

JESSICA SARA WHATMORE

05002765

DANCE DEPARTMENT

UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE CARDIFF

SOCIETY'S TREATMENT OF MASCULINITY AS EVIDENCED IN
THE WORK OF LLOYD NEWSON

Table of Contents

Page Number

Acknowledgements

I

Abstract

II

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

2

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature Review

6

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

16

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Case Study

19

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Discussion

29

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Conclusion

37

7.0 Reference List

40

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank my dissertation tutor Heidi Wilson for all her help and guidance throughout. It has been greatly appreciated.

Also I would like to thank my housemates and all my other friends who have been continually supportive and positive, helping me through the good times and bad.

Finally, thanks to all my family for their constant love and support throughout my life and for knowing that they are proud of me no matter what.

A special thanks however to my mum, she has been the backbone in everything I have done, without her unwavering love and support I wouldn't be where I am today.

Abstract

This dissertation primarily focuses upon society's treatment of masculinity as evidenced in the work of Lloyd Newson, director of DV8 Physical Theatre Company. In order for the research topic to be explored effectively, previous critical research was selected and analysed on a variety of related subject matters, including: post-modernism and the role of the spectator; intertextuality and the position of the author; DV8 and expressionism and the evolution of a new dance/drama genre known as 'physical theatre' (Watson, 1995, p.2).

The issue of masculinity within contemporary western society is the main theoretical focus of the study. This theoretical framework is applied to Newson's work. A case study of DV8's 1995 work *Enter Achilles* provides an in-depth insight into 'everyday maleness' and the failure that 'lurks behind the veneer of straight and solid masculinity' (Petrovic, pp.1 - 2). As the study is essentially a review of existing literature a qualitative approach was adopted.

The main conclusions of the research can be summarised as follows, firstly, Lloyd Newson, as an openly homosexual choreographer, effectively 'challenges and disrupts the ways in which gender is conventionally represented', revealing 'hidden aspects of the construction of masculine identity' in the process (Burt, 1995, pp.8 – 198). By adopting the genre of physical theatre and creating works such as that of *Enter Achilles (1995)*, Newson is able to convey the complexity of relationships (in this case of a primarily heterosexual nature) and provoke the audience to question why non-conformity produces so much loathing and fear within western society today (Newson, 2005, p.1).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research study deals with the investigation of society's treatment of masculinity as evidenced in the work of Lloyd Newson (director of DV8 Physical Theatre Group). In order to gain a greater understanding of the way in which Newson explores the chosen subject matter, an in-depth analysis of the company's 1995 piece 'Enter Achilles' was conducted.

'Lloyd Newson's work with DV8 emerged from a white American/Australian/European nexus of 1970's youth culture, notably of those interested in theatre dance as well as the popular and physical arts of the time' (Adshead, 2007, p.44). Adshead (1988, p.65) reinforces how 'all dances are found within a social and cultural setting and relate directly to the general beliefs and values of that time and place'. During the 1980's for example, Newson was surrounded by experimental dance which thus 'provided a challenging context' for his 'creative endeavours' (Adshead, 2007, p.44). According to Adshead (2007, p.44),

the range of work available at that time contrasted the abstractions of a fading modern dance, humanised through its contact with pedestrian movement, with the violence of a form of realism which was lead to extremes of self-exposure in the 1990's.

As a choreographer, Newson took the opportunity to embrace this shift away from modern dance and created movement material that had 'something to say about real lives' (Watson, 1995/96, p.18). In order to successfully communicate with his audience and project this sense of 'real life' the DV8 director decided to adopt a 'physical theatre' approach to his choreography (Parry, 1996/97, p.71). Parry (1996/97, p.71) highlights how such an approach creates an effective

'visceral impact' on its audience, primarily generated through 'risk taking techniques' and 'high-energy movements' fuelled by powerful emotions such as 'anger, frenzy [or] despair' (Parry, 1996/97, p.71). The emotional intensity of the work links it with European Expressionism that was suspected to have spread from 'Pina Bausch in Germany', Burt (1995, p.180) states that 'Bausch's work certainly represents horrific and despairing behaviour, the performance of which imposes on her dancers considerable hardship of both an emotional and physical nature'.

Newson's choreographic approach therefore bears similarities to that of Bausch's, according to Adshead (2007, p.44) Newson's work,

is peculiarly European in character in its focus on the intensity of emotion and on the use of images, words and movement, separately and together, in dealing with personally and socially relevant, and politically intense subject matter.

Thus, DV8's work can be argued to respond well to an expressionist theory of art, a theory which Sheppard (1987, p.18) suggests relies on two assumptions: 'first, that one of the things artists do is express their emotions, and second, that expression is one of the sources of aesthetic value'. Martin (1975, cited Copeland and Cohen, 1983, p.3) reinforces how 'the art of dance is the expression and transference through the medium of bodily movement of mental and emotional experiences that the individual cannot express by rational or intellectual means'. Newson (cited Solway, 1985, p.11) believes that 'there's a direct relationship between movement and emotion, and it's that – the emotional level of dance' which is inspirational to him as an artist. Hannah (1983, pp. 3-4) acknowledges the fact that 'dance is an age-old, well known vehicle to express emotion'; possessing the power to arouse 'feelings via its associations with basic life functions, pleasures, pain and guilt'. Conversely, in Langer's (1953, cited Copeland and Cohen, 1983, p.4) opinion, 'the gestures of the dance express

feelings, but not what the dancer feels' the critic insists that 'they are virtual or illusory gestures which are logically or symbolically expressive but not self-expressions'.

Newson's work on the other hand could be considered self-expressive as his 'movement choices come from externalising the internal' (Prickett, 2003, p.29). Hawkins (1966, p.39) suggests that,

the important essence of all dancing is movement quality....the wondrous, immediate knowledge of existence that you get in the pure fact of movement can come only if you find that inner quality....Pure movement is decorative, instead of significant, if the inner quality is lacking.

Consequently in order to ensure his work is significant as opposed to decorative, Newson 'delves into how individuals relate to one another emotionally and intellectually, rather than being about movement, patterns, design patterns, like moving human wallpaper' (Butterworth, J. & Clarke, G (1998, p.117). However, although the DV8 director is concerned with the emotion that can be conveyed through dance, he also deals with 'real and present issues' within today's society (Solway, 1985, p.11). Thus, Newson's work can be placed not only within an artistic context, but within a social one too (Adshead, 1981, p.99).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Methodology.

In order to effectively explore and analyse society's treatment of masculinity as evidenced in the work of Lloyd Newson, a descriptive qualitative research study was the most obvious and useful method to adopt. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.542) state that 'the study of sexualities in general, and homosexualities in particular, has long been closely intertwined with qualitative research'. According to Denscombe (2003, p.267) 'qualitative research' is considered an 'umbrella term' as it covers a 'variety of styles of social research', however, it is particularly concerned with 'meanings and the way people understand things, as well as a 'concern with patterns of behaviour' (Denscombe, 2003, p.267). Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.13) reinforce how 'qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry'. Quantitative data in contrast carries with it an 'aura of scientific respectability' and only applies to study's which involve the use of numbers and the need to present findings in the form of graphs and tables (Denscombe, 2003, p.236).

The fact that the study was solely based upon the critical analysis of previous research (around the chosen subject matter), qualitative research methods such as ethnography and the use of a case study were employed. Denscombe (2003, p.84) indicates that 'ethnography refers to the study of cultures and groups – their lifestyle, understandings and beliefs'. The critic reinforces how 'there is special attention given to the way people being studied see their world' (Denscombe, 2003, p.85). In this instance, the 'special attention' was focused around Lloyd Newson and his perception of masculinity within contemporary Western society. Adshead (2007, p.25) indicates that by 'bringing together a textual analysis with ethnographic material and cultural studies it may be possible to arrive at a more informed analysis'.

The use of a single case study (*Enter Achilles, 1995*) was also advantageous in terms of gathering evidence to help answer the specific research question (Gillham, 2000, p.1). According to Jensen (2000, p.239) 'what case studies share with other qualitative research is the detailed attention given, first to phenomena within their everyday contexts and second to their structural or thematic interrelations with other phenomena and contexts'. By adopting such an in-depth approach 'there is obviously far greater opportunity to delve into things in more detail and discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research' (Denscombe, 2003, pp.30-31).

Another qualitative method which enabled the researcher to delve into the subject matter further was historical research. Burns (2000, p.483) highlights how 'the objective [of this type of research] is solely to describe something that has not been fully studied before', in this case – 'gender issues'. The critic emphasises how the 'historical researcher does not create data, but attempts to discover data that already exists' (Burns, 2000, p.482). Thus, the study can be essentially described as a review of literature as it involves using 'secondary sources', such as 'general textbooks which include relevant topics and literature reviews' and 'primary resources' such as 'journal articles' (Burns, 2000, p.27). Burns (2000, p.27) emphasises how 'the review of literature can help in limiting the individual's research problem and defining it more clearly'.

However, 'the problem of adequate validity and reliability is a major criticism placed by quantitative researchers on qualitative methods' (Burns, 2000, p.12). Burns (2002, pp.12-13) argues that this is due to possible bias on the researcher / participant's behalf and the fact that 'contexts, situations, events, conditions and interactions cannot be replicated to any extent nor can generalisations be made to a wider context than the one studied with any confidence'. Nevertheless, regardless of the chosen method (qualitative or quantitative) 'both are legitimate tools of research and can supplement each other, providing alternative insights into human behaviour' (Burns, 2002, p.391).

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY

4.0 Case study

Lloyd Newson first began his dance training whilst studying psychology in Australia at the University of Melbourne (Bannerman, 1996, p.1). In 1979, after he had gained a post-graduate degree in psychology, he decided to enter the dance profession and join the New Zealand Ballet (Bannerman, 1996, p.1). However his stay was short lived as a year later Newson came to Britain and decided to pursue his studies for a further year at London Contemporary Dance School before joining Extemporary Dance Theatre (EDT) in 1981 (Bannerman, 1996, p.1). Although in 1985 he decided to leave EDT as according to Bannerman (1996, p.1) 'he was not given the artistic freedom to choose the designer or the dancers for a new work he wished to create for the company'. Newson (quoted in Buckland, 1995, p.372) reflected;

So many choreographers denied who I was, my ideas, my thoughts, and I was nothing more than a bit of pigment for them to paint with; and the reality is that dancers are not pigment, they are living and feeling, and you can't deny, no matter how hard you try, the humanity on stage.

By 1986 Newson had become increasingly frustrated with mainstream modern dance in Britain and the 'unreal image of perfection' (Mackrell, 1992, p.23). As a result he decided to form his own company DV8 Physical Theatre, with the aim 'to re-invest meaning in dance particularly where it has been lost through formalised techniques – pushing beyond the traditional and aesthetic inherent in most dance forms to enable a discussion of wider and more complex issues' (Butterworth & Clarke, 1998, p.117). In doing so he wanted to attract a wider range of audiences and make dance more 'accessible' (Bannerman, 1996, p.1). Mackrell (1992, p.50) highlights how Newson desired to 'create a situation in which dancers and choreographers collaborated on work, rather than the former simply carrying out the latter's instructions'. Thus, DV8 can be described as an

independent company that is run on the basis of a 'collective' (Bannerman, 1996, p.1).

In terms of his work, Newson is essentially concerned with major issues embedded within today's culture and is highly influenced 'by the interplay between the individual and their personal response politically, sociologically and psychologically' (Butterworth & Clarke. 1988, p.117). As a result, Newson has 'involved the company in remorseless self-investigation and relentless physical investment' to ensure that their movement material 'speaks the truth clearly' (Carter, 1993, p.7). The performers and their personalities are vital to the reputation of DV8, Newson (1993, p.12) states 'our work is only ever as good as the people involved, only as deep and profound as they are'.

However, Newson (quoted in Lawrence, 1990, pp. 30-31) stresses the fact that he 'doesn't purposely set out to be controversial', but instead sets out to 'deal with issues about our lives'. Initially he drew inspiration from his own personal experiences as a homosexual in order to create dance pieces which expressed the hostility gay men endured, living in Britain under Margaret Thatcher's conservative government (Prickett, 2003, p.27). Examples such as the passing of Clause 28 (1988) and the growing awareness of the Aids pandemic reinforced how homosexuality was seen as deviant and unacceptable in society during the 1980's (Prickett, 2003, p.27). The purpose of Clause 28 was to 'prohibit local authorities promoting homosexuality by publishing material, or by promoting the teaching in state schools of the acceptability of homosexuality as a 'pretended family relationship' (Anon, 2008). These limitations and restrictions encouraged Newson to express his frustrations and those of his fellow company members through works such as '*My Sex, Our Dance*' (1986), '*Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men*' (1988), '*Strange Fish*' (1992) and '*Enter Achilles*' (1995).

Enter Achilles (1995) is the work which will be critically analysed in depth here due to the fact that it provides a great insight into the 'nature of male gender and

the way men relate to other men' (Watson, 1995/96, p.18). The issue of gender is undoubtedly a topic which Newson is fascinated by; (according to one interview) the choreographer read 'thirty textbooks on the subject of gender' prior to creating *Enter Achilles* (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). Watson (1995/96, pp.18-19) states that the work is 'a searing study of masculine insecurities' whereby Newson 'takes a bitter swipe at man's inhumanity to man'. Burt (1995, p.13) highlights how masculinity is 'a socially constructed identity' and therefore as a consequence 'rather than enjoying a secure autonomy, men have continually needed to adjust and redefine the meanings attributed to sexual differences in order to maintain dominance in the face of changing social circumstances' (Burt, 1995, p.13). This is essentially what Newson explores within *Enter Achilles* (1995), 'built around a night 'down the pub', the action strips the homophobic bonhomie of a group of beer-guzzling lads down to its raw and bleeding roots, exposing much misogyny along the way' (Watson, 1995/96, p.18).

The initial ideas for the work arose as a result of an extensive hospital stay to recover from an injury to his Achilles tendon, during which time Newson became aware of his male friends' incapability to confront issues on a deeply personal level (Prickett, 2003, p.30). Leask (1995, p.52) expresses how 'Newson felt that the social stigma and taboos concerning friendships among men stifles their ability to communicate with each other'. Theweleit (1987, cited Burt, 1995, p.198) argues that this break down of communication is due to western male identity being dependent on the maintenance of tight physical and psychological boundaries. What Newson aims to do as a choreographer is to emphasise and 'show up some of the more unsatisfactory aspects of what it is to be a man in society today' by essentially denaturalising and demystifying the concept of masculinity (Burt, 1995, p.198).

Enter Achilles (1995) 'took straight male bonding as its theme, and was a physical manifestation of the 'new lad' imagery that was being promoted in the media at the time' (Bremser, 1999, p.175). In order to initially create movement

material for the piece, Newson set tasks in development workshops which involved 'exploring and questioning behaviour and habits linked to male identity and male bonding' (Prickett, 2003, p.30). In response, the performers delved into their own individual experiences and contributed ideas such as 'binge drinking, games and familial relationships – with the setting inspired by post-rehearsal drinks at a local pub' (Prickett, 2003, p.30). With these ideas intact Newson was eager to expose 'the crisis of masculinity through movement, sound and design' (Bremser, 1999, p.175). The recreated setting of a pub bar for *Enter Achilles* (1995) was a key factor in the success of the piece as not only was it effectively used as 'a launching point for flying leaps and turns' but in addition it also helped to establish 'an atmospheric stereotype echoed in the performers characterisations' (Prickett, 2003, p.30).

Prickett (2003, p.30) further highlights how Newson manages to manipulate 'everyday materials, subverting or magnifying their meaning in the process'. One prop which is evidently magnified within the piece is that of the pint glass of larger, an item stereotypical of that of the British male working class in the pub (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). Prickett (2003, p.30) states how the pint glass essentially acts as a barrier between the men 'literally separating faces and bodies' and is thus recognised within *Enter Achilles* (1995) as 'a site of safety'. The emphasis upon masculinity and pub culture is emphasised throughout the piece as 'the ubiquitous pint is elevated to an item of desire, of award, in addition to being guzzled down in alcoholic bravado' (Prickett, 2003, p.30). Watson (1995/96, p.19) stresses how Newson 'has his lads juggling pint pots in displays of startling dexterity, showing they are men by how much they can knock back, clinging on to their pint as a totem of insecurity in an unreliable world'.

Another interesting analysis of the significance of the pint glass is expressed by Newson himself, whom suggests that,

the pint shared between the men can become a metaphor for bodily fluids / our life source, and how the qualities of the glass (the pint) can represent our rigidity, fragility and transparency (Newson, 1995, p.1).

However, it is only when the alcohol starts to take an effect that these manly boys begin to lose their inhibitions and 'open up to a wider world of possibilities than the straitjacket that being a man in society has allowed them' (Watson, 1995/96, p.19). On the contrary, emotions are also heightened once inebriated and the inability to control these emotions often ends in a destructive manner, Watson (1995/96, p.19) states that whilst 'it allows some to let their inner feelings show through, all it does with others is to release the pent-up aggression that the most repressed want to vent on anyone who dares to show they are different'. Tushingam (1995, cited Bannerman, 1996, p.2) further emphasises the issue of male emotion addressed within *Enter Achilles* (1995) stating that 'in men's silence there is always the possibility of violence....when men will not allow in themselves they must deny in others'. Hence why the two most macho characters feel they have to redeem a sense of masculinity and authority after witnessing their peers more vulnerable streak (Watson, 1995/96, p.19). Watson (1995/96, p.19) highlights how the mood in the piece soon switches from 'boozy revelry to bitter conflict' as the two men 'embark on a viciously destructive course than can only end in bloody confrontation'. Therefore where 'manliness is most impregnable-the pub' the possibility of violence is highly likely, as Newson successfully portrays (Brown, 1995, p.1). Mackrell (1995, p.2) comments on how true to life the work is, suggesting that 'the viciousness and inhibition portrayed in *Enter Achilles* (1995) represent the vast majority of heterosexual men'.

On the contrary, there is one affectionate and loving relationship conjured up within the piece, although controversially it's between one of the most homophobic characters' and his inflatable sex doll (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). However, it is apparent that this character cares deeply for his dummy and as Brown (1995, p.1) suggests 'loves it more tenderly than some men love real

women'. The man even goes to the extent of turning off his 'answer machine when a call comes through from a girlfriend asking him on a date' - he is clearly more content at home with his doll (Christiansen, 1995). Watson (1995/96, p.19) further evokes sympathy for the character by suggesting that evidently 'this is the only kind of woman he can relate to. Living, thinking alternatives would be too challenging'.

However, as in all Newson's work, 'tenderness, affection and compassion surface only momentarily' as the man's secret relationship with his sex doll is exposed (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). In response, his so-called friends once again turn to violence and aggression as a means of control and masculine conformity (Newson, 1995, p.1). As a consequence for not 'running with the pack' the men savagely dismember the beloved blow-up doll, leaving Hounslow (her lover) with nothing but grief (Watson, 1995/96, p.19). Newson (1996, p.2) indicates how 'some of the characters see the doll like a football....an object to be kicked around and played with which bonds men as many sports games do'. Dougill (1995, p.2) sympathetically states, "this was the one relationship (private, made public) that mattered in the bleak world Newson is depicting".

In conclusion, despite Hounslow being the most homophobic character in the piece, he as Watson (1995/96, p.19) suggests is 'just as much a victim of the way male society has set its agenda, as the gay character caught in the middle of the storm of queerbashers'. By including the blow-up doll scenario, Newson is able to successfully convey how 'the straight male experience can be every bit as oppressive as its gay counterpart' (Watson, 1995, p.2).

However, a hero does emerge within the piece in the form of the Cupid or Puck like figure, presumed to be the Achilles of the title (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). The man is evidently an outsider as he appears to be 'playing some strange private game of his own' and is 'clearly a bit smarter than the rest of the gang' (Christiansen, 1995, p.2). However, despite possessing many qualities

associated with that of a homosexual, such as, 'fly', 'subtle' and 'camp', he still attempts to be one of the lads nevertheless (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). Predictably due to the suppression of homosexuality being such a strong theme throughout the piece, it isn't before long that the men turn against him as their homophobia sets in (Christiansen, 1996, p.4). Mackrell (1995, p.1) highlights how bizarrely, when they do turn on him for the worse, the men are left standing as 'he fulfils every boy's dream by whirling around and trouncing his attackers, his clothes falling off to reveal his Superman suit'. Incorporating this costume is according to Prickett (2003, p.30) 'another juxtaposition of iconic imagery', as Superman is stereotypically perceived as the epitome of masculinity as opposed to an 'effeminate wine-sipping' slight individual.

The Achilles-Superman continues to provide further humour to the piece as he 'starts camping it up to the disco tune of 'Staying Alive' (Christiansen, 1995, p.2). Soon enough the other characters (minus two) begin to join in and lose their inhibitions, behaving in a way that is predictable of British blokes on a night out (Prickett, 2003, p.30). However, their fun is short lived as 'this display of liberated self-expression proves too much for the pub's resident macho men' who react in the only way they know how, 'with their fists' (Watson, 1995/96, p.18). Scene's such as this are crucial to the success of *'Enter Achilles' (1995)* as it provokes relevant yet unchallenged questions such as, 'why do men police each others' behaviour? Why should non-conformity produce so much abhorrence and fear? And historically, men have oppressed women, but how oppressive have they been to themselves and one another?' (Newson, 2005, p.1). Burt (1995, p.197) highlights how 'the resulting work has had the potential to challenge the spectator to reassess aspects of masculine identity and experience that are generally denied or rendered invisible in mainstream cultural forms'.

The initial inspiration for *Enter Achilles (1995)* derived from Newson's own feelings of discomfort with his sex, he observed that 'most men are afraid to dress as they want, how they don't drink what they want, how they don't express

their emotions and how they are in denial' (Mackrell, 1995, p.2). Burt (1995, pp.29-198) suggests that this repressive life many men endure is due to the 'construction of masculine identity' and 'the fact that western society is and has for hundreds of years been profoundly homophobic'. Thus, within *Enter Achilles* (1995) Newson wanted to highlight and 'explore the problematic potential of the anxieties surrounding male-male relationships' and 'reveal structures that constitute a widespread social problem' (Burt, 1995, p.198). In short, the piece aims to convey 'the dicey business of what makes a man a man' (Watson, 1995, p.2).

However, not all critics agree that Newson presents a fair portrayal of your typical British working class man. Christiansen (1996, p.5) for example argues that he watched *Enter Achilles* (1995) thinking 'yes, but – working- class men also make good fathers, fancy pigeons, grow vegetables, remember their mum's birthdays and try to better themselves'. Therefore the critic believes that 'it simply isn't enough to present them as a herd of stupid, frightened louts' and thus accuses Newson of suffering from 'tunnel vision' (Christiansen, 1996, p.5). Further criticism is displayed by that of Mackrell (1995, p.2) whom suggests that "however true the anecdotes are and however vivid the work's imagery, *Enter Achilles* deliberately presents only the damning evidence against men". The critic continues to ridicule Newson's work by stating that the characters behaviour was just "too bad to be true" (Mackrell, 1995, p.3). In response to Mackrell's (1995) claims, Newson (1996, p.2) speaks out,

As an artist, I tell extreme and specific stories to illustrate certain conditions in our society. Because they may not be universal, it does not mean they are false. Nor because, they are true, does it mean they are universal.

Christiansen (1995, p.1) on the other hand praises Newson's work claiming that '*Enter Achilles* isn't just an enthralling and moving piece of theatre, it's also a

cruelly accurate essay in social anthropology'. Furthermore its 'up against-the-wall and in-you-face nature', forces you as an audience member to take note of the oppressive and violent world in which we inhabit (Christiansen, 1995, p.1).

In conclusion, *Enter Achilles (1995)* is 'proof of just how potent dipping into popular culture can be' (Watson, 1995/96, p.18). Every aspect of the production was carefully thought out in order to 'contribute to the sense of familiarity, providing foils against which to delve into the male psyche' (Prickett, 2003, p.30). Watson (1995, p.3) highlights how the roles have reversed and women are now to a certain extent more 'free' and 'liberated' within society, where as men are constantly trying to 'reassert their masculinity with all this Iron John stuff'. Although, due to challenging works such as that of DV8's, Burt (1995, p.199) believes that some men within society 'are surely, albeit with great difficulty and in slow motion, responding to recent debates about the nature of gendered identity, and dancing and working towards more acceptable ways of being masculine'.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.0 Conclusion

Thus, in conclusion it is evident that Lloyd Newson has adopted a dance theatre approach to enable him to convey 'the fragility of masculine identity' within contemporary western society (Leask, 1995, p.7). The DV8 director indicates his need to express what he perceives in the reality that surrounds him, 'somehow I want to talk about the world around me that I find so maddening at times that if I didn't have theatre I'm sure I would be insane' (Boden, 2003, p.4). Carter (1998, p.44) reinforces how 'theatre does not stand apart from reality. Dance theatre attacks what theatre embodies, as an institution – the rigidity – in order to make it once again a place of living experience'.

The fact that Newson produces 'hard pessimistic works related to sexual politics and specifically to 'queer' sexuality' has resulted in him pushing 'dance theatre through territory previously unexplored by dance' (Leask, 1995, p.1). Leask (1995, p.1) emphasises how prior to Newson there were very few choreographers who 'explored the subject of masculinity, partly because it is a subject that has only recently begun to be looked at in gender studies, thanks to the preparatory work done by feminists and queer theorists'. Hence why, 'for some years the work of DV8 has been seen as ground-breaking' (Adshead, 2007, p.44).

Within *Enter Achilles* (1995) the DV8 director looked 'beyond issues of sexuality to what constitutes masculinity' (Leask, 1995, p.7). Newson was essentially concerned with investigating the 'reasons which lie behind men's silence and the inability of many to communicate emotionally' (Leask, 1995, p.2). Constanti (1989, p.6) highlights how all men, despite their sexuality have problems communicating on an emotional level, she states, 'I don't think it matters whether the men are gay or straight. A gay man is still a man and has those same emotional blockages. For all sorts of reasons, most men want to protect themselves.' Leask (1995, p.9) on the other hand, argues that straight men within

society are the most afraid to 'come out of their tight little boxes'. Newson's recognition of this, prompted him to create a piece (*Enter Achilles*, 1995) which demonstrated how 'oppressive men have been to themselves as well as to women and homosexuals' (Leask. 1995/96, p.7). Burt (1995, p.163) highlights how the revelation of repressed conflicts within a performance situation can 'have the effect of subverting norms and changing attitudes'. According to Petersen (1998, p.89) 'it is widely believed that by paying greater attention to their emotions and by talking 'openly and honestly' about their relationships men [can in fact] change both themselves and society'.

However, as a case study was only conducted on *Enter Achilles* (1995), critics argue that it would 'be impossible to know how the findings can be generalised to other settings' or in this case, other works choreographed by Newson (Bryman, 2004, pp.284-285). Thus, further research could be carried out on works which Leask (1995, p.2) believes,

embody the development, both in form and content, of Newson's concerns and which reflect most clearly on the tensions and anxieties of society towards sexuality and relationships, examples include; '*My Sex, Our Dance*' (1986), '*Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men*' (1989), '*Strange Fish*' (1992) and '*MSM*' (1994).

Also, as *Enter Achilles* was created in 1995, further more recent research could explore whether or not Newson's work 'has developed and grown to reflect more optimism in a gradually-changing, more acceptable society' (Leask, 1995, p,2).

Another possible investigation which would address the representation of gender norms and evoke aspects associated with European-based dance/ theatre groups (such as DV8), is Edouard Locke's 1994 creation- *Duo Number 1* (Cooper-Albright, 1997, pp.28-36). This piece is particularly significant in the way that Louise Lecavalier (the 'star' of the work) 'literally (as well as metaphorically)

inscribe[s] both genders onto her dancing body' and thus challenges 'what we know about the traditionally gendered body in dance' (Cooper-Albright, 1997, p.35).

However, Leask (1995, p.2) insists that Newson's movement material is derivative of his own observations and experiences as a homosexual living within a male dominated society. Therefore due to this subjective perspective, the DV8 director's work can be consequently depicted as a 'personal journey of discovery which doesn't necessarily provide answers' (Leask, 1995, p.2).

Reference List

- Adshead, J. (1988). *Dance Analysis: Theory and Practice*. London: Dance Books Ltd.
- Adshead-Lansdale, J. (2007). *The Struggle with the Angel: A poetics of Lloyd Newson's Strange Fish*. Hampshire: Dance Books Ltd.
- Albright, A. C. (1997). *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance*. Hanover, N.H; London: University Press of New England.
- Alder, C., & Polk, K. (1996). Masculinity and Child Homicide in Masculinities, Social Relations, and Crime [special issue]. *British Journal of Criminology*. 36 (3).
- Anon., (2000/2007a). *Heroes in Greek Mythology [online]*. Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease. Available from: <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0882168.html>. [Accessed 2nd March 2008]
- Anon., (2000.2007b). *Achilles: The Angry Young Hero [online]*. Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease, Available from: <http://www.infoplease.com/cig/mythology/achilles-angry-young-hero.html>. [Accessed 4th March 2008].
- Anon., (2008). *Clause 28 [online]*. Research Machines plc, Helicon Publishing. Available from: <http://www.tiscali.ac.uk/reference/encyclopaedia/hutchinson/m0022685.html>. [Accessed 3rd March 2008].
- Au, S. (2002). *Ballet and Modern Dance*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Bannerman, H. (1996). *Lloyd Newson: Choreographer Fact Card*. Guildford: National Resource Centre for Dance.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana.
- Boden, Z. (2003). *Interviews: Lloyd Newson*, pp.1-4 [online]. Available from: http://www.article19.co.uk/06/interview/lloyd_newson.php. [Accessed 3rd March 2008].

- Bowen, C. (1995). Review...Edinburgh Festival Theatre. **The Scotsman**, 16th Oct, p.1 (only), [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/stage/enter.achilles/press/ts_16.10.95.html. [Accessed 3rd March 2008].
- Bowker, L.H. (1998). **Masculinities and Violence**. London: SAGE.
- Bremser, M. (1999). **Fifty Contemporary Choreographers: A Reference Guide**, London: Routledge.
- Brown, I. (1995). Enter Achilles, A Man's Man, ReviewArnolfini Bristol, **The Daily Telegraph**, Monday Sep 23rd, pp.1-2, [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/stage/enter.achilles/press/dt_25.9.95.html. [Accessed 3rd January 2008]
- Bryman, A., (2004). **Social Research Methods** (2nd Ed.). United States: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Buckland, F. (1995). Towards a language of the stage: The work of DV8 Physical Theatre. **New Dance Quarterly**, 11 (4), pp. 371-380.
- Burns, R.B. (1990). **Introduction to Research Methods 4th Edition**. London: Sage Publications.
- Burt, R. (1995). **The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities**, London: Routledge.
- Butterworth, J. and Clarke, G. (1998). **Dance Makers Portfolio: Conversations with Choreographers. Wakefield:** Centre for Dance and Theatre Studies at Bretton Hall and the British Association of Choreographers.
- Caudwell, J. (2006). **Sport, Sexualities and Queer/Theory**. London: Routledge.
- Carter, G. (1993). In the Plush Hush of the Mainstream. **Dance Theatre Journal**, 10 (4), pp. 6-53.
- Carter, A. (1998). **The Routledge Dance Studies Reader**. London & New York: Routledge.
- Cheney, G. (1989). **Basic concepts in Modern Dance: A Creative Approach 3rd Edition**. Pennington, N.J.: Princeton Book Company.

- Christiansen, R. (1995). 'Fun with a Blow-up Doll': Review...Newcastle Playhouse. ***The Observer Review***, Sunday Sep 24th, pp.1-2, [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/stage/enter.achilles/press/to_24.9.95.html. [Accessed 3rd March 2008].

- Christiansen, R. (1996). Weakness in the heel. ***Dance Theatre Journal***, 13 (1), pp. 4-5.

- Collinson, D. & Hearn, J. (1996). 'Men' at 'work': multiple masculinities/multiple workplaces, in: M.Mac an Gahail (Ed) ***Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas***. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Connor, S. (1989). ***Postmodernist Culture: An introduction to theories of the contemporary***. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Constanti, S. (1989). 'Giving birth to *Dead Dreams*: Interview with Lloyd Newson', ***Dance Theatre Journal***, 6 (4), p. 6 (only).

- Constanti, S. (1995). Dance. ***Independent, The (London)*** [online]. Newspaper Publishing PLC, p.1 (only). Available from: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_19951012/ai_n14011514/print. [Accessed 17th February 2008]

- Cooper-Albright, A. (1997). ***Choreographing Difference***. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2003). ***The Landscape of Qualitative Research 2nd Edition***. London: Sage Publications.

- Denscombe, M. (2003). ***The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects***. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

- Desmond, J.C. (2001). ***Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on & off the Stage***. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

- Dougill, D. (1995). 'Pint-sized Male Egos': Review....Newcastle Playhouse. ***The Sunday Times***, Sunday Sep 24th, pp.1-2, [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/stage/enter.achills/press/st_24.9.95.html. [Accessed 3rd March 2008]

- **Enter Achilles**, 1996. Video. Directed by Clara van GOOL. London: Dance Videos.
- Foster, S.L. (2006). **Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power**. London: Routledge.
- Gard, M. (2006). **Men who Dance: Aesthetics, Athletics & the Art of Masculinity**. New York: Peter Lang.
- Gillham, B. (2000). **Case Study Research Methods**. London: Continuum.
- Hanna, J.L. (1988). **Dance Sex and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire**. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hawkins, E. (1966), 'Pure Poetry', in (ed.) S.J. Cohen, **The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief**.
- Huyssen, A. (1986). **After the great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture**. London: Macmillan.
- Jackson, D. (1990). **Unmasking Masculinity: A Critical Autobiography**. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Jensen, K.B. (2000). **A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies**. London: Routledge.
- Jordan, S. (1992). **Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain**. London: Dance Books Ltd.
- Lawrence, M. (1990). DV8 Physical Theatre: Breaking down the barriers. **Ballet International**. (13) 9, pp.30 - 32.
- Leask, J. (1995). The silence of the man. **Ballet International**, DV8 Physical Theatre [online], pp.1-9. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/about.dv8/LN_silence.html [Accessed 3rd March 2008]
- Levene, L. (1992). 'Fish out of water'. **The Independent**, 11 July, p.24 (only).
- Luckhurst, M. (1997). '**DV8...Ten Years on the Edge**', Bound To Please Programme, DV8 Physical Theatre [online], pp.1-2. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/about.dv8/LN_tenyears.html [Accessed 27th February 2008]

- Mackrell, J. (1992). ***Out of Line: The story of British New Dance***. London: Dance Books.
- Mackrell, J. (1995). 'Truly, Badly, But Terribly Manly': Review...Arnolfini, Bristol. ***The Guardian***, Friday September 22nd, pp.1-3, [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.ac.uk/stage/enetr.achilles/press/tg_22.9.95.html. [Accessed 3rd March 2008]
- Mackrell, J. (1997). ***Reading Dance***. London: Michael Joseph.
- Manning, S. (1998). Coding the Message. ***Dance Theatre Journal***, 14 (1), pp. 34-37.
- McLean, C. (1995). The cost of masculinity: placing men's pain in the context of male power, in: ***Promoting Gender Equity Conference***. Canberra: Department of Education and Training.
- Newson, L. (1993). Lloyd Newson: Interview with Lloyd Newson. ***Dance Now***, summer 1993, pp.11-13.
- Newson, L. (1995). ***Original Text***, p.1 (only), [online]. Available from: <http://www.dv8.co.uk/stage/enter.achilles/enter.html> [Accessed 27th February 2008]
- Newson, L. (1996). Talkback Column: Reply. ***Dance Europe***, Feb/March, pp.1-4, [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/stage/enter.achilles/press/de_3.96.html. [Accessed 6th January, 2008].
- Parry, J. (1996/1997). Dance on the Edge. ***Dance Now***, 5 (4), pp. 67 – 72.
- Petersen, A. R. (1998). ***Unmasking the Masculine: 'men' and 'identity' in a sceptical age***. London: SAGE.
- Petrovic, J. (1997). Men Behaving Badly. ***City Pages***, October 8th, pp.1-4, [online]. Available from: <http://articles.citypages.com/1997-10-08/art/men-behaving-badly/> [Accessed 17th February 2008]
- Prickett, S. (2003). Profile: Lloyd Newson. ***Dance Theatre Journal***, 19 (1), pp. 27-31.
- Pumphrey, M. (1989). 'Why do cowboys wear hats in the bath?' ***Critical Quarterly***, 31 (3), pp. 78-100.

- Rubin, G. (1982). 'Thinking sex: notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality', in C. Vance (ed.), ***Pleasure and Danger: The Politics of Sexuality***. **Routledge & Kegan Paul**: Boston.
- Sheppard, A. (1987). ***Aesthetics an introduction to the philosophy of art***. Oxford: OUP.
- Stewart, E. (1990). The Integrated Text and Postmodern Performance, **Music, Theatre, Dance**, Summer, pp.2 – 9.
- Solway, A. (1985). Interview: Lloyd Newson, ***New Dance***, 34, pp. 10-11.
- Thomas, H. (1993). ***Dance, Gender and Culture***, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Tushingam, D. (1995). ***Lloyd Newson...Dance About Something***, Enter Achilles Programme, DV8 Physical Theatre, pp. 1-4 [online], pp.1-4. Available from: http://www.dv8.co.uk/about.dv8/LN_danceabout.html [Accessed 27th February 2008]
- Watson, K. (1995). 'Straight and Narrow Minded': Review, ***The Observer Review***, Sep 10th, pp.1-3, [online]. Available from: http://www.dv8.ac.uk/stage/enetr.achilles/press/to_10.9.95.html. [Accessed 3rd January 2008].
- Watson, K. (1995/1996). Enter Achilles. ***Dance Theatre Journal***, 12 (3), pp.18-19.

