motivates others to follow them. There is a key point here about 'ability' or bodily autonomy. Without her prosthesis or a wheelchair O'Brien is restricted to the floor, a

restriction, which is amplified by the 'normalising' effect of her prosthesis. Her movement becomes slower and more visibly 'different' from traditional transits through space. The eye of the outsider becomes automatically drawn through this unique movement to her impairment, more specifically to where her leg is not. In this exchange O'Brien perceives a shift from leader to subject. This is further exemplified in her comment below:

> I just feel when you're on the floor that people don't take you
> seriously really. It's like as soon as I stand up (I don't know if its
> me, maybe its just me) as soon as I stand up at the end of teaching
> and put my leg on or at the end of the day at work I feel that people
> take me more seriously. (O'Brien 2014)

O'Brien seems to be describing a leaderful physicality as one that is not necessarily 'bigger', 'taller' or 'stronger'. Rather, she describes one that is in control, a body that can command the space and the attention of other bodies around it. Her use of Caroline Bowditch as an example is central to this. Bowditch is a small woman who uses a motorised wheelchair. O'Brien has been a dancer in a work choreographed by Bowditch, she has witnessed Bowditch's leadership in action, not only in her role as choreographer but also in her liaison with key partners, venues, producers, designers and funding bodies, for example.

My own encounters with Bowditch demonstrate to me that she is a woman with a clearly defined sense of her own leadership ability and position of authority in dance. O'Brien also clearly sees Bowditch as a leader and a person with a leaderful body. It is possible that O'Brien also perceives Bowditch as a person whose personality and leadership capability transcends a body that is marked as smaller and requiring assistance. To extend upon O'Brien's comments, there seems to be a theme emerging that suggests a 'recognisable' physicality as potentially leaderful. A person using a wheelchair can be a leader, media representations of the 'supercrip' (Kama 2004:450) have presented a 'superhuman' power in certain physicalities - a framework within which disability is positioned as 'something that one must successfully overcome, rather than learn to adjust to' (Kama 2004:450). It is this

'determined' physicality that is traditionally associated with leadership. One caveat here is that this perception is necessitated by the autonomy of the wheelchair user. It seems to be associated with a view that they must propel themselves independently through space and must communicate in a way that is easily accessible to a wider audience. The standing amputee is a recognisable bodily form in leadership often associated with heroic overcoming of trauma or injury. As O'Brien states, she feels that she is taken more seriously when her physicality approximates to a standard form. As soon as she is without her leg, on the floor, she immediately feels less leader-like in her relationship to others.

O'Brien's suggestion that the more 'impaired' or the greater 'in-need' a person seems to be, the less likely they are to be perceived as leaders. This is a widely acknowledged area of disability studies research, which draws upon notions of care and medicalization associated with the experience of disability. These narratives of medicalization are hard to defy since they assume vitalities and legitimacies and are reproduced all the time (Ramanathan 2009:4).

The notion of perpetuated assumptions and perceptions associated with a medicalised view of impairment is important. Reliance on medicine and 'care' is often an intrinsic part of the experience of disability. It can assist and support progression but it can also interrupt the practice of the individual with a disability. In the context of dance these 'narratives of medicalization' are reproduced as the relationship of the individual to medicine is exposed; through the need for personal assistance, interpretation or access requirements.

In parallel to the physicality of the disabled leader, O'Brien also makes a connection between knowledge and leadership. Along with Daw and Harvey she cites Professor Stephen Hawking as a disabled leader in society. She suggests that his leadership originates from:

> His beliefs and what he thinks about the universe, people listen to
> him, which I find really interesting because actually he doesn't
> really, he doesn't really look…[pauses] from what he says, it's like,
> he is so passionate in what he believes, its kind of how he holds

himself, how he delivers what he is saying, he's so strong. (O'Brien 2014)

There is a relationship between O'Brien's view of the passionate or physically commanding leader and Daw's comments that in order to be perceived as leaders disabled people must be much 'more' than their non-disabled peers. This has implications for future disabled leaders in dance. In order to lead and be seen as leaders, they must either defeat their impairment or conceal it in some way In the case of Hawking he has 'overcome' barriers, physical and social, to be recognised as an expert in his field, he is not concealing his impairment but his expertise and confidence resist the definitions of tragedy surrounding his disability. I postulate that there is limited space in dance afforded to disabled artists to lead in a way that accounts for their disability. There is no environment where disability is not seen as an obstacle or where dancers are not expected to assimilate to traditional bodies. If this is the case, is there a way that the impairment itself can be seen as leaderful away from a narrative of overcoming trauma or adversity?

Being born with an impairment or becoming disabled in later life can give a perspective on life which is both interesting and affirmative and can be used positively. This is not generally recognised by non-disabled people. (Swain et al 2004:37)

As the quote above highlights, recent research has introduced an 'affirmative' model for considering disability. Disability activist and academic Colin Cameron suggests that the affirmative model is based on a view that for people with disabilities, impairments are a core part of our being and of our experience (Cameron 2011). This positioning of disability as central to the 'whole' experience of being in the world offers an important perspective for exploring leadership and disability. There is a suggestion that impairments should be a part of how we perceive ourselves to be leaders, this model allows for differentiation in how we legitimise success and leadership. In addition, it offers a framework for people with disabilities to re-consider their position in a scale of norms, rather than perceive

themselves in relation to a single 'norm'. The affirmation model allows the individual to be merited on his or her own terms. Cameron makes a key point below relating to societal expectation of impairment and 'real' lived experiences of disabled people:

> If we accept this understanding of disability as role we can begin to
> think of disability as part of the embodied experience of people with
> impairments, materialised not only in their exclusion from ordinary
> community life but in terms also of what they are expected to do
> with their lives instead: not just in terms of being passive (as
> recipients of charity) but also in attempting to demonstrate that they
> are not passive (by doing sky-dives). (Disability Arts Online 2011)

6.2.6 Leading on Equal Terms

O'Brien is emphatic in her response when I ask her if she is a leader, she answers "no" without hesitation. She suggests that she is not confident in herself and that her disability is not the causing factor of this, but at times it has 'made her confidence quite low' (O'Brien 2014). When I asked her if she wants to be leader, she again answers "no" straightaway. It seems clear that O'Brien feels quite removed from leadership. I asked her why she does not want to be a leader and she replies:

> Erm, because I just like dancing. (O'Brien 2014)

This comment reiterates the idea that for O'Brien she doesn't associate dancing with leading. She is suggesting that in order to lead she would have to stop dancing and in turn that by dancing she is not leading. I would suggest that it is not the action of dancing that O'Brien perceives as non-leading, rather it is the label of 'dancer' that for her is in opposition to leadership.

O'Brien's experience has been within the traditional framework of undertaking dancing roles in the choreography of others. She is often a conduit for creative exploration between a dance-maker and a dance-audience. She is rarely in control

of these processes and is placed within a network of choreographers, managers, producers, promoters and funders. Her role is to go where she is asked, and to do what she is asked. This position means that her artistic voice is less prominent. It is interesting that O'Brien cites teaching as a temporary moment of leadership. When activity is dependent on her voice and her direction she feels like a leader, but as soon as these encounters end the feeling of leading lessens. There seems to be something quite specific for O'Brien that relates to being a dancer and therefore not being a leader.

One conversation between O'Brien and myself takes place during a week where we have been working together towards creating our duet[34]. O'Brien and I have collaborated on the production of dance works as part of 'choreographic residencies'[35], but this duet however, is the first time either of us have made a professional work; and the first time we have worked without any other partners during our friendship and working partnership. I ask O'Brien if she has felt like a leader during this process and she responds 'no because we haven't really led anyone' This reflects a view from O'Brien that leadership is formed by relationship with others or that in order to be a leader, there must be others 'following' our lead. We are sharing the decisions and the management of this project therefore for O'Brien this feels more collaborative than a traditional 'leader-follower' scenario.

During the week we worked together. I felt that O'Brien led on many aspects of the project. There were some times when I would suggest an early finish and O'Brien would suggest that we carry on working. Although there is something essentially collaborative in this exchange, O'Brien is clearly stating what she wants us to do and in a very practical sense is leading the rehearsal process. There were a number of moments like these, regarding costume, music, and movement content. There were also times when we would 'direct' each other in improvisation tasks; one moving and the other note taking and re-visiting and developing elements of the dance that we felt 'worked'. These are all leadership activities in dance; directing a

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[34] The duet is a collaboration between myself and O'Brien funded by the Arts Council Grants for the Arts (GftA) in January 2015. We are co-choreographers of the piece and both perform in the live work

[35] Choreographic residencies are generally commissioned by schools, universities or arts organisations and take place over a set period of time. Artists are given a brief for the group(s) and the residencies normally culminate in a performance.

task, selecting and refining material and making choices about the process and subsequent product.

The fact that in these examples I see O'Brien as a leader, also speaks much about my perception of myself as a leader. I entered into that project and in my mind I was embarking on an autonomous process where I was co-leading with O'Brien. It is important to acknowledge the differences between my own and O'Brien's careers in dance. Where I had pursued some managerial roles in dance and had spent some time employed in formal education settings as a lecturer in dance, O'Brien had focussed on her performing career. These diverse experiences have informed our views on leadership generally and on our perception of ourselves as leaders. Earlier in my conversations with O'Brien, she suggested that she sometimes 'steers' decision-making processes. She gives the example of her partner who she feels is a leader in their relationship:

> He is a leader in our relationship yeah definitely, he makes the final
> decisions about stuff definitely you know I can try and steer that,
> but he definitely lays the ground rules. (O'Brien 2014)

The notion of 'steering' is pertinent here, although O'Brien suggests that her partner 'lays the ground rules' and has the 'final' word. The fact that she perceives herself as steering suggest that she has some role in the leadership process. In the example of our collaboration we are both steering, we each have a clear idea of the work we want to produce and the ideas we want to explore. We also benefit from and are somewhat restricted by the intimacy of our relationship. Neither of us want to assume leadership, so we each 'steer' the process with suggestion and conversations. It is useful to here to highlight a distinction between leading as one person directing an activity and steering as decision making through a process of mutual suggestion and collaboration. It is possible that O'Brien does not see this shared or collaborative leadership as 'real' leading. She suggests we have not led other people, therefore she has not felt like a leader. There is something important here linked to O'Brien's suggestion that leading is a tangible process. This is one in which people are directed, or inclined to follow another person or people. As a

primarily independent artist O'Brien may feel that a lack of 'followers' in her practice makes her less leader-like.

O'Brien is consistent in her description of leaders as people who are 'present' or people others want to 'go with' (O'Brien 2014). In her comment below it is clear that for her a leader is a person whom other people want to be around:

> With a leader they have an aura or a way, so I think, yeah you could be a leader without realising. I mean some people have a thing about them that makes people want to be near them or have them in their lives. It's like a sparkle, like a sparkly weird force-field thing. (O'Brien 2014)

There is an interesting suggestion from O'Brien that someone may posses these inherent leadership qualities without being aware. This is contrary to notions of the ruthless leader who seeks success at any cost. The idea of a leader having an 'aura' around them points to an almost prophetical leader, someone who has the gift of leadership rather than the desire to lead. This is useful in exploring O'Brien's perception that she is not a leader, she feels that she does not have this gift. From my observations over the time that I have known O'Brien, she seems deeply connected to those around her. She inspires loyalty amongst her friends and people seem to naturally feel very comfortable around her. In these moments I see O'Brien as a leader. O'Brien seems unable to recognise this in herself, because she does not see herself 'doing' traditional leading roles, she does not consider these encounters to be leaderful. Jim Collins, a researcher in leadership, considers the relationship between personality and leadership. In his proposition of a 'level 5 leader' he places significant value on 'personal humility' (Collins 2005) as a personality trait in successful leaders. It seem possible that although O'Brien does not identify as a leader her modest and sometimes self-deprecating position are the aspects of her personality that make her a leader in dance.

I propose that O'Brien's reluctance to label herself as a leader is linked to the long-standing hierarchy of normative bodies in dance. Historically, non-disabled people have 'made way' for disabled artists, 'allowing' them into existing frameworks

for training and practice. In some ways the disabled artists in this context are indebted, not explicitly, but our experience in dance is based on borrowing from an existing vocabulary of language and movement that is strongly based on 'normal' bodies. This has meant that negotiating leadership in dance is complex for disabled artists. Unless we are content to lead primarily within a 'community' of other disabled artists, our desire to lead in 'mainstream' settings seems like a rebellion of sorts. It seems more acceptable for disabled artists to undertake leadership roles within a defined 'dance and disability' context, including leading within this community or leading in mainstream arenas, but focussing on disability as a 'subject'. It is my view that this complexity will continue until disabled artists are undertaking leadership across a range of contexts which are not always 'about' impairment and not where the disabled artist leads by 'inspiration'.

O'Brien tells me that she has been asked to be a mentor at her local Limb Centre. A Limb Centre is an associate clinic of a hospital where individuals are sent for rehabilitation and regular visits to fit and assess prosthetics. O'Brien has been a regular visitor to her centre since losing her leg. I inquire if being asked to undertake this role makes her feel like a leader and she replies;

> Maybe, like they want me to mentor younger people. I haven't done
> it yet, but I guess I could be, yeah but then that's the thing, I can
> say a certain amount, but then I don't feel like I deliver the goods I
> can sort of be what people want me to be, but I don't deliver the
> goods fully, so then they go "oh actually you're not". (O'Brien 2014)

O'Brien hints here that she could be a leader in this context but is quick to add that people may perceive her to be a leader, but that she will seem fraudulent when she does not 'deliver the goods.' This chimes with O'Brien's perception of herself as someone who looks silly, who might fall over or whose walk looks different, marking her out as not 'strong' (O'Brien 2014) and therefore not a leader. It is also useful to observe that when O'Brien is close to acknowledging that she could be a leader, this is in the context of leading other people with disabilities. She feels more confident and 'expert' in this role than as a leader in dance. This supports

previous comments that O'Brien feels that leading in dance is not her 'right.'

During one conversation I ask O'Brien how she thinks there could be more opportunities for disabled dance artists to lead. In her response she gives an insight into her view of dance in general and how this informs the development of disabled leaders in the sector:

> Well if you think about dance, well if you think about dance right now, actually who are the dance leaders that you feel are really amazing? You know, I think because the sector is so tiny actually are there that many dancers or choreographers that you think are really amazing. There's lots of dancers I mean there's fucking hundreds of dancers in England, in Britain, but you know not all of them are great and there's probably only a handful, that you'd say "oh I'd really love to see their work," so it's the same in the disabled world, there's less artists out there so you're going to have a smaller amount of leaders. (O'Brien 2014)

This suggests that O'Brien is confident in commenting on the sector in which she works, she trusts her own instinct and is comfortable offering her opinion on what makes dance 'good'. This points to O'Brien's sense of agency in the dance sector, although she openly states that she lacks confidence and feels that is not a leader in dance. She is able to highlight that some artists in dance are 'not great'. This perception indicates a shift away from the 'grateful' disabled artist. O'Brien is adding her voice to a critique of existing work and feels this voice has value and credentials in the sector. It appears that O'Brien feels part of a wider community of dancers and not restricted to a sub-genre of 'disability dance'. One caveat here, however, is that O'Brien reinforces the notion of a 'normal' dance sector and a 'dance and disability' sector. This is apparent in her comparative example of the 'disabled world', which she identifies as having 'less artists' and therefore fewer leaders emerging from within this world. O'Brien is highlighting a central issue relating to the lack of disabled artists in leadership roles in dance. The 'problem' of leadership is not limited to a lack of opportunity at leadership level in dance. It is a

problem that exists in all aspects of dance, at every level. It appears that to increase disabled leaders in dance it is crucial to increase the number of disabled artists practicing in dance.

6.2.7 Conclusion

O'Brien's position in dance offers an important perspective in relation to the development of disabled leaders in dance. She is not a dancer seeking access into the sector; she is firmly established and regularly employed. She is consistent in defining herself as part of a 'community' of dancers and although she indicates a binary between 'disabled' and 'non-disabled' artists, she clearly perceives herself to be in the 'follower' role, along with, in her view, many other dancers, regardless of their physicality. It is this self-positioning that provides an interesting viewpoint for my study and the development of disabled leaders in dance. O'Brien is choosing not to identify as a leader in dance, but her observations suggest that within aspects of her practice she sees herself as 'doing' leadership activities. For example, O'Brien recognises teaching as leaderful, although she adds the caveat that this feeling is limited to the moment of 'doing'. Her acknowledgement that she is in an influential position gives an insight into how she perceives her position in dance.

Despite O'Brien's own views, her work and her responses I would argue that she is, at some level, a leader in dance. Her resistance to accept the label of 'leader' highlights a level of humility in her that positions her as someone to be 'looked up to'. O'Brien does not identify as a leader because she does not see in herself the qualities that she associates with leadership, 'strong, confident, ballsy' (O'Brien 2014). Through my observations, conversations and shared practice with O'Brien, I perceive a woman who cares deeply about others and works with sensitivity to the needs of those around her. Moreover, she is passionate about and widely experienced in dance.

O'Brien's position in dance and her views on leadership in dance have the potential to challenge pre-existing perceptions of leadership in the sector as necessarily 'white, male non-disabled' (Daw 2015). The paradox between O'Brien's evident knowledge and experience in dance and her reluctance to call herself a

leader forces a re-evaluation of how leadership is positioned and recognised in dance. O'Brien does not recognise herself as a leader because her personality, her beliefs and her body do not align with what she sees as the 'ideal' leader.

I conclude that what O'Brien presents is an alternative to the leadership model. Her presence in dance has the potential to 'inspire' new audiences and challenge viewings of the impaired body, specifically the body missing a limb, as tragic or lacking. Her performance and teaching work thus seems to exhibit great value in encouraging access into the contemporary dance sector even if in the current dance climate, performers such as O'Brien may not be afforded a voice to impact on the future of the dance sector. Her actions are leaderful even if she does not voice aspirations to leadership. Furthermore, her career thus far illuminates the problem in restricting established disabled dance artists to a rhetoric of 'inspirational' (Young 2014) bodies on stage. By creating more space for these artists and an opportunity to hear their voices, they will become active, autonomous members of the sector and contribute to the cultural legacies of dance, as opposed to being relegated to silent performing icons.

6.3 Kimberley Harvey

6.3.0 Introduction

The two previous sections of this chapter (6.1 and 6.2) presented case study research centred around two disabled dance artists (Dan Daw and Welly O'Brien). These were based on long-term observations and interviews over a period of three years (2013 - 2016). I approached O'Brien and Daw to participate in my research because they are my peers. This section of the chapter offers my case study research involving Kimberley Harvey, a disabled dance artist based in North London. Although I have known Harvey for over a decade, the age difference between us means that we are from different generations in terms of our dance practice. As detailed in Chapter 1, my introduction to 'inclusive' dance coincided with the

beginnings of Candoco Dance Company whereas Harvey entered into dance at a time where disability was more 'present' in the UK Contemporary Dance Sector.[36]

As a result of this 'gap' between us, Harvey and I have rarely danced alongside each other[37]. In our relationship, I have been a teacher and she has been a participant or student. My decision to ask Harvey to be involved in my research was based on my belief that her position and experience in dance offered a perspective that was less available from Daw, O'Brien and myself. We are artists who have, to differing extents, developed profiles and reputations as professional dancers. Harvey is an artist at the start of this process; she is in the process of exploring her position in dance and what it means to be a disabled dance artist now. It is this aspect of Harvey's practice and experience that offers a specific voice to my research. Harvey's perspective gives valuable insight into the place of the impaired dancer in the current UK dance infrastructure. The observations and interviews with Harvey took place at three different points during my three-year research period. Each encounter with Harvey occurred over one or two days during her rehearsals and choreographic development of new work[38].

6.3.1 About Kimberley Harvey

Kimberley Harvey was born in 1987 in Hillingdon, North West London where she lived with her grandparents. Harvey was born prematurely, her grandmother noticed some delay in her physical development and at 18 months old she was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Harvey tells me that initially her grandparents were told she would 'walk with a slight limp'; as she tells me she laughs and suggests 'they got that a bit wrong' (Harvey uses a wheelchair and has done so since early childhood). Harvey's main carer whilst growing up was her grandmother, this is significant because during our conversations Harvey reveals that her Grandmother was integral in negotiating 'problems' arising during her youth. Harvey offers the

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[36] Harvey participated in her first Candoco workshop in 2000

[37] Harvey and I danced together in the Paralymic closing ceremony in London, 2012.

[38] Harvey has been developing work for her dance company *Subtle Kraft*. My observations included rehearsals for existing work *Moments – Revisited* and research for a new work including dancers, Robert Hesp and Kitty Fedorec.

example that it was her grandmother who took the lead in ensuring Harvey was able to attend the school of her choice, rather than the local authority recommended school. This is important for Harvey as the mainstream provider was inaccessible and had little experience of students with impairment in comparison to the 'special' school; which was fully adapted and had a long-standing history of supporting students with both learning and physical disability.

Harvey was explicit in her desire to attend the mainstream school. Her Grandmother agreed with her granddaughter's instinct and they pushed until changes were made to the inaccessible school to allow Harvey to attend. It was also Harvey's Grandmother who suggested she consider the Candoco workshop that initiated her practice in dance. Harvey describes her younger self as having the 'usual' pre-teen interest in choreographing 'routines' to music and her Grandmother thought it was something she would enjoy. Harvey comments on her early involvement in dance thus:

> I was the annoying little kid who would make up dance routines to embarrassing songs so I did all that…but dancing and choreography and classes, it never crossed my mind, so my friends did ballet, I didn't. (Harvey 2014)

It is clear from this statement that Harvey recalls feeling that participating in dance was not viable for her. There is a sense of resignation in her comment, suggesting that she did not expect to be included in the same classes as her peers. The concept of being part of formal dance classes was abstract, so much so, that Harvey did not consider it. Although Harvey did not attend formal dance classes, between the ages of 6 and 10 her Grandmother regularly took her to see Ballet performances at the theatre. Harvey recalls some apprehension from others directed at her Grandmother:

> There were people who said to Nanny "you shouldn't take her to the ballet because she can't do it" and she said "well that's ridiculous", so I got to see all these things. (Harvey 2015)

Harvey's Grandmother's rejection of conventional ideologies of who can access dance performance is central to understanding Harvey's later involvement in dance. Although Harvey states that she felt dance participation was not available to her; her early viewings of dance seem important to her subsequent dance activity. Importantly here, it is not the viewing itself that is significant, it is likely in-fact that the balletic performances Harvey experienced reinforced notions of a 'dancerly' (Kuppers 2000) form. What is most valuable is Harvey's grandmother's insistence that her granddaughter be included. I propose that it is this attitude that has informed Harvey's involvement in dance. Harvey's participation in structured dance activity began when she attended a workshop led by Candoco Dance Company at ASPIRE[39]. Harvey points out that she almost didn't attend this session as she was reluctant to be surrounded by 'disabled people' she elaborates on this by explaining that in her desire to 'fit in' for example by attending a mainstream school she would often reject the label of 'disabled.'

6.3.2 Harvey in Practice

It is raining heavily on the day I go to observe Harvey in rehearsals with her company 'Subtle Kraft' I arrive at the studio, soaking wet. Harvey greets me warmly and introduces me to her three dancers before instructing her personal assistant on when she will be needed. The space is split into two areas; one is a mirrored 'studio' space and the other a comfortable seating area with several chairs and sofas.

My physical proximity to the participants during observations has been important in my research. My relationship with O'Brien affords me a unique proximity, as collaborating dancers, we touch, we invade each other's space our presence in the process of the research is fluid and transient. My own position shifts from dancer to researcher, observer to the observed. In the case of Daw the longevity of the observations (daily for periods of one and two weeks during rehearsals) means that my body in the space becomes part of the fabric of the

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[39] ASPIRE is the rehabilitation centre affiliated to the royal national orthopaedic hospital in Stanmore.

process. There is a reciprocal relationship formed through my research and their involvement in it.

The observations of Harvey's practice are different. We know each other through our work in dance; what we lack is the verbal and physical shorthand that exists in my relationships with Daw and O'Brien. Because this is new to both Harvey and myself, I am cautious and place myself on the 'border' between the studio and the seating area. I want to absorb the atmosphere of the rehearsal at the same time without infringing on the work.

As noted in the methodology chapter, the ethnographic nature of my research offers an opportunity to interrogate the perceptions and lived experiences of disabled dance artists. Conversely, and this seems more prominent in the case of Harvey, there are ethical considerations that must be accounted for. For instance, how does my presence inform this artist in practice and how does this impact on the validity of what I present in this chapter?
Dance Anthropologist Andree Grau offers the following view commenting on the relationship between researcher and research object:

> The Field, existing prior to and outside of the anthropologist's work
> is a naïve vision merging the presence of the anthropologist and
> the present of the ethnographic object. (Grau 1999:163)

Although I am not undertaking an anthropological study and I draw on ethnographic methods as one of several methods in my study specifically in my role as artist-researcher and my indigenous position to my research participants. Grau's observation has particular resonance to my research involving Harvey. My observations are sporadic, Harvey and the dancers do not have time to become 'familiar' with my presence and my viewings can only ever give a 'snapshot' of Harvey's practice. Equally my observations of Harvey are inevitably affected by my presence as 'outsider'; Harvey and I are creating a 'moment' that intersects us both and our individual aims as researcher and choreographer, thus unavoidably impacting on both the practice and the observation. The absence of a pre-existing shared practice between myself and Harvey, however, does present an opportunity

for my observations to begin from a position of little prior knowledge and assumption. Each time I see her deliver an instruction or move in the space, I am seeing it for the first time.

Harvey starts the rehearsal; she invites the dancers to warm up, and as they do so, she moves alongside them, conducting her own warm up, stretching her arms, arching and contracting her neck. She rolls down until she becomes folded, her torso draped on her lap and her arms drop down towards her feet. Harvey suggests they run through the work 'for memory' as a way of re-capping the piece. She addresses the two other dancers in the space quietly, I am aware of a need to listen more intently to hear what she is saying. The dancers move closer to Harvey, they sit at her feet; I sense a deliberate physical show of 'listening', bodies and heads facing Harvey, eyes wide open, leaning in. They seem to be inviting her to lead.

6.3.3 Harvey as a Leader

In the first interview, during a break in the rehearsal, I ask Harvey if she is a leader. She states:

Erm, If I am, it's not something I would put on myself. (Harvey 2014)

Harvey's response clearly links to questions of whether leadership is given to us or is something that we take for ourselves (Eagly and Chin 2010). She clearly feels that it is not a title she can give herself, but accepts that others might give her the label of leader. This view is troubled somewhat by Psychology scholars Alice Eagly and Jean Chin in their suggestion that:

As individual cognitive and perceptual processes, leadership requires the recognition and approval of leadership in others and the acknowledgement of oneself as a leader. (Eagly and Chin 2010:220)

According to Eagly and Chin, Harvey's reluctance to identify as a leader is a

potential obstacle to her progression into leadership roles. If Harvey aspires towards leadership, recognition from those around her is not sufficient; she must also perceive herself as leaderful. If Harvey does not identify as a leader she is subsequently less likely to receive criticism for leading in the 'wrong' way. By doing the 'practice' of leadership without explicitly stating one's role as leader implies a 'protection' from criticism. In contrast to a 'buck stops here' (Baldoni 2008:13) model of leadership, if things go 'wrong' the responsibility lies collectively with those involved, rather than with the sole leader. This is problematic for the disabled leader in dance, because if there is a lack of 'conscious' leadership, it is difficult to offer leaderful practice, as examples for aspiring disabled dancers wishing to hold significant roles in the dance sector. There is a history in the dance and disability sector of non-disabled leaders 'facilitating' the participation of dancers with impairment. This is often in the context of community dance, but it is also apparent in Higher Education and training in the UK because of an extreme lack of teachers with a disability. It is interesting to note that Candoco, the UK's largest integrated dance company, has two non-disabled artistic co-directors and its entire management team are also non-disabled. To a large extent this has been an inevitable part of the progression of the sector, in terms of where the current knowledge and experience is. Moreover, the fact that Candoco is a mid-scale, internationally touring dance company, directing the company requires a level of experience that might not yet exist in emergent managers, administrators and artistic directors. What is problematic here is that until disabled dancers begin calling themselves leaders and seeking leadership positions, the balance of who does the 'leading' will remain uneven.

6.3.4 Taxonomies of Leadership

As discussed in Chapter 4, there are numerous categorisations of leadership styles (Bass 2005, Kets de Vries 1991, Raelin, 2011,Tourish 2013). Moreover, my research has suggested that definitive classifications of leadership do not account for the disabled leader or recognise the leadership potential of people with impairment.

My interviews with Harvey reveal a taxonomy of leadership styles, these are offered here:

a) The Democratic Leader

I ask Harvey what she perceives a leader to look like. Rather than describe the physicality or form of a leader she offers a comment on the personality and actions of a leader:

> Erm.. Someone who leads from the front and takes everybody along with them that would be my initial response, but as an artist I absolutely disagree with that, as an artist I think it's someone who knows how to work with people and get the best out of people.
> (Harvey 2014)

Harvey is differentiating between 'traditional' leadership and leadership in dance. She presents a dichotomy of leadership styles, firstly, she describes an 'autocratic' (Lorange 2010:76) approach and seems to associate this model with the corporate leadership detailed in earlier chapters. Secondly, Harvey offers an alternative 'democratic' style, which for her is synonymous with dance. What is important here is Harvey's perceived segregation between leadership in general terms and leadership in dance. Perhaps like O'Brien she does not see dance as principally a leaderful activity.

b) The Authoritative Leader

In response to my question of whether she perceives a difference between a leader and a 'good' leader; Harvey does not offer a definitive answer, rather she restates her view of oppositional leadership styles based on guidance and support as characteristics of 'good' leadership, and 'bossy' and removed as less effective leadership traits:

> So different types for me are the ones that guide and support and
> work with people, and the authoritarian type, bossy, and very
> separate. (Harvey 2014)

Through this distinction Harvey is positioning good leadership as apart from an archetypal 'authority' figure. This suggestion of leaders as disconnected from 'others' links with Daw's perspective of the leader existing 'behind closed doors' (Daw 2014). It is useful to note that within the current UK contemporary dance sector, this analogy does not represent the realities of leadership practice, leaders in dance are generally visible and connected to the practices in which they operate, for example Emma Gladstone, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Dance Umbrella (2013-) and Alistair Splading, Artistic Director of Sadlers Wells Theatre (2004-). One caveat to these examples is in the area of funding for dance, wherein leaders tend to be less visibly connected to the practice of the art form. It could be suggested that as disabled artists the 'inaccessibility' Daw and Harvey perceive in some leaders speaks to their perception of a divide between disabled and non-disabled practitioners in the sector, rather than leaders and 'non'-leaders.

c) The Accidental Leader

Harvey states that she would not describe herself as a leader, but can accept that her practice in dance could be seen as leaderful. In connection with Harvey's view, Caroline Bowditch has described herself as an 'accidental leader' (Bowditch 2013). This is an interesting term and in her description the choreographer is suggesting that a series of events or 'happenings' in her life and career have led to her being perceived as a leader. There is however a sense of apology in this term, suggesting that Bowditch didn't choose to lead or even decide to take a leadership pathway. There seems to be a reluctance to 'take' leadership or to state ones own worth as a leader of others.

As my thesis has suggested, a lack of disabled leaders as role models in dance in addition to an absence of disabled artists in cultural heritage frameworks means

that disabled artists are significantly under-represented in leadership contexts. Subsequently Bowditch and Harvey may be resistant to 'self-labelling' as leaders because they do not have the means to categorise their practice within an existing framework of disabled leaders.

d) The Receptive Leader

The notion of a 'bringing out the best in people' (Lorange 2010:45) seems central to Harvey's perception of leadership. Her view supports the view of the ideal leader as a person who can listen and respond to the needs of those around them. Harvey is alluding to a need to differentiate leadership depending on the individual. There is a connection here to differentiation and disability; the impaired body is removed from ideologies of normative physical form. In simplistic terms, each disabled body requires its own viewing and reading away from frameworks of how bodies are understood. One caveat is that, of course, all bodies are unique and best understood through individual interpretation, however the distinctiveness of the human form is more pronounced in the disabled body. I ask Harvey, in relation to her dance experience what she perceives as the personality traits of an effective leader, she responds:

> The ones that listen and take what they see and what they hear,
> and they know how to use that, so they are actually very receptive.
> (Harvey 2014)

This statement supports Harvey's view of leaders as receptive, suggesting that good leaders in dance should be skilled in helping others reach their potential. Harvey's suggestion that a leader should inherently understand how to utilise the skills and experience of others links to O'Brien's perception of leadership as intangible. The notion of a receptive leader is a somewhat passive interpretation of leadership. Harvey's presentation of a knowledgeable leader intuitively understanding how to direct others automatically positions the follower as submissive and malleable. This is a scenario potentially analogous to Harvey's

experience in dance; she cites others as leaders (Bowditch, Brew, Cunningham) but situates herself as non-leaderful.

e) The Authentic Leader

At the start of one of Harvey's rehearsals there has been a double booking of the studio space; Harvey has to negotiate with staff at the venue. She is offered a smaller studio for less than the pre-arranged time. It is evident that both Harvey and the dancers are displeased with this. As Harvey speaks to the manager of the space, the dancers are obviously unsettled. Harvey begins the rehearsal by leading the dancers in a warm up; as she does this she mentions the confusion in the morning as she talks them through a guided improvisation. She encourages them to acknowledge but not hold onto the earlier disruption. In doing this she is reassuring the dancers; she is dealing with issues whilst shielding the dancers from potential distraction. Her tone is gentle, she speaks with a calmness that at times I have to strain to hear and yet it is not passive. She is using calm and control to bring 'normality' back into the process. In their research into leadership, Leadership scholars Boas Shamir and Galit Eilam develop the notion of authentic leadership suggesting that:

> Authentic leaders are being themselves (as opposed to conforming
> to others' expectations). They do not pretend to be leaders just
> because they are in a leadership position, for instance as a result
> of an appointment to a management position. Nor do they work on
> developing an image or persona of a leader. Performing a
> leadership function and related activities are self-expressive acts
> for authentic leaders. It is part of what they feel to be their true or
> real self. (Shamir and Eilam 2005:397)

Through my observation, I note that Harvey is not employing more traditional leadership strategies, she does not raise her voice nor does she interrupt or 'control' the dancers, rather it is the very 'realness' of her demeanor that gives her the role of

leader here. When the conversation or action in the studio drifts away from the task, Harvey simply sits and waits, carefully, and (it seems) consciously placing herself within the group; it is her quietness and calm that brings focus back to the group.

6.3.5 Bodies of Leadership

My thesis has explored notions of the 'legitimate' (Hanold in Melina 2013:96) bodies for leadership. In earlier chapters focus has been given to theories of bodily communication (Argyle 1988) and the extent to which physical characteristics and gestural idiosyncrasies impact on perceptions of people as leaders. I have suggested that the disabled body contrasts normative ideologies of leaderful bodies; they are disadvantaged by frameworks that depend on socially constructed ideologies of the body. Researcher in embodiment and leadership, Maylon Hanold, comments on the reading of leadership bodies

> A leader's body mediates whether or not a leader is perceived to
> be authentic or not. Their position that followers are able to
> perceive subconscious, subtle bodily movements as powerful
> signals about leaders' deeper convictions and feelings is a
> significant and valuable insight. (Hanold in Melina 2013:98)

As discussed in Chapter one, Introduction, a body that speaks quietly, moves slowly or requires assistance is classified as 'inferior' and therefore not leaderful. One important caveat here is the presentation of the disabled body as 'overcoming' adversity and leading against the odds. In this context the disabled person may be seen as leaderful; in these instances, however, there seems to be a requirement to transcend the limitations of the disabled body (Albright 1998). I ask Harvey if she feels her physicality is an obstacle to her being perceived as leaderful?[41] She responded:

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[41] I am aware that asking Harvey this question is possibly made easier by my own identification as a disabled artist.

> Yes, for example when I go on the floor, I don't go on the floor very
> often, and I would never go on the floor in a teaching context,
> purely because for me that is like complete exposure. Because my
> body is like bleugh[42]. (Harvey 2015)

I am shocked by the negativity of this term and Harvey's use of it to describe her own body out of her wheelchair and on the floor. I ask Harvey to elaborate what she means by 'bleugh' She answers:

> I mean you see every part of me, you see me completely. I mean
> this (gestures at wheelchair) hides a lot, yes you see my escaping
> legs, but it hides things. (Harvey 2015)

Harvey's comments here are reminiscent of O'Brien's view of feeling less leaderful when on the floor without her prosthetic leg. O'Brien's prosthetic leg and Harvey's wheelchair have a 'normalising' effect; their bodies become recognisable and therefore classifiable. O'Brien and Harvey both express a feeling of being less authoritative when their impairment is 'on display'. Harvey extends this by stating that her mobility in her wheelchair is different from her mobility out of the wheelchair. She seems to associate being out of her wheelchair as being less independent. Harvey offers an example of her grandmother's response to a performance during which she danced on the floor:

> I remember talking to Nanny about being on the floor and she said
> "I don't like seeing you on the floor, you look so vulnerable"
> because she knows all the pitfalls of me being on the floor. (Harvey
> 2015)

Harvey and her grandmother associate Harvey's body out of the chair as vulnerable; Harvey's world is more easily navigated in her wheelchair. Harvey is also suggesting that her grandmother has a sense of her disability that is less apparent to

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[42] Bleugh is a colloquial term generally used to express disgust.

others. Harvey's view raises the question of what disabled people need to do to, and with, the bodies to appear more leaderful.

6.3.6 Ownership and Leadership

As I observe and speak to Harvey, questions that arise are: Is Harvey the choreographer? Does she own this work? Is she in charge? These questions are in some part answered by Harvey directly who informs me that this work is a result of tasks undertaken by the dancers and led by her. She is the choreographer of the work because she sculpts the piece using the material offered by her dancers. This way of working is typical of much current contemporary dance, by using improvisation as a means of generating material and the choreographer 'stitching' the dance together. Choreographer Caroline Bowditch when discussing her creative practice states that:

> I am not a good generator of movement, I am a good generator of
> tasks, which generate movement. (Bowditch 2014)

Although this is a somewhat simplified description of Bowditch's multi-layered process in making performance work, it does clearly indicate a collaborative environment where dancers and choreographer each take a role in creating the movement that will become the fabric of the dance. This model of working is useful in the context of dance and the impaired body, it is a structure with a clear emphasis on the individual – there is a validity in all physicalities and the absence of choreography by rote allows for much greater access and participation for a range of bodies. This also presents a problem within a traditional structure of leadership, if the dance originates from the body and ideas of one individual, who then is the choreographer? Dance maker, Marc Brew, suggests that in his recent work, he has at times avoided the term 'choreographer' highlighting that his pieces are the result of a collaborative process shared between himself and the dancers he is working with. He is keen to recognise and afford status to the contribution of the dancers towards the final 'product.' In a field where work is more frequently labelled as collaborative and

'shared' is anyone in charge of the work and ultimately the 'author?' If the role of 'leader' becomes less clear it may follow that improving progression into leadership for dancers with impairments becomes more complex. How can an aspiring leader progress if the route to leadership is unclear? These questions reveal an interesting shift in how the role of choreographer is understood as a leadership role, in these collaborative processes the notion of leadership seems less relevant or even desirable.

6.3.7 Aspirations

My research has aimed to investigate how disabled dance artists experience working in the contemporary dance sector. I have suggested that obstacles to training (Aujla and Redding 2007) significantly impact on the progression of the impaired dancer. Bespoke training, whilst a useful route into the sector for many disabled artists, has the potential to restrict onward opportunities to the small numbers of organisations offering the training (Coventry University, Candoco Dance Company, StopGap Dance Company). A deficit of disabled role models in leadership positions in dance has meant that disabled dance artists are unable to clearly visualize longevity for themselves and their work in dance. Without historical role models or transparent progression routes, dancers with disabilities may find it difficult to aspire to permanency in the sector. In one conversation I ask Harvey what her aspirations in dance are. She responds:

> In 10 years I would like to think I've made a dent somewhere in my
> profession as a dancer. In my opinion the sector (dance and
> disability) needs a kick up the arse. As a dancer with a disability I
> feel so restricted, I don't feel as if I'm good enough. I feel I'm not
> noticed, unless that noticing is in relation to other disabled dancers.
> (Harvey 2015)

It must be noted that dance as an art form has a reputation for 'short lived careers' and feelings of career instability are not restricted to disabled dancers.

Harvey's desire to 'make a dent' speaks clearly to a narrative of 'short termism' in the dancer's career. Harvey's comment that she is not accounted for in the sector, unless she is associated with other impaired artists, reinforces my suggestion that opportunities for progression for disabled dancers are limited to practice that is focused on dance and disability. If dance practice for disabled dancers is limited to this particular category it follows that leadership positions for such dancers will also be limited. To expand on this observation, the UK contemporary dance sector is a relatively small part of the totality of UK dance, and disabled dance artists practicing within the sector are marginalised to another, even smaller sector; dance and disability. There is a convenience in this classification, which has enabled some opportunity for access for disabled dancers, however it is my firm belief that the segregation of impaired dancers in this way significantly limits the 'space' for disabled leaders to operate in. Harvey supports this observation in her response to my question about her 'success' in dance:

> I've had things that I regard as successes for myself, but in the
> grand scheme of things it might not be acknowledged in the same
> way you know, the likes of Caroline Bowditch and Claire
> Cunningham have done things that have got them huge amounts
> of recognition and Marc Brew, I mean huge amounts of recognition
> and I'm not in the same league as them. (Harvey 2014)

In this statement Harvey cites three high profile disabled dance artists. Her comment highlights her perception of them as leaders in dance. In addition, she marks a difference between herself and them in relation to the 'recognition' they receive. It is noteworthy that all the artists Harvey mentions receive regular funding to create and tour dance works. As an 'un-supported'[43] dance artist, it is plausible that Harvey perceives financial investment from external sources as a validating process, classifying some as 'more successful' within a hierarchical structure.

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[43] At the time of the interview (2014) Harvey had been unsuccessful in her funding attempts. In September 2015 she had been awarded an Arts Council Grant for the Arts (GftA) to develop a new work.

During our final meeting I re-visit the question of aspirations in dance. I want to know if the processes and experiences Harvey has gone through, throughout the period of my research (2013 – 2015) have shifted her thinking in this area. I ask if she sees herself working in dance in twenty years time. Her answer provides a significant insight into her lived experience in dance and perception of her role within the sector:

> Er… my natural reaction is to say, I will stop, purely because if the chipping away is the same all the way through, you know I'm knackered already. I just don't know if I can keep doing that. I think that is relevant to having a disability, but it's also about being an artist. If you don't keep up with it (the dance sector) you're forgotten. We are still at a point where there are the key figures in the dance and disability world and there's nothing wrong with that but if we're all going to push on there needs to be more room and it will shape and shift. I feel like I'm trying to attach onto something but can't quite get there. (Harvey 2015)

There is a clear disillusionment apparent in Harvey's comment. In her description of her career in dance to date as 'chipping away' there is a suggestion of significant effort and disproportionate reward. Harvey highlights that although her position in dance is informed by being a disabled dancer, in more general terms she perceives the role of the artist as an enduring process. Harvey alludes to a fast-changing scenario in dance practice where one can easily feel overlooked or 'forgotten'. It is important to interrogate what Harvey is describing by feeling forgotten and by whom? My research has explored the role of the disabled dance artist within existing dance practice. I have proposed that in a dominant hegemony of 'normative' bodies the impaired body in dance can become 'invisible'. There is an interesting parallel between feeling 'forgotten' and feeling 'invisible'. Harvey feels unseen by the dance sector, her expressed desire to 'attach' onto something, speaks to notions of

hierarchy in dance. Harvey is reaching towards those she perceives as successful in the sector, but does not articulate what this achievement might look like for her.

Harvey perceives herself to be on a route in dance that is typical for many dancers, disabled and non-disabled, however she cannot see herself represented clearly in her 'projected' future in dance. She states that there are 'key people' in the 'dance and disability world'. It is my view that these 'key' people can be usefully interpreted as 'leaders' and others must 'push' to allow the sector to 'shift' and 'shape'. Harvey's view offers an interesting perspective. She marks a difference between 'key people' and 'others' in her construction of a dance and disability world.

I have proposed in this chapter that a segregated sector accommodating disabled dance artists is detrimental to the progression of the disabled leader in dance. Harvey's comments support this in her suggestion that she perceives little room for her own development or progression amongst a small 'pool' of dancers. The segregation serves to distance Harvey from other disabled artists and perpetuates her sense of a peripheral status in dance.

This chapter has highlighted the voices of three disabled dance artists. The artists are at varying stages of a career in dance and their practices in the sector are in some ways similar and in other ways uniquely their own. Projecting these voices into the dance sector, and beyond, will provide a valuable insight into the real lived experiences of disabled dance practitioners. Doing so will encourage further discussion and research in the area and develop spaces for disabled artists to become part of a community of leaders in the UK dance sector. The following chapter will continue on this theme; offering an in-depth auto-ethnographic reflection on my own dance practice.

Chapter 7 – Reflections on Practice

7.0 Introduction

This chapter offers my analysis of the practice that forms part of this research. As detailed in the methodology chapter, my practice in dance is central to the findings of my study. The role of my practice in my research is multi-dimensional. I have used practice as a site for exploring specific research questions, the findings of which are offered in this chapter. The chapter brings together the analysis with practice (in the form of a film) as a different way of transmitting my research discoveries, and an in-depth reflection on the process of producing the film. The process of undertaking scholarly research has influenced my practice research; I have embarked on creative research practices that are a direct result of my academic investigation and vice versa.

The relationship between practice and research, and practice-as-research is a much-debated area and was discussed in detail in chapter 3. In relation to my own practice research, there is much in my research process that aligns with a practice-as-research model; for example, the film[44] is submitted as research in its own right. It is not solely a site for analysis and reflection, rather it is a filmed artefact that offers insight into the research questions, developed in dialogue with the written text. In the process of my research, my practice has shifted and developed, I will reflect on this development and my progression into leadership in relation to my practice with particular reference to the questions detailed in this thesis (see p.5) 'How can I use what I already know?', 'Am I a Leader?' and 'How has the process of my research developed me as a leader in dance?'. My thesis also draws upon a collaborative film, *The Lily, The Rose*, that has a close relationship with the practice that has formed part of this research. This film is not submitted as part of my research, however I offer reflection on this process in this chapter. I will offer a retrospective consideration of my practice within the research period (2013-2016), presenting a perspective on how both my practice in dance and my academic exploration have

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[44] The title of the film is *Rough-cut* as a conscious reference to its initial status as a 'rough' version of a longer film, directed and produced for a different purpose. As I discuss, it was in the process of making the 'roughcut' that I recognised that I was investing in a research process that had direct relevance for and relationship with my thesis, so it became a component of my research method and of the thesis.

mutually informed one another and how each have supported my progression into leadership.

The chapter focuses particularly on the research period mentioned above. It is important, however, to outline a brief personal history in order to contextualise the development of my practice in contemporary dance. It is not the purpose of this chapter to offer a detailed account of my education and training in dance. However the fact that my progression in dance has been informed by a series of fortuitous events and efforts to locate myself in the right place at the right time, speaks directly to my research concerning the position and progression of the disabled dance artist.

At the time of my undergraduate training (1993-1996) I had never seen a dancer with a disability on stage or in any of the resources included in my three-year training. In my third year of study, I encountered Candoco Dance Company (for details see p1), my personal tutor[45] passed me a flyer for a workshop led by dancers from the company and I attended, out of curiosity and a sense of loyalty to my tutor. I recall feeling that I had found something in dance that represented me. For the previous three years, I had studied through practice and theory, a presumed narrative in dance that did not include me. In the Candoco workshop, I saw Celeste Dandeker[46] and Jon French, both wheelchair users and David Toole without legs, dancing with Sue Smith, Helen Baggett and Kuldip-Singh Barmi.[47] They were co-leading the session. The workshop was significantly removed from ideologies of 'therapeutic' dance that I had been trying to disassociate myself from. I saw in this workshop the possibility of working in the professional dance sector in a way that accounted for my non-conforming body.

Shortly after this encounter, Candoco advertised a position of post-graduate trainee to join the company. The post, funded by the Arts Council, would involve shadowing the dancers and administrative staff during different aspects of the company's activity. I knew that I must be one of a very limited pool of disabled dancers graduating from a degree in dance. I applied, confident that I was in a strong position and was offered the one-year training. In relation to progression towards

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[45] Valerie Briginshaw

[46] Co-Founder of Candoco.

[47] Toole, French, Smith, Baggett and Singh Barmi were all founding members of Candoco.

leadership for disabled artists, the notion of being 'lucky' is important. If opportunity for access and development within contemporary dance for disabled artists is dependent on being in the 'right place' or via idiosyncratic routes (Aujla and Redding, 2013:3) then advancement in the sector will consequently be limited to a fortunate group of select individuals.

I have proposed in earlier chapters that societal perceptions of the impaired body as 'lacking', or lesser than the non-disabled body, can cause attitudinal and perceptual barriers (Aujla and Redding 2013) to aspiring disabled dancers. In addition, I have suggested that contemporary dance is an art form that operates within a pre-conceived framework of a 'normal' dancer's body. These combined factors mean that young disabled people seeking dance experiences do not see themselves represented in dance, on stage, in the media or on screen; disabled dancers are disadvantaged by a hegemony of prescribed forms of dancers as non-disabled, 'complete', standing, seeing and hearing. All opportunities in dance are not all available to disabled dancers. 'Traditional' non-disabled bodies are the 'norm' in training and professional contexts. Unless specific employers in dance explicitly state an 'interest' in employing dancers with disabilities, or training providers express a commitment to differentiated training; then the sub-text is clear; the disabled dancer does not belong in these contexts. This is troubling in relation to progression in dance. Failure to recognise the valuable contribution to dance made by disabled dancers, outside of the confines of the 'dance and disability' sector means that progression will remain limited for disabled practitioners in dance. Furthermore, dance as an art form will fail to benefit from the rich knowledge and experience that exists within disabled artists.

The practice detailed in this chapter refers to a period of research and development, during which I collaborated with disabled dance artist, Welly O'Brien[48]. Following a successful funding application to Arts Council, England, we worked for a period of 4 weeks in Peterborough[49], Brighton and France. It is this research and development period that led to the creation of the duet made by myself and O'Brien.

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[48] O'Brien is a case study participant in my PhD research (see 5.2)

[49] The locations were informed by where myself, O'Brien and Darbyshire live.

This work enabled me to clarify my research questions, in this sense the dialogical nature of the relationship between my practice and research is reiterated.

7.1 A Shared History

Welly O'Brien and I are the same age, we both joined Candoco Dance Company in 1999. We each have two sons of the same age and we both have a missing limb. Throughout the two decades we have known each other and worked together, we have often talked about what we might do together. This has included: thinking about with whom we might work, how we would choose to work and what might emerge from our collaborative practice. These discussions have been almost exclusively informal, taking place after a rehearsal or performance, perhaps in a pub or on a train. Even though we were somehow planning and sharing ideas, these rarely seemed framed as part of a creative process.

O'Brien and I both encountered Candoco through an open workshop. My introduction was as a third year undergraduate studying Dance and Related Arts. O'Brien, at the time, was employed cleaning the flat of Adam Benjamin's[50] stepmother and was invited to a workshop. Following these initial encounters we were both involved in different aspects of the work of Candoco. I undertook the Arts Council one-year traineeship in 1996, mentioned above and O'Brien performed a duet, *Tonic* in the same year choreographed by Sue Smith, which toured to small-scale venues as part of Candoco's repertory programme. Neither O'Brien nor myself auditioned for Candoco; we were contacted directly by Celeste Dandeker[51]. She asked us to become full-time members of the performing company. This is indicative of the position of disabled artists in the wider dance sector at this time. In 1999 there were few professional disabled dancers in the UK and the majority of those practising had 'grown up' through Candoco and its associated projects.

This is in contrast to Candoco's current recruitment strategy where auditions are held for both disabled and non-disabled artists together. It should be noted that Candoco auditions attract a wide geographical demographic and as such many of

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[50] Co-founder of Candoco

[51] At this time Dandeker was sole artistic director of Candoco

the disabled dancers working with the company have come from outside the UK, often from other 'inclusive' dance companies. This has implications for potential disabled leaders in dance, if a 'bespoke' route into a company such as Candoco is unavailable they may be disadvantaged by a lack of audition experience. It is only now that O'Brien and I are coming to the conclusion (or beginning) of our exploration together that the value of these 'informal' exchanges has come into focus. In many ways, rather than a new endeavour the period of research and development shared between O'Brien and myself feels like a project that has had over 20 years in development. In relation to my study it is this period of research and development with O'Brien that has generated ideas for the practice that forms part of my thesis

7.2 Research and Development

My work with O'Brien is based on our shared objective to explore and develop a body of performance practice that is appropriate for our bodies and our artistic curiosities. As our research and development began, I was struck by the familiarity that informed our approach. We shifted into a shared vocabulary and understanding that was informed strongly by our years of shared practice and friendship. When I dance with O'Brien she can never be 'just another body'. I am dancing with my friend, with a body that knows my body. Through years spent in rehearsals and hours on trains, in tour buses, in post/pre performance discussions. I am also dancing with the body that was one of my first visitors after the birth of my son, who helped clean up the village hall after my wedding and who listened to me in tears after being 'heckled' by my son's classmates with questions about my missing hand when dropping him at school.

We share knowledge, not only of our dancing bodies, but also of each other's experiences. The fact that we both have missing limbs is important in our friendship and professional collaboration. We are connected by a mutual understanding of the physical experience of this impairment, but also of the psychological and phenomenological aspects of having a missing limb. When the taxi driver on our first day of rehearsals comments to O'Brien, noticing her walking stick "What have you been up to, playing football?" I can relate to how this might make her feel, as a

spectacle or point of interest. I also understand how comments like this feel in the context of embarking on a new creative process; from our perspectives we are two women travelling to a dance studio, in charge of exploring our own ideas and practice. For the taxi driver O'Brien's position as a young woman using a walking stick suggests a narrative that is one of injury or trauma, not conducive with leadership or autonomy.

Having a missing hand and a missing leg does not mean that there are not many unknowns and thoughts yet to be expressed in our collaboration, but there is something in our relationship in life and dance that has allowed us to access a shorthand of practice that feels unique and personal. Critical Disabilities Studies scholar, Mark Castrodale, offers a view on the potential of friendship and shared understanding to create space to interrogate lived experiences:

> Friendship lies between Self and Other; it is the common, liminal, interstitial space that connects us. Stories of disability and friendship exist in the aporia, in ways that engender an interrogation of what it means to be human both individually and collectively. Stories of friendship and disability are spaces for critical thought and reflection. They allow us to rethink and reengage in thinking about the edges of the established ways we make sense of Self and Others. (Castrodale 2015)

On our first day we talk about what we want to explore in this first week, not knowing where this venture may or may not lead. Retrospectively, I note the liberation attached to this project, there is no sharing of work required by funders or stakeholders, just us in the studio with the freedom to do what interests us. Somehow I feel like an interloper here, I am with my friend being paid to dance and question together. I am almost waiting for the door to open and someone to tell us there's been a mistake and that another two 'real' dancers should be here instead.

We talked about these feelings and I wonder what is at the root of this seeming insecurity around our ability to be autonomous in our practice. Maybe it is because we are mothers who move from performing and teaching to parenting, as if each role

requires a different way of being and the two seem not to intersect unless one is troubling the other (guilt at leaving home or guilt at perceived non-committal to work). Maybe it is because we are women and 'feel' the absence of the archetypal male leader. We talk about our position as disabled artists and agree that at times we feel like we are imposing ourselves into an area which functions within systems of 'normal' or 'unbroken' bodies and by situating ourselves in this space we are somehow causing problems for the sector. We are at once looking for acceptance into this world whilst knowing that our shapes can never comply and be anything else but 'other.'

The dichotomy here is that we are proud of our 'otherness' it is our very difference that has placed us in this studio with our long careers behind us and yet we are troubled by our efforts to locate ourselves into an existing fabric of dance artists. We are the 'children' of a generation of pioneers who championed our right to be here, to participate and perform, but without a path laid out for us by those that have gone before we feel the lack of reference to a previous generation we are unsure of how to progress and to what.

7.3 Recording the Creative process

I began filming on our first day in the studio together, initially placing the camera centrally so that the resulting footage would be front facing and clear. My hope was that this would capture a record of our work together that could be re-visited and used for later analysis. As the days progressed, the camera became almost like a third person in the space. Moving from covert positions to sitting between us as we talked or moved together. The setting up of the camera became a daily task undertaken by either one of us. Often the filming would start as we planned for the day, or chatted about the previous day's work.

These informal recordings became central to my reflections of the research and development period. They offered an insight not only into the progression of the work and our artistic choices, they also gave focus to the relationship between myself and O'Brien and the way we communicate and work with each other. This differentiation between filming as a record of a creative practice and filming as offering a narrative

interpretation of the process is interesting in relation to my research concerned with leadership development.

Why an artist-researcher chooses to film and what they choose to record highlight clearly the motivation driving any specific creative process. In the case of filming for memory, there is an instant relationship forged between performer, live dancing and recording of the same dance on film. In this relationship, there is an assumed hierarchy, the live work is seen as authentic and 'real' and the recorded version is a functional device used to remember and re-create the live dance[52]. This use of film as a form of visual notation is a common practice in dance. It is a straightforward means of sharing, learning, and archiving dance works. I draw a distinction between this method of film as record and the theme of film as research. In the case of my own recording and consequent edited work, it became a site for ethnographic and anthropologic research concerning my own practice and reflections and those of O'Brien as collaborator.

The film offered unique insight into conversations and observations that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Examples of this include: moments where rehearsals have ended and we are talking as we are preparing to leave, times where our thoughts and observations manifest as injections between unrelated topics or scenarios where we are unaware that the camera is still recording and we are communicating about something away from the work we are making. It is these instances that give an invaluable perspective on the relationship between us as artists.

It is this unique relationship that is so integral to the nature of the work. Throughout the period of research and development for the work I have discovered that the strength of our collaboration often derives from the 'un-said' as opposed to the explicitly stated. Through our mutual experiences and shared understanding of dancing with a missing limb, we were able to draw upon an inherent knowledge of how our bodies worked and how we wanted to present them to an audience.

The idea of inherent knowing between disabled dance artists is central to exploring leadership. There is a duality in this knowing that is both empowering and

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[52] For further information on 'liveness' in Performance, see Auslander, 2008, Blades, 2011 and Reason 2004)

problematic. Sharing ideologies and lived experiences means that disabled artists can collaborate without their creative process being informed by existing body hierarchies. For example, if I work with a disabled artist, there is no need to spend time talking about the language of my or their body. We are not vehicles for a non-disabled artist exploring disability in dance contexts, therefore, there is no need to 'explain' our impairment within the creative process. We share the vantage point of the atypical (Linton 2006:81) a position where commonality of lived experiences of impairment enable a unique perspective of a world 'configured for non-disabled people' (Linton 2006:81). Although Linton's introduction of a 'unique perspective' here is useful in understanding the differentiated viewpoint of disabled people in a dominantly 'normative' world, it must be noted that there is not a singularity in this perspective and perceptions of disabled people will differ in a multitude of ways rather than fit within a binary of a 'normative' perspective and a perspective held by people with disabilities. This distinction is important in terms of creating space for disabled leaders in dance who hold a range of experience and perception.

Conversely, this shared knowledge also means that disabled dance artists may find themselves restricted to working only within 'disability contexts' in dance. In terms of leadership this is troubling, suggesting that dancers with impairment can lead others with disabilities, however they might find less opportunity to lead in a 'mainstream' setting in dance.

O'Brien and I talked about leadership in the context of our collaboration. There was a feeling of autonomy as we developed our work and we were 'excited' by the potential offered to us as we worked under our own direction. Neither of us, however, declared ourselves to be leading in the process. Retrospectively it is clear that the control of the process was fluid. At times O'Brien would lead on a creative task or take responsibility for directing aspects of the research. At other times I would undertake a 'leading' role in decision making and orchestrating the process. We felt like we were sharing the leadership. The idea of shared or communal leadership offers a useful framework for examining leadership in creative contexts. It is an ideology that allows for decision-making by discussion or choreography through improvisation and a highly reflective practice. From my experience of working with O'Brien this shared responsibility was largely effective. On reflection, however, I feel

that leadership 'in the moment' is rarely a truly shared process. In the example of myself and O'Brien we passed the baton of leadership between us. Whilst this is an effective way of approaching the creative process, it seems that the success of working in this way is dependent on a pre-existing communication and experience of each other. O'Brien and I had a starting position of support for one another. We were prepared to assist the other into leadership. It should be noted that this reflective writing emerges in parallel to the case study research. There is an inevitable connection between my research into the case study participants and my personal reflection on my own practice and experience. Observations and findings are clarified over time by and through the two aspects of my overall research.

7.4 Lost in Translation

Contemporary dance has developed a vocabulary, which is language-like, spanning generations of developments in the genre. It is an etymological framework, which accounts for the history of the form. Balletic vocabulary, highly directive and codified as a practice is still widely used, not only in the context of ballet, but it is also often borrowed by specific contemporary dance techniques as a shorthand for describing a desired position, gesture or phrase of movement (for example, plié, first/second position). Within contemporary dance there is an esoteric language which depends upon knowledge of the field in order to access and understand its meaning. The latter is widely perceived as more 'accessible' and less specific to 'traditional' or normative bodies. However, without a foundation of training or experience in contemporary dance, much of the terminology can be vague and divergent in its interpretation and therefore alienating to dancers with 'non' conforming bodies.

Current discourse in many areas of contemporary dance seems to perpetuate a language in which disability is absent. My experience in the sector suggests that this is also apparent in dance training and education contexts as well as within broader academic frameworks. That which exists is limited to disability as a 'subject' in dance, rather than a language that allows for useful, critical discussion that embraces disability and which includes vocabularies for training and working in

dance that are relevant to disabled dance artists. This absence means that leaders in dance can only draw from existing etymologies to talk about dance including dancers with disabilities. In this context the disabled performer is consistently 'othered' by a language concerned with bodily norms in dance.

In our research period O'Brien and I were aiming to develop a language that felt appropriate to our bodies and our work, one that accounted for our 'non-traditional' bodies. We wanted to create a dance work that could be accessed by diverse audiences; our objective was to challenge viewers of our work to interpret our performance outside a dominant narrative of trauma or bravery. As people with missing limbs, we were intensely aware of the perceptions commonly associated with impairment of this kind. There is a fascination to know 'what happened.' Amputation or congenital limb loss are subjects of curiosity. The 'one armed villain' or 'peg-legged baddie' are familiar characters in popular culture. Although there are limited examples of 'positive' dipictions of limb loss or amputation, for example media coverage of paralympic athletes, the examples discussed above are dominant and in our practice we wanted to offer our perspective on these representations.

The narrative of limb loss as traumatic and painful is embedded into public understanding. Humans are born into a system dictated by scales of 'normal' and 'other'. Dominant modes of socialisation tells us to 'care' about those who are born or who become 'other'. It is this sense of caring that perpetuates the scale. On the whole normal is assessed in comparison to the bodies of others. By 'caring' about those less 'normal' a societal sense of a person's normality is re-affirmed.

This is troubling for the relationship between disabled performer and non-disabled viewer. When the viewer arrives at the performance encounter they bring with them their social, cultural and personal perception and understanding of impairment. Through these 'anthropological mechanisms' (Agamben 2004:29), we are taught not to 'stare' at difference. So often I have witnessed an anxious parent's whispered reprimand to a child first noticing and then staring at where my left hand 'should' be.

O'Brien and I are asking our audience to stare, to really take in our bodies; we are challenging them not to 'feel for us.' In a sense we are inviting the viewer into the shorthand that we as performers have developed. In our dancing together, there is a

relationship that questions 'traditional' models of 'integrated' dance. The absence of the non-disabled performer in our work marks our collaboration as something away from much existing dance that includes dancers with disabilities.

It is rare to see two disabled artists in a duet together, in particular women. 'Integrated' dance has historically borrowed from a traditional balletic model wherein the female disabled dancer duets with the non-disabled and usually male performer (Jurg Koch and Welly O'Brien in *Surfer Girl* by Doug Elkins for Candoco, 2001). In this way the choreography is consistent with attempts to 'fit' impairment into a pre-existing canon that can be readily understood and is still informed by an ethos that reinstates the classical body within the disabled one (Albright, 1997:83). By resisting this model, O'Brien and I are forcing our audience to re-think the position of the disabled dance artist in performance. We are deconstructing the comfortable viewing within which the disabled dancer is supported by their non-disabled partner. This deconstruction invites audiences to reconsider the normative frameworks commonly used to view 'inclusive' dance. As dancers and dance-makers O'Brien and I wanted to position ourselves and our experiences at the forefront of the work. Kuppers offers a view here:

> Disabled artists and their allies challenge and query the knowledge
> that governs how we see what it means to be human, but also how
> we see artwork itself. Through their practices, artists can choose to
> analyse the norms that underlie our conceptions of excellence. But
> it is not easy to undermine the status quo, and disabled artists face
> many challenges as they make choices about how to identify, how
> to place their work, how to find audiences. (Kuppers 2014:32)

Kuppers is citing art as an opportunity to challenge assumptions around disability suggesting that artists can use their practice to consider their own position in the world and their relationship to widely held 'norms'. She also highlights the complexity of subverting these ideologies within artwork suggesting that this is both impacted by and dependent upon the choices the artists make about their work.

Kuppers' theory resonates with the experience of creating our live dance work. O'Brien and I seemed drawn to each other by our long term mutual resistance to being labelled as disabled artists, or to locate our practice within the field of disability arts. We both saw ourselves as 'non-political' in our practice and in our lives as people with impairments. It became clear to us very early on in our research together, that the simple act of making a duet together would be read within a framework of understanding based on a long history of how disability, in particular limb loss, is interpreted. This realisation led us to consider our role in this process of interpretation. We could invite people in to 'our world' in a way that was non-confrontational and would allow audiences to feel 'challenged' but within the confines of their existing understanding. Or we could confront the pre-conceptions in a way that highlighted the dominant norms and placed us in a power position, autonomous performers with the potential to direct the audience gaze.

There is a taboo surrounding missing limbs, it is an impairment that has associations with accident, illness or birth 'anomaly'. It is a disability that invites curiosity, this is in contrast to a visual or hearing impairment or a person using a wheelchair, where generally the body is still 'whole'. Limb 'deficiency' presents a body that does not fit into a recognisable framework. This disrupts our feelings of security about our own physicalities. Limb loss highlights the fragility of the human body, the potential to be 'broken' or 'damaged'. Anthropologist, Lindsay French supports this view suggesting that amputation challenges our own sense of bodily integrity and conjures up nightmares of our own dismemberment' (French 1994:72).

The encounter with a person with a missing limb evokes a mixed reaction in the 'starer' (Garland-Thomson 2009), it unsettles feelings of security at the same time as provoking the question of why? This desire to 'know' is not specific to limb loss, it is an aspect that informs not only how disability is understood in the world, but also the relationship of the person with an impairment to 'normality'. It could be said that there is a belief that? if we have the 'knowledge' we can protect ourselves and those close to us from disability. This implies a power relationship between the disabled person and the non-disabled person. If impairment is understood as something painful, traumatic or even 'unlucky' these associations mean that in leadership terms it may be difficult for a person with a disability to be 'understood' and 'viewed' outside of this

understanding. The fear of 'accepting' fragility as part of what it is to be human automatically stigmatizes the disabled person. I propose that it is this marginalisation that is an obstacle to leadership.

The disabled dancer can also be made voiceless and restricted by presumed narratives held in society. In the same way, the non-disabled artist can be made invisible through their role as 'facilitator.' This is evidenced particularly in the way that 'inclusive' dance is reviewed or critiqued. The 'story' of the disabled artist often dominates the writing and the non-disabled performers frequently remain in the background. This excerpt from a review of a duet between O'Brien and Jurg Koch (a non disabled dancer) supports the statement that the narrative of 'overcoming' impairment is dominant in our discourse of disabled dancers. In addition there is a suggestion in this quote that dance is an opportunity to 'transcend' disability, as O'Brien is lifted and supported by Koch her impairment is invisible, it is the moment when she becomes 'pedestrian' again that we are reminded that she has a missing leg.

> The highlight is Girl, in which Welly O'Brien sails through the air,
> moving as freely with her partner, Jurg Koch, as a fish in water.
> Only when she lands do you realise that, like a mermaid, she
> cannot walk. (Parry 2001)

Parry's response to this work presents an interesting perspective concerning the disabled performer on stage and off-stage; there is an assumption that O'Brien is 'performing' the Surfer Girl 'role'. The ambiguity of this stance is the probability that as O'Brien perceives herself to be more 'whole' without her prosthesis she may feel more like she is performing when wearing her 'normalising' prosthetic leg.

The objective of our research and subsequent duet was to include our missing limbs as a central element of the work. It is this that is most challenging to acceptable norms in dance and disability. We wanted people to see where our limbs 'should' be. We wanted to use the specificity of O'Brien's shortened leg and my left arm as part of the movement, not as a part of our bodies that moved as a

consequence of a different movement. In doing this we were acknowledging our impairments as part of our dance, rather than something to be overlooked.

The lack of a robust and shared vocabulary to enable a critical discourse around the impaired body has meant that the disability is made invisible. Subsequently critical discussion relating to work including disabled artists, is not concerned with the disabled dance artist as a 'complete' person. By this I mean that the commentary is often focussed on the impairment or 'problem'. Normative templates of the dancer's body are used as a comparison to the disabled body in dance. The 'truth' of the skill and experience of disabled performers is secondary to narratives of miraculous or inspiring bodies overcoming trauma and beating obstacles to be positioned as performers on stage.

The consequence of this is that disabled artists are restricted to iconic roles in dance. They have become trophies of equality and access in dance, by positioning them in this way there is a silencing of their voices. It should be noted that there are limited examples of artists who resist categorisation such as Annie Hanauer (Candoco 2008 – 2014) and Toke Broni-Strandby (Candoco 2013-). There is a significant lack of disabled artists present at a leadership level in dance. There are a number of highly experienced dancers who maintain their practice as performers. In addition to this in recent years there has been an increase in the number of high profile disabled choreographers. It is the lack, however, of disabled artists in positions of influence and decision making in 'mainstream' dance that has meant that disabled dancers' voices are not accounted for in our shared dance heritage. The contemporary position of disabled dancers is in large part a consequence of their lack of presence within historical records of dance and in other structures, such as dance teaching programmes.

7.5 Historical Narratives

Dance is an evolutionary practice and students of dance are introduced to the history of the art form during their practical and theoretical education of the subject. Practitioners seen as central to the development of the genre over different periods in time are usually researched and critiqued. Students tend to learn the origin of the

form and how each genre or style has been shaped by what has come before. Students are generally taught that modern or contemporary dance emerged as a shift away from the elitism of Ballet and that schools of experimental practitioners have paved the way for new and innovative practice. Through this curricula dancers are taught that they are part of a long and meaningful history of dance, they learn that their practice sits within a pre-existing canon of work.

Historic dance works are woven into current contexts, both in teaching and learning and in the professional sector. At times, work is re-constructed and 'brought back to life' and at other times the work is de-constructed to allow a response that accounts for new modes of practice. Dance works made by and including dancers with disabilities are relatively absent from a shared dance history. High profile companies such as Candoco and Axis[53] may be considered as part of this history, however in education this is most likely to happen within the context of a specified module of learning focussed on dance and disability.

The implications of this exclusion from dance history is significant for disabled dance artists. It is difficult to aspire to achievement in dance with limited reference to those who have preceded current practice. In this context disabled dancers are marginalised; historic representations are limited to objects of curious anomaly, for example performer Johnny Eck (1911 – 1991) and dancer Lavinia Warren (1842 – 1919) . This leaves dancers with disabilities in a 'middle ground', not drawn upon in an historic context nor aspired to as leaders in a current context. This has a consequence on leadership aspirations for disabled dancers. It appears that the marginalisation of historic figures in the context of dance and disability, where individuals are portrayed as 'abnormal' or attempts are made to 'erase' impairment, has led to a situation where many disabled dancers reject links being made to disabled dancers existing in historic cultural frameworks. Highlighted here by Celeste Dandeker in a discussion about the emergence of Candoco;

> I was particularly aware that we could be seen as 'disabled
> dancing'. I was just not interested. (Animated 2007)

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[53] Axis Dance Company are a professional contemporary dance company of disabled and non-disabled dancers based in Oakland, California.

There is a perpetuation here of an environment within which disabled dancers are striving for 'normality'. Moreover, there is an implication that dancers with disabilities are required to 'ignore' their impairment in a landscape where the disabled body is 'invisible' in both historic and current contexts.

7.6 Letting in the Past

During the initial research period, O'Brien and I were drawn to historic portrayals of female disabled performers. In our efforts to create a dance work that felt 'truthful' to our bodies and our experience, we had many conversations about what it meant to be an 'older' disabled woman in dance. We acknowledged and attempted to ignore the desire to 'please' audiences with 'palatable' or 'predictable' depictions of disability in dance. This led us to Daisy and Violet Hilton; O'Brien had encountered the English born sisters as she was researching Freak Show culture. We felt immediately linked to these women. Daisy and Violet Hilton were born in 1908 in Brighton. They were conjoined at the pelvis and after being rejected by their birth mother they were effectively sold to Mary Hilton after which they were raised into a life of objectification and performance, they literally grew up in the limelight, performing their impairment for audiences (Frost 2009).

In our discussions, O'Brien and I expressed a sense of shared experience with the Hilton sisters, not solely resulting from the fact that they were disabled performers. We were particularly intrigued by their 'hummingbird lives'; 'full of color and glitter and always on the move' (The Charlotte Observer n.d) and the complexity of their mutual manipulation and validation by the viewings of others. Research into the Hilton sisters is limited, there is little available in academic texts. The information we were able to access was largely anecdotal (newspaper archives, YouTube, niche interest websites[54]) and not from scholarly sources. There was a shared narrative across sources that suggested that for the Hilton sisters, performing was a way of life

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[54] For example: http://www.thehumanmarvels.com a website depicting "Freaks, Geeks and Human Oddities"

that was not limited to formal performances, but included their lives away from the stage.

As disabled women we were exploring the duality of both resisting and inviting the curiosity towards our bodies on stage. We also felt empathy towards the Hilton twins. By bringing them into our research, we were giving a voice to their experiences in parallel to considering our own experience as performers. Our research into their lives gave us a framework for examining our own practice. As Actor Mat Fraser comments, re-visiting the past can be framed as disabled artists offering portrayals of the history of their own oppression (Fraser 2015). Fraser's perspective is useful in terms of researching *Freak Show* and its place in current practice. *Freak show* in its historic context has been perceived as exploitative and voyeuristic as demonstrated here by Historian Nadja Durbach;

> Genuine human anomalies of all shapes and sizes could increasingly be seen at fairs, marketplaces, coffee houses and taverns across Europe in the seventeenth century. By the 18th century these horned men, hairy women, dwarfs and double bodied wonders had become staples of both popular and elite culture. (Durbach 2009:2)

Fraser is subverting this view by considering the empowerment of re-claiming the *Freak Show* in a contemporary context. Fraser develops this by describing "Freak" as a radically different person on stage, entertaining with their radical difference (Fraser 2014). This speaks to notions of visibility in the field of dance and disability. Fraser is suggesting that rather than performing *in spite* of impairment, disabled artists are performing *because* of their impairment. In relation to his own solo practice he states:

> Yeah, people were looking at my arms, but I had 110 percent of the audience's attention. They had to listen to everything I said. (Fraser 2014)

O'Brien and I were motivated by the idea that we were not performing 'about' our missing hand and leg. We were performing with them. This represented a shift in our experience as dancers, as the authors of own work we wanted to create a performance that incorporated our whole bodies, not one that aimed to forget them.

Freak Show, as a genre, offers an opportunity to explore the notion of 'displaying' disability, by including Daisy and Violet Hilton in our practice we were letting in disabled performers from our shared heritage as disabled performers, in doing so we were also allowing our current practice to shift and change. In a sense this 'borrowing' was empowering for us as dance makers and also useful for highlighting the place of the disabled performer in performance history.

7.7 The Film – 'The Lily, The Rose'

In the process of applying for funding there were many discussions about what we wanted to explore and ultimately the work we wanted to make. Both of us wanted to include a 'live' element; as dancers this felt like a 'natural' path to take. We also wanted to include an element that could speak for us, an artefact that could exist in the world without us having to be there. We wanted to make a film so that our creative voice could be 'out there' without the need for touring. We also felt that a film offered a versatility that is less available in performed work. This was an interesting point in our collaboration, where the progression of each of us in dance was brought into focus. Having spent the last two years in academic environments where representation by disabled dancers is significantly lacking; I felt that a film would be a valuable resource in training contexts, providing a stimulus for discussion. As a dance artist regularly employed by other choreographers, O'Brien's motivation for creating a film was fed by a desire to make work that did not involve touring and long periods away from home. The vision for our film was that it could act as an agent for dance artists with disabilities in contexts such as conferences, performances and lecture/demonstrations.

The film offered our collaboration a longevity and wider reach than our live performance. At times when we cannot physically be present to show the work, we wanted the film to speak for us. As artists we were also drawn to the idea that a film

might continue to be seen and talked about at a time when we are no longer performing. This is, in many ways, a response to a significant lack of work made by and including disabled artists in our shared dance heritage. In existing dance works that include dancers with disabilities, impaired artists are often silent and the work is generally choreographed by a non-disabled artist. Therefore the portrayal of these artists in archiving processes is frequently as silent muses or corporeal vehicles for the creative ideas of others. There are limited examples of dance works where the ideas and voice of the disabled artist are central to the discussion or explanation of the documented work.

In relation to film as an artefact which acts as a legacy for disabled dance artists, it is useful to highlight a distinction between contemporary dance and Disability Arts, and specifically the role of Disability Arts in cultural heritage frameworks (in Europe and internationally). Although relatively recent, there are examples of prominent disabled artists within this specific field[55] (Rachel Gadsen, Ju Gosling, Bobby Baker). The Disability Arts movement is a powerful and important agent for change in the context of the development of disabled artists. In my research I wish to segregate this body of work from the dance sector. Whilst fully recognising the value and professional status of much of this work, I seek to argue that highlighting the differentiation between Disability Arts and disabled dance artists is key to examining a lack of leadership opportunities available to dancers with disabilities. By acknowledging, but not focussing on Disability Arts, this research is able to consider the position of disabled dancers working in dance who do not wish to be aligned with Disability Arts or marginalised to the periphery of 'mainstream' contemporary dance. These are dancers who consider themselves to be part of one dance sector rather than part of a different 'disability' sector. By aligning with the dance sector, their work is more likely to be included in dance legacies and thus inform the future of the contemporary dance sector. Reflecting on this absence and recognising the contribution our own project could make to the contemporary dance sector and the records that create a dance legacy, we proceeded with a project that incorporated film with live dance.

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[55] 'Disability Art' is defined by Disability Arts Online as 'Art made by disabled people which reflects the experience of disability.' http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/what-is-disability-arts

The film we made, *The Lily, The Rose*, was based on a duet made with O'Brien during our research period working together, *Famuli*[56]. *Famuli* is a ten minute piece made and performed by myself and O'Brien. The film title is drawn from a song of the same name[57] composed for the film.   The question of authorship arose during the making of the film. We approached independent film-maker and mutual friend, Charlotte Darbyshire to direct and produce the short film with the aim of creating an artefact that would represent myself and O'Brien and our shared practice. Although creative ownership was not explicitly discussed at the start of the process, through the production and dissemination of the film a need emerged to formalise the authorial positions of myself, O'Brien and Darbyshire as collaborating artists. The artistic decisions relating to the 20-minute film organically fell to Darbyshire, she had existing knowledge of the genre and O'Brien and I encouraged her to follow her own path in the filming and subsequent editing of the work. During the filming period (one week of filming) O'Brien and I adopted the roles of 'performer' or 'subject'. Darbyshire planned for each day, we were given a 'call time'[58] and we finished when the filming was over. Darbyshire took responsibility for setting up the filming space and clearing it at the end of each day.

Darbyshire's full engagement with the process in contrast to mine and O'Brien's relative distance from the 'making' of the film illuminates a clear shift in authorial responsibility for '*The Lily, The Rose'*. Although O'Brien and I had commissioned Darbyshire based on her knowledge and experience and is this sense we were orchestrating the process, we quickly and willingly 'excused' ourselves from creative control of the film during the filming period. This highlights the position of the disabled dancer as frequently passive in the artistic process. We had successfully secured funding and administrated the project and were autonomous in our employment of Darbyshire. However, we 'reverted ' to our familiar positions of silent performers in the process of filming. It must be noted that this is not necessarily specific to disabled artists; it is a scenario that might apply to any performer shifting from dancing to producing and choreography. What is more prominent in the example of myself and O'Brien as disabled performers in this context is that we

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[56] Famuli or Famulus describes assistants employed by a magician or scholar

[57] Composer and musician Jules Maxwell composed an original score for 'The Lily, The Rose'.

[58] Traditional term used to describe the time that performers should be ready to work.

handed over our duet for filmic interpretation by a third non-disabled party, raising the question of our trust in our own capability to lead a creative process.

7.8 Choice and Edit

In the creation of contemporary dance work, making choices and decision-making are key elements of the process. The choreographer usually adopts the role of making decisions about the dancers, the movement, timings and dynamics amongst many other factors. The dancer chooses how to interpret tasks, or how to perform set phrases of movement. This is often a collaborative practice, whereby the artists involved negotiate these creative choices in working towards a final 'product.' In the research and development period of our work, O'Brien and I shared many of the artistic choices relating to the duet. This included practical aspects: timing, direction, location, and audience. We watched each other improvising and made suggestions for what we felt should be included in the live performance. In addition we filmed parts of our duet and reviewed the film together, both for memory and for effectiveness in describing what we wanted to show. This process is not atypical; it follows a process that many collaborating dancers follow. However, questioning our various roles in the context of my research led me towards exploring the extent to which engaging with different processes within the making of an artefact provides insights to leadership when working as an independent or collaborating artist. This became the focus of the next phase of my practice-led research.

I spent time reviewing the documentation generated through the creative practice. In this process I worked alone. I revisited and reviewed the filmed evidence from the research period. During these viewings I recognised that there was valuable information in the filmed material that would give an insight into both the research process and my collaboration with O'Brien. Further, it exposed aspects of leadership that through a re-editing process could contribute to answering the questions underpinning my research. I decided to construct a short film by selecting sections and moments from the rehearsal process that would provide a different focus on our relationship, our ideas, and that would express our voices in a way that would reveal

new insights about leadership in relation to authorship (and the role of the editor in a creative process).

Choices made by an editor are a central aspect of the editing process and I became interested in what was informing my choices. I was conscious in my position as editor that I could present myself and O'Brien in a way that I felt showed us as we saw ourselves and each other, and how we wish to be seen by the viewers of our work. Kuppers offers a useful view on film as an opportunity to manipulate the viewing of performance:

> Video can trick us – it can show its function as projection, fantasy machine and construction of narrative in powerful ways. (Kuppers 2003:88)

Here Kuppers suggests something fraudulent about film as performance, this is a useful argument relating to disability and performance. Film offers the opportunity to adjust the physical, to hide or reveal aspects of the body in ways that inform the way we are perceived by the viewer. In film, the disabled dancer can edit and frame her body in ways that can choreograph the moment of viewing. The potential to direct the audience gaze is powerful, the performer can choose how her body and more specifically her disability is portrayed. For instance, film offers the opportunity to accelerate or slow down the staring encounter. Tempting the viewer with 'snapshots' of the body or drawing out the 'staring encounter' (Garland Thomson 2009) can provide a way of locating control firmly with the performer. As I edited the recordings made during our research period, I became increasingly aware of my power to control the view. I was cutting the moments where I did not 'like' how I looked or sounded, and brought focus onto moments where the 'me' in the film was something close to the 'me' I wanted to project through the film. I was testing my role as creative editor and the extent to which the agency I was affording myself in this process was an expression of my leadership ability and provided me with new insights to being a leader. Hence this process of identifying as a leader is in many ways oppositional to earlier discussed notions of 'accidental' leadership (see p. 154) because in the editing process I was consciously choosing leadership. The notion of

the 'selected self' is important in relation to disability and performance. The lived experience of impairment is woven into all aspects of my experience of being in the world. I 'choose' how to disclose my disability in public when I am in my 'normal' life. This project invited me to ask if I make the same choices in my 'performed' life.

7.9 Reflections on the Rough Cut Film

The process of editing the filmed documentation of our rehearsals took place when the practical research period had ended. O'Brien and I had spent 4 weeks in studio settings, talking, moving, eating together and often sharing accommodation. In contrast to this intensive practice, when I re-visited the footage, I was alone, at home as I watched and edited and drafted this film that documents our process. My position was multi layered. I was dancer, choreographer, film-maker and editor. I could not help but note the feelings of ownership and autonomy I had as I reflected back on the practice and began steering and editing the film to communicate what I felt it should be. This process was a new experience for me. In my past practice, the content or 'message' of work including me was led by someone else, a choreographer, film-maker or director. Entering into the process I felt not only a sense of leading my own practice, but also a responsibility for the product that would be available to others. I cannot remember experiencing similar feelings of responsibility in my prior work as a dancer. In retrospect my position was usually: "If people, don't like it, I didn't make it". My investment was physical and I was committed to the work, but this rarely extended to wanting to 'protect' or 'nurture' the art-work.

Film has the potential to draw the viewer's attention to the passing of time, through editing techniques or simply by presenting a visual chronology of a project or event. This was a useful framework for considering the production of what I have described as the 'rough-cut film' element of my research. It was important to convey time elapsing throughout the process. I wanted the editing to demonstrate the temporal nature of my relationship with O'Brien, also to speak to our historic research. Clearly expressing the passage of time in the rough-cut film also serves as

a valuable tool for signifying progression throughout the process, my own and that of the duet itself.

7.10 Leadership Through Watching

Watching the footage of the research and development period offered the unique opportunity to see my own leadership 'in action'. By watching the filmed material on numerous occasions I could see change in myself, the 'me' in the footage seemed to grow and develop, through processes of trial and error, discussion and decision making. As the editing of the 'roughcut' film progressed the process drew my attention to what I hadn't recognised in the experience and I was able to reflect on the creative and leadership decisions I was making in collaboration with O'Brien. This was an important reflection because in the 'doing' of the practice I was not identifying as a leader. In the viewing, however, my leadership became evident both in the discursive and practical aspects of the documentation.

There was a cycle involving the raw filmed material and the resulting rough-cut film. I saw my leadership evidenced in the progression of the work; the raw recordings literally demonstrated the decisions I was making about the work; for instance, the costume would change from week one to week three or sections of the dance would be extended or cut. In the editing of the film I was reminded of these processes, which at the time seemed inconsequential, the visual record provided the opportunity to see development 'as it happened.' It was in reviewing the raw filming that I began to make decisions about what 'worked' in terms of artistic output; a process, which led to a conscious exploration of my leadership ability.

Creating a filmed record of the process significantly increased my feelings of authorship of the duet. Seeing myself centrally located within the development of the dance gave me a strong sense of the work belonging to myself and O'Brien. The concept of authorship is key to the experience of dancing and dance-making. The relationship between the dancer and the authorship of their performed work is complex. The embodied or 'lived' experience of dancing resists formal definition and as such is difficult to classify as 'belonging' to anyone. If choreographic practice is a manifestation of the individual artists thoughts, performed versions are all

embodiments of such ideas (Pavis 2014). This is particularly pertinent in the case of our duet, it is the culmination of decades of conversations, shared thoughts, shared experiences and dancing together. It 'feels' highly personal and it 'feels' like ours.

Through engaging in the process of making a new film based on the creative collaboration with O'Brien I discovered what I want to argue that there is an important link between ownership, authorship and leadership. To be the author and owner of one's own creative work seems integral to indentifying as a leader. Conversely, feelings of not owning the work in which your body is a central 'instrument' may be detrimental to feeling leaderful. In the process of making the film this sense of ownership is brought into focus. I am looking back at my work and witnessing the details that I perceive as what makes it 'ours'. I notice the movement vocabulary that I see as uniquely mine or the movement of mine and O'Brien's bodies together, which looks to my editorial eye so intrinsic to our friendship. I can also see all of our creative research manifested in the film. The scattered, 'rejected' props in the frame signify our process of trial and selection. The easiness between us as we move and talk simultaneously as we remember or rehearse our ideas. It is strange to me that this work could be anything other than 'mine' or 'ours'. We are the dance and the dance is us. In my perception they cannot exist independently of each other. The rough-cut film seems to respond to this idea. In documenting the process I am 'cementing' the duet, *Famuli,* as belonging to myself and O'Brien. It is crucial to note that although the rough-cut is derived from my collaboration with O'Brien I am arguing that it is important that I claim myself as the author of this work. It feels like a tangible artefact, a document that has the potential to speak for us. It is a visual representation of a process that led to a product. The film has become a central part of the creative narrative of the journey of our duet. It reiterates our relationship, and nods to the different spaces we have worked in and the support we have received. It is proof of our research and our interrogation. All these factors strengthen my sense of the work as 'mine' and consequently my feelings of leadership and autonomy.

7.11 The Making of a Leader

The cumulative process of applying for funds, researching, choreographing and dancing in the live and filmed elements of my collaboration with O'Brien could be perceived as a journey into leadership. I have trained and worked in dance for over two decades, during this time I have performed, taught and taken part in discussions and symposia across a range of contexts. 'On paper' I have been 'doing' leadership; in more abstract terms, however, I have not perceived myself to be a leader. As O'Brien suggests in my interviews with her, in the act of teaching she can feel like she is 'in charge' this is feeling echoed through my own experience of delivering teaching and training. My position as a disabled dancer means that I offer a unique perspective within a wider dance context, this has informed my self-perception as a person with knowledge and experience in a particular area.

The feeling of responsibility did not, at that time, extend to a view of myself as a leader. At least I did not feel that other people would perceive me as 'leader material'. As my research has alluded to, in dance there are limited examples of disabled dance artists as leaders. A lack of role models impacts not just on disabled people in dance, it also informs the perception of non-disabled people in dance. Disabled role models serve a dual purpose. They present potential leadership to aspiring disabled dancers, in addition they demonstrate to the art form overall that leadership is not restricted to non-disabled people in dance. This has informed the dichotomy I experience of my own leadership. At times I feel like a leader, I pursue my practice with a determination to lead and be autonomous in my endeavours in dance. Conversely I am often confronted with a sense of self-doubt when I am the only disabled person in a room, university, studio or theatre. The societal narrative of 'managing' rather than succeeding or excelling that I have felt defined by reminds me of my perceived place thereby raising an interesting issue regarding the theory and practice of leadership development in dance.

There have been a number of initiatives in dance over the previous two decades that have centred on access and inclusion (Candoco, Coventry University, Trinity Laban, GDance) and certainly when I have attended there is a shared ideology of equal participation and access to dance training and practice. This is

problematic when confronted by the wider contemporary dance field. As a sector we can talk about improving access and opportunity, but as is evidenced by a lack of disabled leaders in dance, are we really prepared to imbed these ideologies in our practice?

Through the production of a reflective film, I was not dependent on an experienced non-disabled dance practitioner to assist in the editing or decision making about what I should show and what I should omit. This gave me a unique opportunity to project myself as a leader. This is a feeling that has emerged over the course of this research. Myself, and my experience, have been central to the study. The research has provided me with a formal framework for questioning my own position in dance; with each conference I attend or meeting I am involved in I feel an opportunity to self-observe. Noting my reaction and response, I am using the research as a moment to make a leader of myself, or to make others see me as leaderful.

In editing the film I am able to make an interesting observation as I see myself reflected on film. The 'I' that is editing and choosing can decide how I want to present myself to others. Further, I consider how this will inform the perception of others of me as a leader. Sociologists Abbas and Reeves suggest that internal dialogue such as my own during a process of editing is:

> What makes "active agents", people who can exercise some governance in their lives, as opposed to "passive agents" to whom things simply happen. Being an active agent hinges on the fact that individuals develop and define their ultimate concerns: those internal goods that they care about most, the precise constellation of which makes for their concrete singularity as persons. No one can have an ultimate concern and fail to do something about it. Instead, each person seeks to develop a concrete course of action to realise that concern by elaborating a "project". (Abbas and Reeves 2007:73)

I noted that each of the case study participants cite me as a leader in dance. This could be a result of my position as researcher. I am positioning myself as someone creating space for their voices. I am using the research to explore potential leadership for disabled dancers. It is also noteworthy that in the case of two of the participants I have been their teacher. This will inevitably impact on their perception of me.

The film is also an opportunity to shift the 'usual' viewing of my impairment as uncontrolled by me and 'in the moment'. As I select the clips for the rough cut, it becomes clear that although the process of editing offers me significant control, the viewing of this film is beyond my control. The audience is free to pause, rewind, fast-forward, and zoom in and out. This is a liberating experience, because I will not witness the response or experience the staring encounter. I am more 'bold' with the body that I project in the film. There is a body honesty that seems more illusive in live performance. I can show my 'stump' my 'non-hand', my 'left arm' (none of these terms are satisfactory, but my hand is my hand, so any other name is hard to find, and somehow the term 'hand' does not seem sufficient here) to the viewer, I can use the film to share my vulnerability and my strength. I re-watch a moment where I am holding a balloon filled with helium during a rehearsal. The studio had very high ceilings and the manager of the space informed us that if the balloons floated up there, they would never get them down. In this moment the camera had been left on as we recorded the day's rehearsal. I lost my grip on the ribbon holding the balloon and as it floats away, I saw myself jumping up, laughing in an attempt to retrieve the balloon. I then observe my expression, my eyes and body language indicate a shared moment with O'Brien, she is not visible on the film, but I know that I am directing my disbelief at her and she is reflecting it back to me. This moment is one of my favourites in the film; it speaks clearly to my working and personal relationship with O'Brien. In terms of our collaboration, it also indicates that as artists, we have in that scenario achieved our objective that this process would 'not take itself too seriously' and that we would strive to maintain a focus on creating a duet that was about the 'real' us and our 'real' bodies.

7.12 Leadership Through Doing

The following section presents a description of *Famuli* from my perspective. As described in Chapter 3, 'informal' modes of writing are employed in this thesis to provide insight into the personal nature of the practice and my immediate response to it.

On the stage there is a single bench. Welly sits on the edge of the bench looking away from the point where I enter. I walk slowly towards her, I have a balloon tied to my foot, the balloon sways and bounces with each step, which I take carefully to stop it from detaching from my foot.

I arrive in front of the bench and remove the balloon by untying the string that holds it in place. I hold the string in my right hand and extend my arm away from my body. I stand like this for a moment. I reach with my left arm and wrap the ribbon around my wrist and forearm, for a second it seems as if my hand is the balloon. I extend the balloon above my head. As I do this O'Brien looks up and watches me from the bench.

I unravel the ribbon and move towards O'Brien, where I tie the balloon to a metal ring and place it on the floor, the helium filled balloon suspends next to the bench. I sit at the opposite end of the bench facing the front. Leading with my left arm I scan the audience by moving my outreached arm from left to right, as I do this I am aware of the demand I am making of them to look at me, at my hand, or where my hand 'should' be.

I am asking the audience to see me, to see the 'whole' me. I am deliberating making my disability part of the movement, not because I want to make a statement about disability, but because it is part of my body and therefore part of my dancing. This seems even more significant when O'Brien and I 'perform' our missing limbs together. At one point she 'shoves' my face with her shorter leg. In the process and

performance of this moment we know we are challenging assumptions about
impairment and the way in which audiences view us.

We do these things because we can, because we are not restricted by an agenda of 'performing' normal or being inspiring. In the work we make together, impairment is integral to the dance. We are consciously 'un-covering' ourselves and this feels both empowering and vulnerable. In order to progress in dance, impairment must be 'manageable'. The demands of a long choreographic process followed by touring and often teaching are not accommodating to fatigue, pain or in some instances medical appointments or intervention.

Mainstream UK contemporary dance is a highly competitive environment that develops and shifts quickly in terms of both training and professional practice. Disabled dancers are often expected to 'slot' into this environment and attempt to fit into codified frameworks of language, body and choreographic vocabulary. This environment takes little account of differentiation between all dancers and is further troubled by the presence of disabled artists. To recognise ones disability and ask for adaptation or acknowledgement of the specifics of your body, and its requirements places the disabled dancer in a vulnerable position. In a world where people and organisations are competing for a limited amount of funding and opportunity it is difficult to ask for 'more' or a different way of working without appearing 'weak' or being perceived through a lens of trauma and need.

There are some examples of funding and opportunity given to disabled artists that is appropriate for their needs. Personal assistants, accessible accommodation, sign language interpretation amongst a number of additional factors are offered. This is still representative of a minority support structure in contemporary dance. Such fractional support for disabled artists means that externally it can appear that disabled artists are well supported to perform and make dance in a way that accounts for them as individuals. Until this support is reflected in the way that all funding is distributed, to allow appropriate access and also for development, disabled dancers will remain 'extra' and peripheral to 'normal' dancing. Through my engagement in the research, film, and performance of the duet with O'Brien, I have felt less restricted by the constraints of presumptions and norms in dance that I have

felt in my past career. I have felt liberated from my personal need to 'adhere' to stereotypes of how disabled dance artists should look or perform. It must be noted here that this is a result of many factors. Working concurrently on my practice and my doctoral research, which have at times been interrelated, has led to me encountering new environments and shaping a new position for myself in dance.

During this period of practice research I have not felt the need to conform to either the normative or the disability stereotypes that have informed my work in dance so far. This freedom has enabled me to be inside my own work as a leader, also to reflect back and see myself emerging as leaderful. I am not 'fitting in' to a prescribed ideology of leadership in dance.

The following and final chapter offers concluding thoughts and suggested strategies for subsequent research emerging from this period of doctoral research.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

8.0 Introduction

This study has examined what I argue is a discrepancy between early initiatives in the field of dance and disability and the presence of disabled leaders in the current contemporary dance sector. By leadership in this context I am referring to lecturers, academics, researchers, choreographers, programmers, managers, and producers, amongst other authority positions. This discrepancy exists because whilst there were early attempts to highlight the experience and needs of dancers with disabilities, not enough has changed and few leaders are emerging from this initial energy. This is what prompted me to investigate leadership in the context of dance and disability.

The questions at the core of this thesis have been informed by my personal experience as a disabled dance artist embarking on training in the mid 1990s and continuing to practice today. In spite of greater awareness of access into and participation in dance for artists with disabilities (Aujla and Redding 2013; Benjamin 2001; Whatley 2007, 2010) there is still a notable deficit in the number of disabled dance artists in positions of leadership in dance. Although there has been some increased presence of disabled choreographers (Bowditch; Brew; Cunningham) these artists make up a minority within the wider dance sector. I have argued that the conditions that lead to locating these artists in leadership roles are informed by a framework of pre-existing standards of 'acceptable' representations of impairment in dance. More surprising, my research suggests that in contrast to affording access and development for future generations of disabled artists, the position of Bowditch *et al* in dance may actually limit the potential for a greater diversity of disabled artists to undertake a range of leadership roles. As highlighted in sections 6.2 and 6.3 there is an expectation that disabled artists must conform to a prescribed leader-like, or 'dancerly' form (Kuppers 2000). The dominance of an acceptable disabled body in dance appears to narrow the opportunity for access and progression. There is a link here to notions of tokenism, and limited representation of people with disabilities in society. Sociologists David Pettinicchio and Michelle Maroto offer a comment on the impact of tokenistic representation of impairment on attitudes towards and

perceptions of people with disabilities in employment:

> The high levels of tokenism and isolation could help to explain
> some of the negative attitudes that employers continue to harbor
> about people with disabilities, as their interaction with each other
> is very limited. This situation likely does little to improve
> employer attitudes and decrease statistical discrimination.
> (Pettinicchio and Maroto 2014:84)

Within the context of dance, I have argued that isolated or limited examples of disabled practitioners progressing into leadership reinforce the ideology that impairment in dance is a phenomenon that exists on the periphery of the sector. I have highlighted how dance made by and including disabled artists is often positioned as 'optional' or specialised in both training and professional settings (see 6.2.5). The low number of disabled leaders in the art form impacts on the visibility of high profile, autonomous artists with disabilities. Furthermore, limited interaction, as described by Pettiniccio and Maroto, between established disabled artists and aspiring disabled dancers restricts the opportunity for progression. Without mentorship and teaching delivered by disabled artists to existing dance-makers with impairment, there are few role models for others to aspire to.

Although this research has not engaged deeply in statistical, quantitative data relating to numbers of disabled artists in training and education, my many years of working in Higher Education and professional dance training indicate a significant lack of disabled teachers, lecturers, academics and scholars working in dance education. My research has highlighted key academics contributing to thinking and research in dance and disability (Kuppers; Sandahl) and others from diverse disciplines intersecting disability and the arts (Conroy; Siebers). Within specific dance training contexts in the UK there have been attempts to increase access into training in the sector (Coventry University; Trinity Laban, Plymouth University), this has led to a greater consciousness of the needs and potential of disabled dance students. It remains the case, however, that non-disabled practitioners lead the planning, delivery and monitoring of these courses. I conclude that until such time that disabled artists are present and autonomous in leadership roles in Higher

Education and training, there will continue to be inequality between disabled student and non-disabled leader, thereby reinforcing a medicalised model of 'knowledgeable' non-disabled leader and 'deficient' disabled follower. The central questions of this thesis relate to leadership in more general terms. I have asked; 'What is understood by leadership in dance? What are the potential 'real' or psychological obstacles facing aspiring disabled leaders in dance? In drawing out answers to these questions I have argued that disabled artists positioned as leaders are essential but I have identified that there are few progression routes available to dancers with impairment within the sector. Further, I have demonstrated that institutional structures such as producing theatres and funding bodies, do not sufficiently represent disabled artists. Consequently, I have shown that disabled dancers have become a further marginalised sub-group of the dance sector, which impacts on the potential for disabled dancers to become leaders in the field.

The introduction chapter (chapter 1) presented a rationale for my research, including my personal motivation for undertaking this study and my position in the dance sector. This chapter incorporated an overview of existing research in the areas of dance, disability and leadership. The introduction chapter introduces my argument that there is a discrepancy between early initiatives aimed at increasing access and participation for disabled people in dance and the presence of disabled dancers in leadership positions today. The questions central to this research are posed in this chapter (see p5), it is also in this chapter that I make clear the questions that relate to my own position as a potential disabled leader in dance and my decision to adopt an artist-researcher stance in the study. Linked to my own position in the research and detailed in the introduction is my choice to highlight the voices of disabled dance artists through long-term observations and interviews.

Chapter 2, Models of Disability, presents an overview of ontological frameworks for thinking about impairment. The purpose of this is to offer a contextualisation for my own research into dance, disability and leadership. In this chapter I do not propose a 'favoured' philosophy, rather that a consideration and analysis of several modes of thinking in this area is required to progress debate concerning the development of disabled leaders. In Chapter 3, Methodology, I offer an in-depth evaluation of my chosen methodological approaches. As this is a

person-centred study I used a qualitative framework for gathering and analysing my findings. Case studies, Interviews and observations were used throughout the research period; this enabled me to fully investigate the perceptions and experiences of the research participants through immersing myself in their practice over a three-year period. I spent time with each case study dancer both in studio contexts (in rehearsals or during a creation period) and in non-dance settings (cafes, bars or at their home) observing and conducting interviews or informal conversations. The long-term nature of the case study research allowed for a rapport to develop between the dance artists and myself. Even though I had a relationship with each of them prior to my study, the period of research allowed for this connection to develop. The ethical considerations of my proximity to the research participants are detailed in the introduction to Chapter 6 (see p92). In addition to the case study research, I have employed an auto-ethnographic approach in my study. The self-reflective aspect of my PhD inquiry has been twofold; I have undertaken and submitted my personal practice in dance as a core part of the research (see *Rough Cut* film) and I have also offered an in-depth evaluation of my practice including but not limi ted to the *Rough Cut* film (see chapter 7).

Chapter 4, Literature Review, examines current and historic resources relevant to my research area. In this chapter I highlight a lack of academic research into dance, disability and leadership, I also suggest that existing research concerning dance and disability comes from a canon of established non-disabled researchers. Whilst this research is valuable and has made a significant impact on the position of the disabled dance artists, the findings offered in this chapter point to a need to increase research in dance produced by disabled dance practitioners. This chapter also considers writing, practice and research located within disability studies and cultural disability studies, making the claim that further intersections between this other body of research and dance research will be valuable for articulating the limited progression of disabled artists into leadership roles in the arts.

Chapter 5, Leadership in Context, examines leadership from different perspectives. In order to understand what leadership might mean in dance, this chapter draws upon key thinking and research into leadership, from corporate contexts, philosophical perspectives and leadership in the arts. The chapter

highlights that although varying in approach and definitions of leadership, there are common themes in existing thinking on leadership, in that the disabled leader is largely absent from this ontological and instructional writing on leadership. I have stated that this is problematic for aspiring disabled leaders in dance; a lack of reference to impairment or leaders with disabilities in the dominant discourse in this area automatically disadvantages disabled people working in or working towards leadership roles. Linked to this absence, I have cited a body of research that cites triumph over adversity as a characteristic of leadership (Collins 2005). In this context the disabled body is read within a narrative of disability as trauma and the impaired individual as heroic. There is some value in this ontology of impairment relating to the development of disabled leaders in dance. It offers a 'new' framework for interpreting the disabled body in positions of leadership. However it is also a problematic model that reinforces an ideology that 'acceptable' manifestations of the disabled body in dance must be strong and determined, automatically alienating disabled artists who do not identify with, or meet the criteria of this narrative.

Chapter 6, Exampling Leadership, offers an in-depth analysis of my extended research with three disabled dancers: Dan Daw, Welly O'Brien and Kimberley Harvey. This is a central chapter and speaks to my aim of highlighting the voices of disabled artists in my study. These sections (6.1, 6.2 and 6.3) give important and useful insight into the experiences, perceptions, aspirations and practice of three dance artists, at different stages of their careers. It is this chapter that offers a particular originality to my research: disabled dancers, talking about leadership, is currently an underdeveloped theme within existing dance research.

Chapter 7, Reflections on Practice, continues from the theme of leadership development and presents my reflections on the practice associated with and inherent to this PhD research. I offer a personal consideration of my experience of researching and co-creating a dance work (see 7.3) examining and evaluating the process of this period of research and practice (2012 -2016). This unfolding of my practice demonstrates my self- realised leadership in dance. By re-visiting and reflecting on the practice with O'Brien I present my leadership in action. This chapter also offers discussion on the creation of the *Rough Cut* film, which forms part of this thesis. The discussion is intended to contextualise the film rather than utilise it as a

tool for evaluation.

My research, including observations, interviews, self-reflection and research 'through' and 'as' practice, has demonstrated a need to extend discourse around dance and disability beyond inclusion and 'acceptance' and into discussion that considers and accounts for the contribution made by disabled artists to the wider dance sector. The disabled body in dance is uniquely positioned to contribute 'new' knowledge to the sector at large. Furthermore the experience of impairment in general and impairment in dance affords the disabled artist a body of knowledge that can support and shift current thinking in dance practice and theory. This is not limited to progressing thinking in a separate field labelled 'dance and disability'; rather, this knowledge has the possibility to inform and improve frameworks of understanding in the wider dance sector. Acknowledging this expertise and its potential for growth and development, will impact significantly on the position of the disabled dancer in shared cultural heritage frameworks. In addition it will create space for the voices and experiences of disabled dancers to inform and shape their own position as stakeholders in dance. In the context of dance in Higher Education, I am not proposing that disability in dance is 'normalised' or that disability ceases to be an 'issue'. I am suggesting that radical change is called for that nurtures, draws out and highlights the rich experience, knowledge and expertise held by disabled artists, and the potential of this to inform the future of the dance sector, including and perhaps most importantly within educational contexts. This change requires more disabled artists to undertake leadership in dance. Increasing the number of disabled dancers in leadership positions, particularly within the educational environment, will challenge normative frameworks of dance.

If disabled dance practitioners are limited to making work or researching and teaching about disability their progression becomes limited. Longevity in dance requires a 'portfolio' or 'non-linear' career involving a continually unfolding, self-managed patchwork of concurrent and overlapping employment (Bennett and Bridgstock 2015:264). Permanency in dance is also improved by a career that allows for the disabled artists to choose when to be associated with the discourse around impairment. Nonetheless, the findings of this study also suggest that existing leaderful practice undertaken by disabled artists is mainly confined to dance and

disability contexts, or is dependent on the artist identifying as disabled and drawing upon their impairment as a creative stimulus. For example, in *Falling in Love with Frida* (see p.86), choreographer Caroline Bowditch creates a performance drawing on her research into disabled visual artist Frida Kahlo. The piece is described by critic Josh Gardner as a performance that:

> Draws critical attention to the lack of representation that disabled
> (or just unconventional) body types receive within the
> theatre/performance world (Gardner 2015)

Irrespective of Bowditch's specific interest or creative intention relating to Frida Kahlo, this statement projects her as a dance-maker who uses her choreographic practice to promote more positive representations of disabled people. As I have argued (see p91) there is empowerment associated with the reclamation and exploration of the experience of disability in dance. What my findings also suggest, however, is that the positioning of limited numbers of disabled dance artists as leaders based on their interrogation of disability, whether intended or implied, is potentially restricting to future disabled leaders in the sector. If disabled artists are only perceived as leaders through their engagement with impairment, it follows that disabled artists choosing not to explore disability in their work are less likely to progress into leadership roles. In this scenario, disabled leaders located in 'specialist' leadership roles[59] that are related to disability and the arts, are seen as fulfilling a requirement to include a leading disabled 'voice' therefore negating a need for disabled artists to be included in more general leadership roles in the sector. My findings have shown that pre-defined ideologies of the aesthetics of leadership (see 5.4) are a barrier in the progression of disabled leaders. The implications of this for disabled leaders in dance include a lack of recognition as leaderful people. With a body that does not signify key physical markers of leadership; upright, strong, 'expanding into height and space' (Kinsey-Goman 2014:15) disabled people in dance may be discounted as potential leaders.

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[59] For example Caroline Bowditch has an advisory role within *Unlimited,* for more information see http://www.carolinebowditch.com/consulting.html

By presenting the voices of disabled artists this study has located the experiences and practice of these dancers into a framework of scholarly research. Deliberate positioning of practicing artists in this way challenges existing expectations and pre-conceptions surrounding access, participation and progression in dance for disabled artists. One caveat to this is that the proximity to existing research, creates the potential for my research and the voices of the artists involved in the study, including my own, to be enveloped by dominant research discourses and activity. Furthermore the risk is that this research will be interpreted through a lens and framework of understanding that is informed by a hegemony of non-disabled leaders.

My research has further claimed that progression in dance for disabled dance artists is dependent on the development of a language and critical vocabulary that accounts for the individual or 'non-normative' body in dance, which is currently absent. Additionally, I argue that the knowledge and experience of disabled artists should be utilised and valued on terms equal to their non-disabled peers. I have also stated that without long-term, permanent employment of disabled practitioners in leadership structures, such as policy makers, funders, producers, lecturers, choreographers, the 'gap' between non-disabled leaders and disabled 'followers' will remain. Disabled dance artists are a central part of the dance sector in terms of practice. I argue that it is therefore essential that they take their place in leadership structures to enable development for future practice. Their voices and practice should also contribute to dance legacies as a whole rather than as a peripheral or separate sector.

My overarching aim in this thesis has been to introduce the voices of disabled dancers to the debate about leadership, and in doing so, offer new perspectives on how disabled dancers experience working within the professional dance sector and move towards positions of leadership. By weaving together established theory on disability, philosophy and 'leadership', observation and fieldwork with artists, and the creation of practice to test out my own 'insider' experience of leadership, I argue for a mixed-mode method to uncover new knowledge about how disabled dancers make, perform and participate in the wider dance sector.

8.1 New Knowledge

An analysis of the key findings of my research reveals something of a paradox in that existing disabled artists in leadership positions do not necessarily improve progression into leadership for emerging disabled people in dance. I have claimed that although there is limited evidence of disabled artists positioned as leaders in the sector (Bowditch, Cunningham, Brew), this has created an environment of tokenism. Locating a small number of disabled practitioners as leaders has 'allowed' the wider dance sector to decrease the focus on access, participation and progression for disabled dancers. The findings of my research suggest that rather than creating more space for other disabled artists, the sense that the minimal number of disabled leaders is 'enough' actually reduces opportunity for emerging artists. An unintended consequence seems to be that the dance sector at large perceives that the 'job' of creating access has been done and no further space for more leaders is needed.

Continued marginalisation of disabled dance artists or limited examples of disabled leaders in the sector therefore maintains and reinforces the 'status quo' or current dominant ideology of normative bodies in the sector. The presence of bodies that disrupt existing perceptions of the dancer's body is troubling for dance; relegating disabled people into a 'separate' sector limits and controls this disruption and permits the continuation of a normative hegemony of dancing bodies and leading bodies.

Leadership discourse in general overlooks impairment and the disabled leader; this is also true in dance leadership frameworks. Disabled leaders may embody a different canon of leadership characteristics (quietly leading, self effacing, collaborative), which are in contrast to 'accepted' ideas of what makes a leader. Their experience of impairment in a society dominated by conformist and normalised ideologies makes them non-assuming or modest leaders. Leadership discourse thereby appears to uphold the Social Model of disability. Disabled dancers are not disadvantaged by a deficit of leadership skills in themselves, rather they are disadvantaged by a framework of leadership principles that does not include them.

8.2 Application of the Research and Suggestions for Future study

I have demonstrated that the voice of the disabled dance artist is lacking in existing leadership structures in dance. I have also highlighted the lack of low numbers of autonomous, high profile disabled leaders in the sector that impact on aspiring and future generations of disabled and non-disabled dance students and dance practitioners.

Continued research is required that focuses on the knowledge and experience which exists in disabled artists; research needs to extend thinking beyond understanding impairment in dance through a normative lens and account for the sector-wide, interdisciplinary contribution made by disabled dancers to the art form in more general terms.

My choice to include and privilege the voices of four disabled artists (including my own) points to a radical re-consideration of the position of the disabled artist in dance practice and research. My practice through this research period has led to my personal development into leadership, both through the 'doing' and reflection involved in this process. Future research in this area should continue to utilise the voices of disabled artists, thereby framing their practice in an ontology that is relevant and useful for progression and future practice. It is through the telling of individual stories and direct experiences that the many layers and complexities of disability are revealed.

I have emphasised a need for debate and practical proposals that invite, include and maintain roles for disabled practitioners in dance training systems, this will ensure longevity and security for established disabled artists in addition to challenging a hierarchy of normative bodies in dance educational contexts, which I believe is a primary obstacle to the next generation of disabled dancers. Further research could also demonstrate how a focus on dance and those who work within the dance sector can lead to 're-thinking' definitions of leadership, both in dance and more widely. My findings point to a need to challenge expectations that disabled dancers should change or adapt to look or behave like leaders in dance based on a criteria of norms. In order to shift the position of dancers with impairment it is essential to consider an alternative classification of what a leader is. This is

reminiscent of early developments in dance and disability practice and research during which reconsideration was given to what a dancer looks like. The sector has to some extent addressed the question; 'Who is allowed in?' (Candoco n.d); there is now a need to address the question; 'Who does the leading?'

The notion of 'Taking Charge' is central to my study. Through my research I have explored what it means for disabled artists to take charge. I have discovered that to take charge, or inform change, disabled artists may not simply replace or work alongside existing leaders in dance, rather that their pathway to leadership should be informed by their unique and original experience, and that this will begin to clear and define progression routes into leading roles that are not restricted by exclusionary philosophies of leadership or 'taking charge' that are largely irrelevant to the disabled artist.

I propose that for disabled dance artists to take charge in dance is to feel self-directed in their practice and less 'dependent' on gatekeepers to practice and progression. This means that taking charge may not manifest in a 'traditional' manner but that it will have an integrity and authenticity that locates disabled dance artists as knowledgeable and independent contributors to the wider dance sector. By interrogating my own practice as part of this research I have felt 'in charge' of my creative process. Analysing my practice was an important method of re-framing my practice in dance on my own terms. I have found that this process has informed how I 'take charge' outside my personal practice. Exploring and presenting my voice and the voices of other disabled artists in this study has impacted on how I extend my practice into other aspects of dance. Framing my thinking through the writing and practice of this research has enhanced my perception of my experiences in and reflections of dance as valid and potentially change making.

Further research in dance undertaken by disabled people, not specifically in the area of dance and disability, will locate disabled artists in a framework of leadership. My position as a disabled artist-researcher has been integral to the originality of this research. On embarking on the research, I knew I was in a significant minority of disabled dance researchers. As mentioned in chapter 1, it was this acknowledgment that motivated me to pursue the research. On concluding this study it is clear that the findings of my research offer new thinking around dance, disability and leadership,

not just through the contents of the research, but also through the context of the production of a PhD in dance led by a disabled dance artist.

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Appendices

Appendix 1) Schedule of interviews and observations

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Appendix 2.) Extracts from Interview Transcripts

i) **D**Th **D**Th **June 16th 2015 –** This item has been removed due to Data

KM: What does a leader look like?

DD: A leader looks like……(long pause) That's a really huge question! (laughs)

KM: It's massive.

DD: I would say female.

KM: I know that your mum was a strong force in your life. Do you think that's a big part of what makes you see women as leaders?

DD: Yeah, absolutely

KM: If you had to describe a leader what would they look like?

DD: A leader, sorry it's taken ages to think about it, it's hard

KM: That's ok take your time

DD: To me, a leader is someone who is a collective voice, a leader isn't someone who pushes their own agenda and they…. I guess they facilitate, I think about leadership as a big role of facilitation in terms of how they lead is informed by who they lead.

KM: Yes that's really interesting I'm going to push you a bit now what does a leader look like?

DD: I think in that kind of sense, a leader wears a suit, a leader has their own office with the door often shut, a leader is often unapproachable, a leader is never the first port of call.

KM: So you've just described what a leader is, whereas when you were talking before you seemed to be describing what a leader should be?

DD: Yes exactly! I was cheating in a way because I don't like what I think a leader is.

KM: Because you know what you want leadership to be and to look like?

DD: Yes exactly, we see what it is, but we want it to be something else.

KM: When you talk about the qualities of leadership, you mention a shut door and unapproachable, do these qualities come across in how they look how they hold themselves, do you link those things?

DD: If we're thinking in these terms, and it's horrible, but a leader is non-disabled.

KM: So in your perception you don't currently see disabled leaders

DD: Currently leaders are non-disabled, white male (or female actually)

KM: What makes a leader what are the key personality traits?

DD I'd say determination and very strong will.

KM: OK do you think there are different types of leaders?

DD: Absolutely, I mean there are leaders who sit away in their office and shut themselves off do the job via email and there are leaders who do get out there on the ground and get the lay of the land, leaders who are in the same room as their staff,

open office environment, there are leaders who don't see themselves as part of a hierarchy, so very much see themselves on an equal playing field

KM: Do you put one of those above the other? is one more effective?

DD: I would say the leader 'on the floor' is far more effective, the leader who sees the way the world is rather than being told the way the world is far more effective

KM: Who have been the leaders in your life?

DD: My mum and my grandmother have been very strong leaders, my teachers have been really strong leaders, actually all the way growing up, my peers have really been strong leaders in that respect.

KM: Do you mean leaders in relation to you in that they've led or inspired you or that your peers were general leaders in life?

DD In a sense they really inspired me to want to go and get the opportunities that they have had.

KM: So they led the way, rather than leading you

DD: Yes

KM: and your mum and you grandmother, are they leaders in life or just to you

DD: No not at all they are both very much followers, its strange actually.

KM: So how were they leaders to you?

DD: Of course they were people I loved and respected looked up to, but I'd always take their advice seriously and even though they weren't leaders they kind of took on that role as parents they had to, because parents are leaders

KM: So do you think that's informed your leadership style?

DD: Yeah, I really think it has informed how I am and the choices I've made all based on the teaching from them.

KM: I remember talking to you about your mum and her determination to put you out there in the world, for you to take risks, can you talk about that?

DD: As a leader she never molly coddled me, she let me fall over, and mistakes and be naughty and be punished.

KM: So leading you into finding your own independence?

DD She was always you know.. I was walking o school by myself at six

KM: Did all the kids do that?

DD: Yes it was the done thing

KM: Has that notion of "you do it too" informed you?

DD Yes its key, if you want to do it, just do it.

KM: What about teachers, any stick in your mind?

DD: I think a few teachers that really made a big impression over time my year 7 teacher is one in particular.

KM: So you're 11?

DD: 12, the thing I loved about him was, that made me think he was amazing was that when he taught he'd always deliver maths class with a high pitched female voice.

KM: As a joke?

DD: Yes to acknowledge that it was boring but needed to be done, he used humour as a tool for leading us.

KM: what about male leaders then, you obviously have a strong matriarchal line in your upbringing. Do you draw a difference between male and female leaders

DD: I'm generally quite intimidated by male leaders and that stems from my childhood, having many stepdads over the years and almost…. Yeah… yeah…yeah.(stops) For that reason all of my really good school friends were girls.

KM: Who do you think are the leaders in dance? and you can be quite broad here.

DD: Sorry, my mind is going back, can I explain my thought process, my mind is going back to aesthetics, and all the leaders are… well my first response is Luke Pell, they're the people I see in dance as leaders, you know, people who are challenging the aesthetic they're the leaders. Just to really articulate it because its easy for me to say who the leaders in dance aren't. Others would say they are, but for me they are not.

KM: So those are people you see as leaders in dance, not those widely perceived to be leaders. So who are the perceived leaders?

DD: Yeah, just because these people to me are all I know. That's the way I operate, what is it to me?

KM: I think that says something about where you are and your position in dance, So Luke Pell, who else?

DD: Wendy Houston, erm Theo Clinkard, Ben Wright.

KM: What makes them leaders?

DD The fact that they all are incredibly articulate and can really… I think they are all artists that make the work they want to make, rather than the work they think they should make and to me that is incredibly leader-like " Do you know "I'm just going to do this if you're with me fine, if not also fine."

KM: Interesting that you cite all artists, so you see artistry as leaderful?

DD: Yeah absolutely and making no apologies for the art you want to make is leaderful.

KM: What about in practical terms if you had to name the leading positions in dance what would they be?

DD: Leading roles?

KM: Yes

DD: Programmers, producers, artistic directors company managers, office staff.

KM: so you cite artists as the leaders to you and programmers et al as the 'official' leaders. Who are the disabled leaders in dance?

DD: Erm.. Celeste (Dandeker) You, Welly (O'Brien) Kimberly Harvey.

KM: Do you see Kimberley as a leader?

DD: yeah I do, because just because she's been turned own by Candoco, and now she's saying 'fuck you' I have Subtle Kraft company (Kimberley's own dance company) now. So in that respect she is a leader, she's doing what she wants to do.

KM: So who else?

DD: Claire Cunningham, Caroline (Bowditch) yeah…

KM: What makes them leaders?

DD: Determination. I'm doing it anyway, I'll find a way, erm and just that thing of getting on and doing it without fuss. Just like, because all of the people I mentioned its like they're not going on 'I'm doing this and I want everyone to see me' they're not self serving, they're forming really strong identities for themselves, as artists.

KM: I wonder if there's something about the journey that disabled artists go through makes you a good leader?

DD: So is leadership inherent in being a disabled artist..? Can you be a follower as a disabled artists?

KM: Interesting, who do you see as the disabled leaders in society?

DD: I would say Stephen Hawking, just because he's the only one I can really think of if I'm honest (laughs)

KM: what affords him his leading status?

DD: His incredible brain I would say, the fact that he has something tangible, he's offering something tangible that society knows how to use.

KM: Do you think there's something in that relating to the requirement to be 'beautiful' as a disabled dancer, to be 'known' you need to be disabled and strong or clever?

DD: Yes to get on equal footing you have to more than the 'average' person to be seen as equal.

KM: So almost overcompensating?

DD: You have to be really smart, arguably the smartest man in the world to be seen as equal when actually he's far superior to most.

KM: Are you a leader?

DD: Yes, Yes.

KM: Do you want to elaborate? you don't have to.

DD: I am a leader, but I don't do what I do to be a leader. What I do and the way I do it makes me a leader.

KM: if you had to label it, what kind of leader are you?

DD: Mmmm….for me my leadership style is based on the premise of leader as equal to those I'm leading, but I'm not sure I'm leading anybody.

KM: So is it that you do what you want to do and make work that you want to make regardless of expectation that makes you a leader.

DD: Yes I'd agree with that because I've never said "I'm a leader" I've heard "Dan you're a leader"

KM: All the way through your life?

DD: Yes

KM: So it's been facilitated?

DD: I've been told "you're a leader" but I think what does that actually mean.

KM: Do you feel a pressure to lead, is a good feeling to lead?

DD: It is good but I'm still unaware of how I'm leading.

KM: Do you have to be able to articulate that?

DD it's not something I can put me finger on, I know I'm a leader, I have a desire to lead but I cant place my finger on why or how.

KM: That's Ok

KM: When you say you have a desire to lead, what kind of leadership role do you want?

DD: My pipe dream is…. I would like to be working in some sort of artistic director capacity.

KM: Pipe dream to me suggests that it wont happen or be could difficult.

DD: Pipe dream to me means it's an aspiration

KM: Is there something about your experience that makes you feel like a leader?

DD: It's to do with the knowledge I gain from the experience I have and the more knowledge I gain the better equipped I feel to be able to call myself a leader, or kind of more deserving I guess.

KM: That's interesting what kind of leader are you without that knowledge?

DD: Not sure, I just mean you cant be a leader until you have that knowledge or the experience that fills you with knowledge, it's a bit chicken and egg.

KM: Do you have to have Followers to be a leader

DD: No.

KM: So it's more of a philosophical state?

DD : No its something I do for myself

KM: Is that like your earlier comments about Ben Wright and Theo Clinkard "I m doing this, join if you want"?

DD: yes I aspire to that, I aspire to not care too much what others think, as a leader.

KM: Do you think that caring too much what others think is an obstacle to leadership?

DD: I think it can really get in the way of being…. To be a leader in the sense that I'm talking about I really think that can get in the way if you're doing things to always please, then its not leading if you're always giving people what they want.

KM: You seem to be alluding to a tough model of leadership, that you can't always give people what they want.

DD: Yeah, but you can still be a nice person. In terms of work and leadership through the work that I've created and my artistic choices, in that respect its bee a tough love model.

KM: In practical terms how can there be more disabled leaders in dance?

DD: Hesitates… I think, I really think we are at a point now where if disabled artists want to be leaders they can be.

KM: Can you talk more about that?

DD: Sure, it's like, we have Unlimited, we have disabled leaders, disabled artists as leaders, so we now have that point of reference.

KM: Is that point of reference out there enough to reach aspiring disabled dancers?

DD: I really think it is out there so so much actually, again like unlimited like work produced by Claire (Cunningham) and Caroline (Bowditch). Like Candoco going into schools so there are these disabled leaders in the sector but we need to be infiltrating into schools, like the Rapheal Bonecela work (Currently on the GCSE dance syllabus as a set study) is a form of leadership, so I really think we are now at a point where people know. If they want to know how to be disabled leader then the resources are there to show they can be.

KM: Tell me the story of you and dance.

DD: I remember I was sat in a theatre in the only theatre in Whyalla and saw Australian Dance Theatre, and I leant over to my grandmother and I was young I think I was about 11, and I said "I'd love to dance like that" and she said "Dear, I'm afraid you'll never be able to"

KM: What do you think she meant? Was she talking about your disability or the fact that it's a professional dance company and that's competitive anyway?

DD: I think she was talking about the fact we lived in Whyalla. I think she was talking about the fact that I was disabled, I think she was talking about the fact that we might not be able to afford a conservatoire. Also that I'd missed the boat because I hadn't been doing ballet since I was three, so you know a lot of factors underpinning that statement.

KM: I see, so why did she take you, was she interested in dance?

DD: She was a dancer, my grandmother was a dancer, so was her sister, they started the first ballet school in Whyalla so they go way back.

KM: So do you think she was informed by a sense of what a dancer looks like and what a dancer is like and what a dancer does?

DD: Yes she was very much of that ballet world.

ii)   W Thi **O'B**Thi **11**th **April 2014 – Bournemouth**

KM: What does a leader look like?

W O'B: A leader has to be confident they have to hold themselves I think with strangers or people they know or the audience or whoever they're working with has to trust them – they have to feel that that person is confident and knows what they talking about, that they can trust them to be teaching them or telling them.

KM: How do you think those qualities come across in the way they looked?

W O'B: No matter if they are a man or a woman they would have some kind of presence I think, I think they would not be meek or mild they would just look strong.

KM: How does meek and mild look and how does strong look?

W O'B:I would just say that's confidence – it would look like they had confidence - they would hold themselves I think you can hold yourself even if you're looking down, you can still hold yourself because you'd have to have presence

KM: What are the characteristics that make a leader? Are there key personality traits?

W O'B: I think the main thing they have to really believe in what they are telling people that's a character that the person is bold and completely believes in what they're saying what ever that may be – and there's nothing that will falter in that.

KM: Do you think there are different types of leaders?

W O'B: Yeah Strong Male, fatherly figure erm you could have young leaders, kids but they would all have same trait, and I think women I don't think it matters what they look like, it is again that they've got presence

KM: So a leader could look different or be a different gender or age, but if you had a young male or female – would they have certain traits or do you think one could be a leader with certain traits and another would be a leader with different traits?

W O'B: Erm. I don't know, I think they would have to have a ballsyness in them I think that's the only trait other than that they could be anything else. They would have to have some kind of ballsyness, presence, strength in how they're delivering, but that could be through power point presentation or film or through anything, but I think they would have to be strength in the way they are delivering through their voice or how they are presenting themselves.

KM: OK, Who have been leaders in your life?

W O'B: At School, certain teachers that you trusted and believed in, and others that you didn't trust and those would be the lessons that I really didn't enjoy, because I really didn't want to go on that journey unless they were getting everyone's attention. School friends were leaders there were certain kids who are leaders, who you just know will probably be leaders in their lives or works you can see that from a really early age

KM: Do you think you didn't relate to certain teachers because they were less effective leaders or because there wasn't a shared passion?

W O'B: I think it was both, not having a passion – because someone could be a physics teacher and be passionate, but not engaging so they're not making anyone want to go on that journey with them

KM: What about after school?

W O'B: Leaders. Leaders erm?? I don't know, I guess you meet people in jobs or in a shop and you can see that they are good managers or not great managers or good

teachers or not good teachers – you can see in people whether they're good at their job.

KM: So you can recognise leadership? What about your parents are they leaders?

W O'B: No, I don't think about them as leaders.

KM: And Bobby? (W. O'B's partner)

W O'B: He is in his work yeah,

KM: But not necessarily someone who you see as a leader?

W O'B: He is in our relationship yeah definitely, he makes the final decisions about stuff definitely you know I can try and steer that, but he definitely lays the ground rules.

KM: So when you're steering, do you feel like you're leading?

W O'B: I never feel with Bob like I'm ever leading, I've never felt like that in our relationship.

KM: Who do you think the leaders are in dance?

W O'B: I guess Adam (Benjamin) it felt like he was a leader, because he had a strong voice and he really believed in what he was teaching in what he was spreading the word about – I think in his and Celeste's relationship he was the voice, but she was quietly steering stuff.

KM: So she was steering and leading?

W O'B: Yeah, yeah but I think men like being leaders so I think quite often in a man woman relationship I think the men want to be – and I think women go into that role of letting them, because they think if it makes them happy being in that role, then they can go ahead and do it,

KM: Do you think fewer women want to lead?

W O'B: With my personal life all my woman friends are strong characters but they have quiet partners leading in the background that's most of the straight relationships I know, no matter how loud the women are the men are laying down the rules so actually most of my friends its actually the men that are leading

KM: Do you think as men and women we are fitting into a stereotype that sometimes men don't want to lead but feel like they have to?

W O'B: I'm not sure a part thinks the next generation is like that, most of my friends are around forty and most are in that kind of old school stereotype – I think girls maybe (I don't know Kate..) Maybe girls have more of a voice nowadays - I think women are much more laddy and men are letting it shift

KM: So lets look again at leaders in dance.

W O'B: With Candoco Helen (Baggett), Sue (Smith), Charlotte (Darbyshire)

KM: What makes them leaders?

W O'B: For me they were like teachers

KM: If you had to name the leading roles in dance what would they be?

W O'B: Choreographers, producers are making big choices, there is lots of hierarchy in dance, lots of companies have a rep so they have teams doing that work, so they

are leaders but they're not actually leaders, in the hierarchy all doing different things they're not at the top. You know they'll be leaders in a workshop or teaching or making work, but, but I don't think they're leaders.

KM: So it shifts – In one context you're a leader, but then in others you're not?

W O'B: Yeah, I think dance generally you're kind of a bit of a puppet in some ways, and you can get joy out of being that puppet you can get lots and lots of great things from it but at the same time you're a cog in a wheel that's going round.

KM: So if you're a cog in a wheel who is driving?

W O'B: I think it's the same as most places its hierarchy, so people like managers, artistic director, tour manager (not so much tour manager) and I've noticed that in every company I've worked with.

KM: Can you talk more about that?

W O'B: Most dance situations I've been in, it's been that a person has been a dancer and they've worked their way up and worked their way up and they've created their own company like artistic directors, that's often what's happened, admin people it's different they've come in a different level, sometimes they used to be dancers, but generally they're different, they're different people they have quite different energies – quite business heady, so I think they're steering a lot of stuff.

KM: Do you think you need to be 'business heady' to lead?

W O'B: I suppose you need to have those cogs in the wheel to work

KM: If Dancers are cogs in wheels what are disabled dancers?

W O'B: Cogs in the wheel.

KM: Are they next to non-disabled dancers, on the same level?

W O'B: I think they are, I think it's hard yeah they are if they're out working of course they are, but if they're not working then they're not but you know that's the same with any dancer

KM: If there's a hierarchy how do you see dance and disability?

W O'B: There are lots of dancers that would like to work with disabled dancers. I think you need to be a certain kind of person to work with disabled dancers

KM: Why is that?

W O'B: Because I think you have to be someone who is a bit intrigued by difference, because I think if you're going to be someone who works with Matthew Bourne or whatever that's the aesthetic you like, so you're probably not that interested in working in a mixed abled and disabled environment, maybe you are, but I think you know, and I think that's fine and in my experience most people who work in inclusive dance are really nice people.

KM: Do you think you have to be nice to work in inclusive dance?

W O'B: I think you can be intrigued, like xxxxx (a dancer with whom Welly has worked) they are really interested in different bodies and how they work, so I think you get people like that, not being nice and carey sharey they are interested in how that difference comes across on stage. Or they like that difference you know and I think there's less of that carey shareyness, its still there but less.

KM: Who are the disabled leaders?

W O'B: I don't really know everybody but, Claire (Cunningham), Mark (Brew), and Caroline (Bowditch),, Sarah (Howard, access officer at Sadlers Wells) erm.. I guess that's it really and you, but I don't think anyone else.. the four of you are who I would automatically think.

KM: What makes them leaders?

W O'B: They definitely have the attributes because they have a strength in them that's kind of like, I don't know the word, a drive, they have a drive in them they've probably had since they were little they've always had and will always have, its just in their personalities, I think quite often that it's to do with meeting the right people at the right time and having people believe in you and go on a journey with you, yeah I think believing in you is big thing. And I really notice that today with what Noemi was saying she needs praise to know she doing the right thing.

KM: Do you think that's more in disabled dance leaders?

W O'B: I think it is, I think it's the same actually in life I think its quite a big thing quite often if people believe in themselves they've had people who believe in them and I think that could have been a teacher when they were 5 that steered them in a direction or a parent or a grandma or granddad or great grandma – I think there's always someone behind someone who's done alright.

KM: Does disability make it harder to believe in someone or to believe in yourself?

W O'B: I think having an impairment makes it harder sometimes to believe in yourself because society makes you feel like that. I think you have a bit more of a barrier than others.

KM: Who do you see as disabled leaders in society?

W O'B: What's his name in America… Stephen Hawking?

KM: Why is he a leader?

W O'B: Because of his beliefs and what he thinks about the universe, people listen to him, which I find really interesting because actually he doesn't really , he doesn't really look.. from what he says it's like he so passionate in what he believes its kind of how he holds himself, how he delivers what he is saying, He's so strong and he's…..

KM: Do you think its because he's clever, do we see intelligence as a part of leadership?

W O'B: Sometimes, but not always.

KM: Is it more that he has self believe?

W O'B: Yeah, but also clever. Because he is clever.

KM: Are you a leader?

W O'B: No (Laughs)

KM: Can you tell me why?

W O'B: Because, erm, I've had people believe in me and everything, but I don't believe in myself.

KM: Has that always been the case?

W O'B: I think I've always been like that , not much confidence in myself, since I was born and that's nothing to do with my disability.

KM: Are you saying that your view of yourself as a leader is the same before and after your disability?

W O'B: Erm I think its shifted in some ways, Oh don't know Kate, in some ways I feel more confident since I lost my leg, because I feel like I've just got to get on with life, because I know I've had to struggle a bit, you kind of go no-one is going to do this for me, you know, I've got to walk up that hill or get there or learn to walk , you know that's me that's done that – so I think I do feel a bit more confident, but then there's the whole thing about falling over like looking a bit silly walking a bit funny has added to my confidence being quite low, its made my confidence low.

KM: Is there a link between your point about how leaders hold themselves and how you look?

W O'B: Yes definitely especially when I'm teaching, I really struggle when I don't have my leg on – and I'm on the floor and people all looking down at me so how can I have voice if they're all looking down at me?

KM: Does that mean that you don't feel like you have the physicality of a leader?

W O'B: Its definitely held me back in teaching, yeah for sure actually it has in dancing as well.

KM: How?

W O'B: I don't know I Just feel, I just feel when you're on the floor that people don't take you seriously really. It's like as soon as I stand up, I don't know if its me, maybe its just me, as soon as I stand up at the end of teaching and put my leg on or at the end of the day at work I feel that people take me more seriously when I've got my leg on. I don't think that's about people disabled I think it's because all the time they're looking down at me.

KM: So it's about a stance – the physical relationship between leader and follower, do you think the leader physically has to be higher or bigger or taller or stronger than the person they're leading

W O'B: Erm not taller, because Caroline (Bowditch) has it and she's tiny, maybe its just about being on the floor. Maybe its like… because if I'm in a wheelchair I don't feel it. I remember when we teaching in Singapore and there was those army men that had lost legs and they would never sit on the floor, do you remember that?

KM: Yes I do actually.

W O'B: So they were dancing all day on their leg.

KM: Do you think it's submissive?

W O'B: Yes maybe, and because they were male, maybe they thought "No I'm not sitting on the floor" but it was hurting them, I could see that.

KM: So do you think if you didn't have one leg that you would be a leader?

W O'B: I think I'd be a better teacher

KM: Because you would feel more upright?

W O'B: Yeah

KM: Do you think you'd be better or feel like you looked more like a teacher?

W O'B: I'd feel better so then I'd maybe be better.

KM: Ok, do you want to be a leader?

W O'B: No

KM: Why?

W O'B: Erm, because I just like dancing.

KM: You don't want to lead?

W O'B: I don't think so, I just like dancing, I'm not bright enough, or pushy enough or ballsy enough to go any further than I am .

KM: Do you feel like you've led this week (Inclusive Chorelab)

W O'B: No it's been equal,

KM: Have we led this week, have we been leaders?

W O'B: No because we haven't really led anyone

KM: Do you have to have followers to be a leader?

W O'B: No because, you could walk through town and be so present walking through town that people would want to go with you – so if you were really holding yourself if you wanted to go away, I think other people would want to go with you. Because I think its in how you are, how you're coming across to people because I feel there is an energy around people, if someone is feeling really shit and unconfident – you see it in them within seconds and so I think people don't want to talk to someone if you were in a bar and you fancied someone you're less likely to go over to the bloke whose holding himself like "don't look at me I'm really unconfident" than the bloke who's got confidence, its like an aura and I think that's the same with a leader they have an aura or a way so I think, yeah you could be a leader without realising. I

mean some people have a thing about them that makes people want to be near them or have them in their lives.

KM: What is that thing?

W O'B: It's like a sparkle, like a sparkly weird forcefield thing. (laughs)

KM: Is it different for everybody?

W O'B: I don't know, I don't know what it is.

KM: How can there be more disabled leaders in dance?

W O'B: Well if you think about dance, well if you think about dance right now actually who are the dance leaders that you feel are really amazing? You know I think because the sector is so tiny actually are there that many dancers or choreographers that you think are really amazing? There's lots of dancers I mean there's fucking hundreds of dancers in England, in Britain, but you know not all of them are great and there's probably only a handful, that you'd say "oh I'd really love to see their work," so it's the same in the disabled world, there's less artists out there so you're going to have a smaller amount of leaders.

KM: So it's relative?

W O'B: Yeah, I think and also they need to have a certain amount of experience to go further in that field.

KM: Is it harder if you're disabled?

W O'B: I think it's a thing in you, like I said you're born with that sense of ballsyness or attitude or whatever, so you have to have that and then you have to have all the other factors for it to work.

KM: In Dance and Disability have you felt pushed into leadership?

W O'B: Erm maybe a little bit, but they soon realise that's not for me

KM: What about when you're asked to 'inspire' other disabled people. Does that make you feel like a leader?

W O'B: I do, like I've just been asked to be a mentor for the limb centre.

KM: Do you feel like a leader when you do that?

W O'B: Erm, Maybe like they want me to mentor younger people. I haven't done it yet, but I guess I could be, yeah but then that's the thing, I can say a certain amount, but then I don't feel like I deliver the goods I can sort of be what people want me to be, but I don't deliver the goods fully, so then they go "oh actually you're not"

KM: So you feel like people think you should be a leader, but then they catch you out, is that how you feel?

W O'B: Yeah, Or that I could be, but it wont happen.

iii)   **K**This item **H**   This item has been

KM: What does a leader look like?

KH: Erm..Well My initial response which is someone who…what's the expression? Someone who leads from the front so that takes everybody along with them, that would be my initial response, but as an artist I absolutely disagree with that, as an artist I think it's someone who knows how to work with people and can get the best out of people, but, I prefer to work in a way where even if I am leading the project I would never say that I'm the….. I can only lead because I'm in it. But I would always say I guide and collaborate rather than.. Yeah I don't know there's something about 'leading ' that I kind of shy away from.

KM: Are there physical attributes associated with a leader?

KH: Stereotypically a leader is a man they're not disabled. In dance terms they erm,… they probably don't actually look like dancers..

KM: OK, Can you talk a bit more about that?

KH: So, the leaders that automatically come to mind are the traditional choreographers who will stand at the mirror and say " No, not like that" and they're not in it.

KM: So they are separate from the process?

KH: Yes, which I guess is where because I have that stereotype in my head, and it is a real stereotype, because that's in my head I suppose that's where my aversion to 'leader' comes from.

KM: That's Interesting. Are there personal traits in a leader?

KH: Stereotypically?

KM: Or in your experience, either?

KH: In my experience, the best experience of leaders I've had are ones that listen and are ones that take what they see and what they hear and know how to use that so there are actually very receptive

KM: So being receptive and listening are key traits of a leader?

KH: Yes of a good leader

KM: You make a differentiation between a leader and a good leader. Do you think there are different types of leader?

KH: So different types for me are the ones that guide and support and work with people and the authoritarian type, bossy, and very separate.

KM: Do you think you can you still be a good leader if you weren't 'gentle'?

KH: Yes I do, as a gentle leader I think you can still be very clear on what you want and ask, I won't say demand, the people you're working with know that you expect a certain thing of them as you would of yourself you can still have high standards and be very clear and very precise and say "no that is not what I want, this is what I need for this" but erm.. yeah you never disregard the people that you're working with.

KM: So the people you're with are key. The people you are leading almost enable the leadership – Is that right?

KH: Yes

KM: So, who have been leaders in your life?

KH: Leaders in my life? In terms of example erm, my Grandmother, but she's not a leader she's an example.

KM: Why isn't she a leader?

KH: I think because she, because she, she would hate to think of herself as a leader. Also she naturally, like with school and stuff when she had to fight to get me into schools, she really fought my case, she was key, she was so angry about what was being suggested that she was able to say "completely no!" and write her letters.

KM: So She was leading?

KH: She was leading, but in everyday life she has to really be pushed to that point, but in everyday life she is definitely an example that I follow and if I choose to go against her example through generation or whatever, I'm very aware of why I'm doing that. So I can always respect the role and position she takes, but if I choose to go against it I know why

KM: Do you think you have developed your leadership style in response to your grandmother?

KH: Potentially yes, One the way I was brought up, definitely, another the Candoco environment is one where you are led and there are very strong examples of people who lead and inspire you but its never at the expense of who you are, it's always in account of the individual, maybe that collaborative thing.

KM: Talk about leaders you've encountered?

KH: Luke Pell, he knows how to get the best of people, he can be very diplomatic but be very clear on what he wants he knows how to communicate which I marvel at, because sometimes its very clear that he has a different standpoint erm particularly on teacher training issues and he never disregards the person in disagreeing with them, which I do marvel at, because I don't know how its done

KM: What about before dance?

KH: It's difficult because… erm obviously you have teachers… I was very aware from a young age of what I didn't respond well to so I sort of worked in reverse, so in the sense of teachers I suppose the way they work with you.

KM: Are you describing that leadership you mentioned earlier – are you saying that you responded to receptive teachers as opposed to authoritative teachers?

KH: I came across some teachers who were quite unreasonable yeah, and so you'd be working, there's this thing of trying to please people, as teachers they're leaders, but in me I had this inherent need to please my teachers and to do my best so the teachers would think you know…

KM: Do you think that's about having a disability or just in your personality?

KH: That was bought up for me interestingly when I was at school, that it was something to do with my disability. Which I had never thought of, I suppose it could well be, I also know that it's my personality as well but at school I worked my backside off, I wasn't one of these that it comes naturally to, but I worked out that if I worked really hard then I could do ok, I would literally drive myself into the ground because I didn't want to disappoint my teachers, so its that thing of if you can do it then you should do it.. do you see?

KM: So who are the leaders in society?

KH: Erm… the Government lead the country, I don't think they do it very well, in the arts ..the Arts Council shape and have a role in shaping our professional sector

KM: Who do you think the leaders are in dance?

KH: So in our sector.. Candoco yes absolutely but still the traditional, traditional contemporary companies are still considered as something to be aspired to – I mean they're brilliant and beautiful if that's your view, your only view of contemporary dance and I would never take anything away from the dancers and what they can achieve because they're amazing, but I think for a lot of people they are the pinnacle that everybody aspires to and that's not right

KH: Richard Alston, Rambert, …

KM: Where do you put companies like Siobhan Davies?

KH: I think for those of us that don't work quite so or produce aesthetically work like Richard Alston I think we appreciate the work of Siobhan Davies and Gill Clarke etc, but I think in other peoples perception they might not see Siobhan Davies as the same as Richard Alston and Rambert

KM: What are the leadership jobs in dance?

KH: Artistic Directors some choreographers, not many, and its very clear who they are…

KM: Who are they?

KH: Richard Alston, Akram Khan, Russell Maliphant, Hofesch (Schector) I'm naming all Male ones that's interesting….

KM: Ok, what about management and administration?

KH: Luke again, he really showed how much he helped shape candoco's education programme, his work was absolutely instrumental and he was doing so many things, and having to juggle and he did it – I haven't come across many people who like Luke had such an impact on a company

KM: Who are the disabled leaders in society?

KH: Well sports wise because of the Olympics they've come up so, Tanni Grey-Thomson David Weir erm.. In the dance sector Caroline Bowditch Claire Cunningham , yourself, Welly (O'Brien) I would absolutely say there are more people who have a disability in the dance world who are leading, there are some people that come automatically to mind, but there are also some people who are making changes..

KM: Do you think there is an equity between disabled dance artists and non disabled dance artists, do you think they exist on the same platform in dance?

KH: I like to say so, and among my peers, yes absolutely, maybe once you start talking to some choreographers or some institutions that's when you begin to see the difference which is very irritating, you know it feels very pessimistic, but I think if you haven't done things the same way, if your body doesn't achieved the same things there are still a lot of people and organisations of the mindset that haven't shifted to the skill and ability that can be attributed in different ways and you can still be an incredibly proficient dancer, which is very annoying.

KM: Can you talk a little but about what got you into dance – or were you always interested in dance?

KH: I was really lucky in the sense that I was brought up in a certain way, there were people who said to Nanny " you shouldn't take her to the ballet because she cant do it" and she said "well that's ridiculous" so I got to see all these things and I was the annoying little kid who would make up dance routines to embarrassing songs so I did all that shit….but dancing and choreography and classes, it never crossed my mind, so my friends did ballet, I didn't erm so, when nanny told me she'd seen a Candoco notice I said "oh ok" and then when it got nearer I remember wandering whether I wanted to go, because I had no context of what it might be, you know would I be in a room full of disabled people doing scarf waving or something

KM: How old were you then?

KH: 12ish

KM: At 12 did you have sense of therapeutic dance?

KH: Yes! I mean I went to a mainstream school, I didn't want to go to a disabled school, from a very young age I wanted to be like everybody else, that was my own prejudice that I carried with me, absolutely.

KM: I was born with my disability and I spent many years rejecting the label of 'disabled' but I know that Welly for instance is quite accepting as it was a label she inherited at 18 – can you relate to that?

KH: Yes, absolutely I remember that horrible period when you're looking at high schools and there was the school where my mum had gone where I wanted to go, but it was completely inaccessible – so the options were there was mainstream that would have to be drastically changed and would mean waiting for ages– ad then there was the school that was all done and had lifts and everything and I went to see it and sad "no way in Hell!" because it had all these huge lifts that were really ostentatious and the SEN (special educational needs) department was massive and

the SEN groups would go swimming instead of certain lessons and I said "No I'm not doing that!" so yeah I opted for the really difficult option and went for the school that wasn't very accessible in many ways . Yeah so, I completely.... this sounds awful, but I didn't want to be with other disabled people, I wanted to be like everybody else. Erm yeah.

KM: Are you aware of a shift where you stopped thinking that, or do you still think that ?

KH: I can still catch myself outside of the dance world, sometimes it creeps in and I'm very conscious. I think the dance world now…erm I don't identify with…some people and I really admire this, have a strong sense of identifying with other disabled people and I don't really have that - I identify with people if I get on with them. In the dance world I'm far more likely to identify with you know people, I'll find a point of identity and a point of "Ok, I belong here" I never want to be in a …. I choose not to be in a disabled environment, which I also feel is very wrong, just because generally the people who work in those environments have a such a perception of what disability is.

KM: Are you talking about non-disabled people?

KH: Yes, but also some disabled people are like "well we shouldn't do that we're disabled" and I'm like "No"

KM: After you did the workshop how did you feel?

KH: Half way through the day when I'd met Pippa (ex youth dance manager at Candoco) and Welly (O'Brien) and Welly knows this because I've told her (laughs) I came out and said to Nanny "I want to dance like that person – and that person was Welly. I knew that was what I wanted to do

KM: What did you see in Welly?

KH: A beautiful dancer and beautiful person, she was, who she was

KM: Did something make you link to her – because you both had a disability was there a link there?

KH: I think so, because I hadn't seen….oh actually I'm going to contradict myself because Welly had her (Prosthetic) leg on so I didn't notice until later, I remember touching her leg and it didn't feel the same, but I was young and I didn't think much of it, also though I was working with Charlotte Darbyshire (ex Candoco dancer) who was having me tilt my chair which I'd never done, it was that thing of doing scary things, you know this was a place where you could do scary things or risky things which I had never… I had never really fallen, or if I had it had been really bad, so it took my a lot of years to not be scared of falling – its those kinds of things which in a dance environment are completely normal.

KM: Are you a leader?

KH: Er, if I am, if I am, it's not something I would put on myself

KM: You wouldn't describe yourself, but are you saying that others might see you as a leader?

KH: I would say that I'm a, like if you go to a school and kids see a disabled dancer its something new, so it might be an example or an example of something that's possible. Erm.. there aren't many of us doing it – so I guess we are all leaders in a sense – I mean I know there are quite a few of us – but in comparison…

KM: So do you think your seen as a leader in the dance world?

KH: No (Laughs)

KM: Why not?

KH: It's about experience, yeah and your position and success you've had

KM: What do mean by successes, like things that you've done?

KH: Yeah, so I've had things that I regard as successes for myself, but in the grand scheme of things it might not be acknowledged in the same way you know, the likes of Caroline Bowditch and Claire Cunningham have done things that have got then huge amounts of recognition and Marc Brew, I mean huge amounts of recognition and I'm not in the same league as them

KM: Why not, What is the difference? (KH laughs at this question)

KH: I think experience is huge also, I guess Marc Brew danced for Cando for a long time he was also a dancer before his accident, Caroline, I don't know what it is about her, she's amazing I don't know how she does it, there is just something in Caroline that means she can just go and I believe in that but I don't drive in the same way, I think I'm much quieter.

KM: Just a couple of observations from watching you. Are you the choreographer, do you own this work?

KH: No

KM: Who owns it?

KH: We all do

KM: Are you in charge?

KH: In terms of I've organised it and I'm paying them, yes I am

KM: And are you in charge of the content of the rehearsal?

KH: Yes I organise the day

KM: You use questioning a lot, is that a conscious decision?

KH: No that's again… I was really nervous about taking on the choreographers role on my own when I had dancers, which is probably also why I am a dancer in it as well, previously when I have choreographed it was with Anna (Bergstrom) and we were both in it so we've done youth platforms but that's really different in that context I'm more directional "we need to do this" because I know I'm teacher and sometimes with students you have to.

KM: So when you teach you know you're a teacher, but here where do the nerves come from is it because you don't 'feel 'like a choreographer?

KH: I think I want these guys to like the work

KM: Do you think they wont like it if you more authoritative?

KH: I think if I make them do things because I want it, then they wont feel so invested. And also there's a crossover between working with friends

KM: When I interviewed Welly she talked about feeling like less of a leader without her leg on, because physically she is lower and is not 'commanding' the space can you comment on this?

KH: Yes, and its only come recently, whereby I went to a school which was a nightmare and the children had no respect for either of us, but t really felt that it was easy for them to ignore me, but Sarah who I was with (Sarah Blanc a non-disabled

dancer) she could, you know, she could be above them, whereas I was at their level and easier for them to bypass.

KM: Do you feel that there is a discrepancy between disability and authority?

KH: I do, in some environments definitely, I naturally fall into the role that society would put ne in, but that s personality too, you know sometimes you have a teaching team, and sometimes opposites can be great, but sometimes if one id very dominant I can feel personality wise I naturally do this (sinks back in chair) which then is made more obvious but the fact that I'm lower down, so I'm aware that that happens. I'm aware that I do this but it's made even bigger by this (points to self)

KM: What are your aspirations in dance?

KH: Its changed in the last year, I did want to be in Candoco, but now whilst I still want to do lots of things, I like having no long-term plan. In 10 years I would like to think I've made a dent somewhere in my profession as a dancer. In my opinion the sector (dance and disability) needs a kick up the arse. As a dancer with a disability I feel so restricted, I don't feel as if I'm good enough. I feel I'm not noticed, unless that noticing is in relation to other disabled dancers.

Additional questions   This item has been   **October 2015**

KM: Do you think disabled artists are under pressure to 'assimilate' to 'normal' bodies?

KH: I do wonder, because one specific example I'm thinking of is in a project I did where I made the adaptation in the choreography - which I did for two weeks, then two weeks into the process when everyone is sorted the choreographer said "I'm not happy with the way you're doing it" then the individual wanted to define it within the context of the 'other' dancers, so I think there are times we can say its my body I'm

doing it this way, and then others (for instance the paralympics) where our job is to do it that way, the same as the non-disabled dancers.

KM: Are you drawn to that aesthetic?

KH: There is nothing nicer, well not nothing, but massively satisfying about seeing something in unison, so I'm interesting in exploring my version and an audience version of unison which is entirely visual. But like Dan (Daw) for example, there's something so incredible about the level of conviction in his work, I know I don't have that level of conviction.

KM: Do you want to be a leader?

KH: My natural response is no. I make jokes about being a shit choreographer because it sits a bit weird with me, I want to do it, but I don't want to be bossy and tell people what to do. I want to enable, so I guess….

KM: Do you think there's something about your body that does not look leaderful?

KH: Yes, and there are some things, like for a long time people would say to be teacher you have to be all loud and confident and command the space, so I used to think, "Oh I cant do that, I cant be a teacher." Then interestingly I was teaching with Luke (Pell), and I realised oh actually I'm ok. The example of working on the floor example is really Interesting, I don't really go on the floor very much, and I would never go on the floor in a teaching context purely because for me that s like complete exposure, because my body is like 'bleugh'.

KM: What do you mean by 'bleugh'?

KH: I mean you see every part of me, you see me completely, I mean this (gestures at wheelchair) hides a lot, yes you see my escaping legs, but it hides things, also on a practical note I'm not as mobile, I'm mobile in a very different sense. I remember

talking to nanny about being on the floor when I was out of my chair in one performance and she said "I don't like seeing you on the floor, you look so vulnerable" because she know all the pitfalls of me being on the floor.

KM: Do you think if people saw you on the floor that makes you look less like you can command them?

KH: Yes, I made a duet this summer and I deliberated a lot about going on the floor, I did it, but I became very aware of how quickly those feelings of "you're shit" crept in, because you become really aware of the problems.

KM: If you think about your practice, what are you persisting for?

KH: Mmm what do I want?! For a long time I knew the answer to that which was 'a dancer' in recent years I have slighty questioned that, I mean I love what I do, but at the moment for me, it's about finding the things that resonate with me.

KM: Are you talking about moving away from dance, or carving out something different in dance?

KH: Both I think, I'm pondering on making something after this on myself

KM: Making a solo?

KH: Yeah, which feels very exposing?

KM: Why?

KH: Like all the stimulus of used so far feels like it's wrapped up in quite a palatable way, but this wok that I'm pondering is more, this is really what it is, I mean it's still done in an artistic way but its more me and my experiences, I've toyed with it for ages, and now I feel that if I'm going to continue I need to do it, so for a long time,

I've said this is the me that does this and this is the me who does that, but I've realised that the longer something persists you actually have to go, ok lets look at this. I'm very good at presenting what is needed for a certain situation, but to actually start getting rid of that 'presentation' feels quite necessary, because those things in me will end up showing anyway.

KM: Do you see yourself working in dance in, say, 20 years time?

KH: Er… my natural reaction is to say, I will stop, purely because if the chipping away is the same all the way through, you know I'm knackered already, I just don't know if I can keep doing that. I think that is relevant to having a disability, but it's also about being an artist. If you don't keep up with it (the dance sector) you're forgotten. We are still at a point where there are the key figures in the dance and dis world and there's nothing wrong worth that but if we 're all going to push on there needs to be more room and it will shape and shift. I feel like I'm trying to attach onto something but can't quite get there.