

UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER

Department of Dance / Institute of Sport

**Interdisciplinary Investigation into Meditative Flow States
and Their Roles in Movement Performance**

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION INTO MEDITATIVE FLOW STATES AND THEIR ROLES IN MOVEMENT PERFORMANCE

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This thesis focuses on the idea of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), a psychological phenomenon that involves complete immersion and optimal experience. Whereas many existing studies focus on *telic* Flow e.g. fixed goals, performance-oriented or the current thesis places focus on *paratelic* Flow e.g. open goals, sensation-oriented or by exploring its role in dance and movement performance (Swann et al., 2018). In response to the call to reconceptualise and clarify the concept of Flow with regards to its various manifestations, the thesis draws from other related/similar concepts, such as pre-reflective experiences in dance (Fraleigh, 1987), the idea of *no-mind* in Zen practice (Yuasa, 1993), and the hypofrontality theory (Dietrich, 2004). Building on these concepts, the thesis examines how dancers might experience paratelic Flow within meditative movement episodes. Another focus of the thesis is to explore how Flow experiences might interact with a dancer's physical performance. This line of inquiry draws inspiration from both philosophical and neurocognitive accounts, which identify a relationship between Flow and optimal movement performance. Given the paucity of cross-disciplinary dialogue, the thesis attempts to investigate the above topics through an interdisciplinary mixed-methods approach.

Through an exploratory survey (Chapter 4) followed by a series of event-focused interviews (Chapter 5) or the thesis explores 1.) how dancers and movement practitioners might experience Flow during a single movement session, 2.) how these states might interact with the mover's physical performance, and 3.) how viewers perceive and describe a mover in Flow. The survey results indicated that movers may experience Flow through various meditative episodes that arise through movement, including improvisational sessions, technique classes, and performative events. The interview study showed that Flow appears in a cyclical process involving five distinct stages or Entering, Opening, Riding, Ebbing, and Resetting or during which the mover's physical performance show observable changes in quality. Notably, during the peak state of Flow (Riding), movements are described by observers as fluid, organic, and well-coordinated, which is consistent with existing literature. Through these findings, the thesis provides clarity to the role of Flow during dance and movement performance and demonstrates possible links between the dancer's mental state and his/her physical performance.

Contents

ABSTRACT	i
Contents	iii
List of tables	vi
List of figures	vii
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction	1
1. Background and theoretical context	11
1.1. Flow as a cross-disciplinary area of research	11
1.1.1. Pre-reflective consciousness in dance ó a phenomenological perspective	12
1.1.2. <i>No-mind</i> ó a Zen Buddhist perspective	16
1.1.3. Hypofrontality and meditation ó a neurocognitive perspective	19
1.2. Flow and movement performance	26
1.3. Epistemological pluralism in interdisciplinary research	28
1.4. Definitions and frameworks	34
1.5. Somatic practice and kinesthetic attention	39
1.6. A note on ideologies embedded in theory and practice	41
2. Flow, Zen, and movement practice	45
2.1. Embodied meditation as a process towards Flow attainment.....	46
2.1.1. Somatic movement as an attention technique ó Nihon-buyo narrative	46
2.1.2. Surrendering to the unknown ó Butoh narrative	52
2.1.3. Flow within the context of meditative practice.....	60
2.2. Meditative Flow and movement performance	62
2.2.1. ðOptimalö performance as heightened intuition and ideal effort	63
2.2.2. Pre-reflectivity as an aesthetic quality.....	67
3. Methodology.....	75
3.1. Identifying Flow experiences during meditative moving.....	77
3.1.1. Identifying Flow through questionnaires.....	78
3.1.2. Defining ðmeditativeö moving.....	80
3.1.3. Method 1: exploratory survey on Meditative Flow experiences.....	83

3.2.	The role of Meditative Flow during movement performance	84
3.2.1.	Exploring the experiential nuances of Flow	85
3.2.2.	Interpreting kinesthetic experience	87
3.2.3.	Exploring the relationship between Flow and movement performance	91
3.2.4.	Audience-based perceptual analysis.....	93
3.2.5.	Method 2: first- and third-person event-focused interviews.....	97
3.3.	Mixed-methods research and issues on rigour and validity	99
4.	Study 1: Meditative Flow experiences among movement practitioners	107
4.1.	Introduction	107
4.1.1.	Definition for Meditative Flow.....	108
4.1.2.	Definition for Meditation in Movement	112
4.1.3.	Various episodes of meditative moving	114
4.1.4.	Summary of hypotheses	117
4.2.	Method	118
4.3.	Results.....	124
4.4.	Discussion	129
4.5.	Limitations	133
4.6.	Conclusion.....	135
5.	Study 2: the role of Meditative Flow during movement performance.....	137
5.1.	Introduction	137
5.2.	My role and position as researcher	139
5.3.	Method	141
5.3.1.	Participant recruitment and demographic.....	141
5.3.2.	Materials.....	143
5.3.3.	Data collection procedure.....	145
5.3.4.	Analysis process.....	156
5.4.	Results.....	173
5.4.1.	A note on expressions deriving from participants' backgrounds	173
5.4.2.	Question 1: Agreement VS Non-agreement phases	174
5.4.3.	Questions 2 and 3: The Meditative Flow cycle.....	178
5.4.4.	Additional themes: memory & time perception.....	200
5.5.	Reflections on methodology.....	202
5.6.	Conclusion.....	205
6.	General discussion and reflective analysis	207
6.1.	PART 1 ó Cognitive implications within the Meditative Flow cycle.....	209
6.1.1.	Entering/Resetting: releasing self-consciousness and engaging with sensation	209

6.1.2.	Opening: releasing control and engaging with the unknown.....	212
6.1.3.	Riding: releasing effort and the engaged mind-body	214
6.1.4.	Ebbing and the ðselfö	216
6.1.5.	Retrospective and present-centred attention: memory & time.....	220
6.2.	PART 2 ó Somatic movement approaches towards Meditative Flow	223
6.2.1.	Translating the not-yet-embodied.....	225
6.2.2.	A space of suspension: away from the habitual mind-body	227
6.2.3.	Magnifying automatic processes of embodiment	229
6.3.	PART 3 ó Meditative Flow and movement performance	232
6.3.1.	Performative qualities within the Meditative Flow cycle.....	233
6.3.2.	Movement efficiency: kinetic chain, <i>ki</i> energy, and core.....	238
6.3.3.	The aesthetics of movement in Meditative Flow	242
6.4.	PART 4 ó Observer-observer relationships: audience experience	246
6.4.1.	Meditative resonance through kinesthetic empathy	247
6.4.2.	Disconnections during Ebbing.....	253
7.	Conclusion.....	261
7.1.	Aims of the research	261
7.2.	Methodological reflections.....	262
7.3.	Outcomes of the research	267
	Appendices	277
	Appendix 1 ó List of Recruitment Sources.....	277
	Appendix 2 ó Survey Pilot Notes.....	278
	Appendix 3 ó Recruitment Email.....	281
	Appendix 4 ó Information Sheet.....	282
	Appendix 5 ó Consent Form.....	286
	Appendix 6 ó Component Sheet	288
	Appendix 7 ó Line Graph Template.....	289
	Appendix 8 ó Verbal Instructions	290
	Appendix 9 ó Interview Pilot Notes	293
	Appendix 10 ó Line Graph Full Mapping	306
	Appendix 11 ó Quantitative Methods.....	315
	Appendix 12 ó Inter-rater Agreement Material	317
	Appendix 13 ó Phase Catalogue	319
	Appendix 14 ó Data.....	331
	References	333

List of tables

Table 1. Survey questions.....	121
Table 2. Percentage of participants who selected each Meditation in Movement component ..	125
Table 3. Percentage of participants who selected each Meditative Flow component	126
Table 4. Percentage of participants for each activity category within those who selected all five components of Meditation in Movement.....	128
Table 5. Percentage of participants for each activity category within those who selected all nine components of Meditative Flow	129
Table 6. Number of phases in each category (Agreement, Semi-agreement, Non-agreement).	175

List of figures

Figure 1. Challenge-skill balance.....	57
Figure 2. Causal effects and levels of Flow components.	110
Figure 3. Causal effects and levels of Meditative Flow components.....	112
Figure 4. Percentage of participants based on number of Meditation in Movement components.	125
Figure 5. Percentage of participants based on number of Meditative Flow components.....	126
Figure 6. Percentage of participants based on number of Meditative Flow components.....	127
Figure 7. Original mouse device and webpage layout.	144
Figure 8. Example of notes taken in the first step of the interview.....	153
Figure 9. Example of levels noted in the second step of the interview.	153
Figure 10. Example of final line graph created through the interview.....	154
Figure 11. Samples of mover's and observer's line graphs from trial 1-3.	157
Figure 12. Mover's (top) and observer 1's (bottom) line graphs from trial 1.....	160
Figure 13. Excerpt of observer's transcription with comments.	164
Figure 14. Excerpt of 'Comment List' Excel sheet.....	165
Figure 15. Excerpt of Excel high/low colour-coding sheet.	166
Figure 16. Examples of 'high' (left) and 'low' (right) Agreement phases in colour-coding. ..	170
Figure 17. Cyclical model of Meditative Flow and themes within each stage.	178

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Aska Sakuta, declare that the thesis entitled:

Interdisciplinary Investigation into Meditative Flow States and Their Roles in Movement Performance

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- Parts of this work have been published as:
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Signed: 作田 飛鳥

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Introduction

Flow is a psychological concept proposed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997), defined as a state in which an individual is completely immersed in an activity without reflective self-consciousness but with a deep sense of control (Enseger & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012, p.1).

Described by some as a state of optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Delle Fave, Massimi, & Bassi, 2011=Jackson & Kimiecik, 2008), the concept has propelled the development of positive psychology through studies on a range of activities and contexts, including work (Bakker, 2008=Eisenberger, Jones, Stinglhamber, Shanlock, & Randall, 2005=Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009), study (Admiraal, Huizenga, Akkerman, & Ten Dam, 2011=Hamari, et al., 2016=Liu, Liao, & Pratt, 2009=McQuillan & Conde, 1996), play (Cowley, Charles, Black, & Hickey, 2008=Fang, Zhang, & Chan, 2013=Sherry, 2004), and other athletic (Jackson, 1996=Jackson & Eklund, 2002=Swann, Piggott, Schweickle, & Vella, 2018) and artistic (Banfield & Burgess, 2013=De Manzano, Theorell, Harmat, & Ullén, 2010=MacDonald, Byrne, & Carlton, 2006=Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013) contexts. The current thesis focuses on Flow experiences during dance and movement practices, and the changes in its experiential and performative qualities throughout a single movement session.

In a recent review on Flow in sports and exercise, sport psychologist Christian Swann et al. (2018), proposed a distinction between *telic* and *paratelic* Flow states, arguing that the current Flow concept conflates (at least) two distinct psychological states (p.259). Drawing on research conducted by Mackenzie, Hodge, & Boyes (2011), Swann et al. (2018) explain that telic Flow occurs in a challenging activity with clear/distinct outcome goals and is characterized by an achievement focus, intensity . . . and having higher performance expectations (p.259), whereas paratelic Flow is experienced when an activity is more sensation oriented and is undertaken without a clear outcome goal and a lack of importance

attributed to performance outcomes and future concerns (p.260). Further, Swann et al. (2018) propose that perhaps the former experience is, in fact, a separate state in itself which they call *clutch* and that it can be distinguished from Flow all together. In their argument, clutch states involve deliberate focus on the task and intense effort, whereas Flow involves effortless attention and automatic experience (p.260). Swann et al. (2018) explain that a key determinant of flow and clutch states appear to be the nature of goals pursued (p.8), the former being associated with open goals and the latter with fixed goals. With this framework in mind, Swann et al. encourage a deeper examination of contexts involving open goals, given that studies in sport have focused predominantly on the role of fixed goals within competitive contexts. Considering the context of dance, a dancer might experience either of these states depending on the context and setting in which the movement is carried out. For instance, dance competitions can involve challenging tasks, clear goals, and high performance expectations (i.e. leading to telic Flow or clutch states), whereas improvisational movement sessions may be more sensation-oriented and less concerned about performance outcomes (i.e. leading to paratelic Flow). In response to Swann et al. (2018) recommendation, the thesis will focus on the latter case by investigating non-competitive, explorative, and open-ended movement contexts, including contemporary dance practices which are driven by somatic or kinesthetic awareness (Ehrenberg, 2015=Ravn, 2010).

Whilst psychological studies have established theories on how Flow might arise through specific activities (Chou & Ting, 2003=Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009=Stoll, 2018=Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013), intentions (Kaufman, Glass, & Arnkoff, 2009=Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014=Swann, Keegan, Crust, & Piggott, 2016), and conditions (Engeser & Rheinberg, 2008=Fullagar, Knight, & Sovern, 2013=Swann, Keegan, Piggott, Crust, & Smith, 2012), few have explored these aspects with a specific focus on paratelic Flow, or how these aspects might influence (or interact with) the experience throughout a single occurrence.

Furthermore, whilst some researchers theorise that there is a connection between Flow and 'optimal' states of performance (Demerouti, 2006; Dietrich & Stoll, 2010; Hamari et al., 2016; Jackson & Roberts, 1992; Privette & Brundrick, 1991), they have struggled to obtain evidence of such a connection, as it is difficult to reliably induce the state or to predict its occurrence for the purpose of examining its performative effects. The topic is faced with even more complexity when applied to the context of dance, as one must question the very meaning of 'optimality' in performance, and what it might entail. Existing research on Flow experiences during dance, although scarce, have generally taken either a psychological (Jeong, 2012; Levine, 2006; Thomson & Jaque, 2012; Uznik, 2018) or practice-led (e.g. phenomenological, ethnographic) approach (Bond & Stinson, 2000; Douse, 2013; Grogan, 2014; Hefferon & Ollis, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Urmston & Hewison, 2014), producing insights on the conditions and possible effects of Flow among professional and student dancers. Dance scholars have also drawn connections between Flow and other phenomenological and philosophical concepts such as pre-reflective consciousness (Fraleigh, 1987; Sheets-Johnstone, 1966) and *no-mind* (Paskevaska, 2001; Yuasa, 1993), thus shedding light on the concept's relevance to fields outside of positive psychology. The current thesis builds on these existing areas of Flow research, applying them to the context of contemporary dance practice through an interdisciplinary mixed-methods approach.

The thesis is guided by three main questions: 1.) How might dancers and movement practitioners experience paratelic Flow during a single movement session? 2.) How might these states interact with the mover's physical performance? and 3.) How might viewers perceive and describe the experience of witnessing a performer move in and out of Flow? The thesis will first explore how paratelic Flow states might arise through (and interact with) particular intentions and techniques that are embedded in movement, then examine how those states might play a role in the context of dance performance. As for the latter, the main interest lies in the relationship between the subjectively 'felt' (i.e. first-person) experience of Flow and its

physical or observable (i.e. third-person) qualities in movement. Through these explorations, the thesis aims to develop a temporal model of paratelic Flow which describes the dynamic shifts that occur within, and between, the mover's experiences and their performance. The findings of this research may bring clarity to the role of paratelic Flow during dance and movement practice, making it more accessible and available for critical discourses and practical applications among dance practitioners, artists, and teachers.

Throughout the thesis, I argue that paratelic Flow experiences during dance and movement practices involve a meditative state of mind, wherein the mover is unbound by external motivations or goal-oriented thinking. I use the term Meditative Flow to describe this particular state, as a way of defining Flow experiences that specifically occur during meditative instances in dance. The thesis approaches the topic of meditation through the perspective of Zen Buddhist philosophy, which not only provides the philosophical foundations of Eastern movement practices (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Sellers-Young, 1993), but also shares many of its principles with somatic practices that were established in the West (Eddy, 2009=Eddy, Williamson, & Weber, 2015). The thesis treats Zen philosophy as a conceptual bridge between Flow and embodied practices, which ultimately illuminates how somatic moving can be seen as a meditative process in itself. Based on this framework, the thesis examines how Meditative Flow states may appear within somatically grounded, meditative movement episodes (Deets, 2015=Schmalzl, Crane-Godreau, & Payne, 2014). As there are countless dance scenarios and movement practices that embody somatic or meditative elements, the thesis attempts to provide a clear boundary of the practices with which it engages. This boundary will be represented by the term Meditation in Movement, which refers to a particular set of intentions that are embedded in somatic and/or meditative movement processes.

The two concepts, Meditative Flow and Meditation in Movement, as well as their respective definitions, hold particular relevance to the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis. As

the thesis anticipates readers from various disciplines, there is a need to define key concepts in a way that reflects and accommodates those disciplinary perspectives. The first two chapters explore the theoretical underpinnings of Flow and meditation, drawing from philosophical, phenomenological, and scientific perspectives. The following two chapters formalise the ideas of Meditative Flow and Meditation in Movement, embedding the above perspectives into established systems of defining and measuring Flow, and testing whether those frameworks are appropriate for the current research context. Finally, the two concepts and their definitions are utilised in the main practical study to filter participants with relevant experience.

Chapter outline

Chapter 1 describes the background and context of the current research, firstly by establishing the cross-disciplinary¹ nature of Flow research and how it relates to other concepts in various fields including phenomenology, Eastern philosophy, and cognitive neuroscience. In response to Swann et al. (2018) observation, that Flow research has reached a 'crisis point' (p.249) in which a number of criticisms and gaps in knowledge invite 'a progressive shift' (p.265) towards reconceptualisation and clarification, the chapter explores and incorporates related concepts from other fields to disrupt, develop, and enrich our current understanding of the phenomenon. These concepts include pre-reflective consciousness in dance (Fraleigh, 1987), the idea of no-mind in Zen-influenced practice (Paskevskaja, 2001=Yuasa, 1993), and neurocognitive ideas such as 'hypofrontality' (Dietrich, 2004) and 'self-less' states in meditation (Dor-Ziderman, Berkovich-Ohana, Glicksohn, & Goldstein, 2013). Having introduced these concepts, the chapter moves on to address the epistemological plurality of this thesis and its implications.

¹ The thesis uses various terms including interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary to describe different relationships between disciplines. In this thesis, these terms are defined as the following, based on Choi & Pak (2006) interpretations: interdisciplinarity refers to processes of uniting and synthesising links between disciplines to form a 'coherent whole'; multidisciplinary refers to processes of drawing information from several disciplines while remaining within disciplinary limits; and cross-disciplinarity refers to processes, perspectives, and areas of research which span across multiple disciplines.

Drawing on the approaches taken by researchers of embodied cognition (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 2017) and neurophenomenology (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008=Lutz, 2002) ó fields which deal with a marriage of positivist and postpositivist (Green & Stinson, 1999) perspectives ó the thesis establishes its theoretical foundations based on the paradigm of pragmatism (Dewey, 1958=Morgan, 2014). The chapter explains this approach in depth, locating the thesis' ontological views on 'reality' and 'truth,' and on wider concepts such as embodiment and consciousness. Finally, the chapter addresses the idea of Flow 'conditions' (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), which relates to the contexts and scenarios in which Flow experiences may occur. Drawing on existing studies in dance phenomenology (Ehrenberg, 2015=Purser, 2018b=Ravn, 2010) the chapter identifies somatic practices and its focus on kinesthetic attention as a potentially fruitful area to explore how paratelic Flow experiences may arise through, behave in, and influence movement practice and performance.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical perspective on the relationship between Flow and embodied practices, drawing from literature on various Zen-influenced movement practices including Nihon-buyo, Butoh, and Eastern martial arts. The occurrence of paratelic Flow and similar experiences during movement activity is often addressed in literature on Zen-based movement practices (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Taylor, 2006), many of which imply that reaching such a state is one of the aims of the practice and that they are a sign of mastery in movement performance. The chapter explores this view in depth, supplementing practice-based accounts with psychological (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012=Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) and cognitive (Dietrich, 2004=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010) theories to establish frameworks on how a mover might enter and experience paratelic Flow, and how it may play a role in movement performance. The chapter will first focus on the process of attaining and navigating Flow by way of an embodied meditative process that is embedded in somatic movement, involving focused attention and sensory attunement. Secondly, the chapter

will explore how Flow and similar states are thought to involve heightened intuition and ideal effort in movement, leading to what practitioners may consider 'optimal' or 'masterful' movement performance. Finally, the chapter will explore cultural and philosophical perspectives on the aesthetics of pre-reflectivity, which provide the theoretical grounds to investigate how observers might perceive and describe the experience of witnessing a performer move in and out of Flow.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the thesis, which draws from existing methods in dance and psychology to examine the conditions, temporal dynamics, and the performative effects of paratelic Flow. The field of psychology has developed rigorous methodologies to study Flow throughout the past few decades, providing operational definitions and measuring systems to examine the phenomenon through a scientific lens (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012; Moneta, 2012). The possible connections between Flow and masterful movement performance is also an existing hypothesis in the field of psychology (Engeser & Rheinberg, 2008; Stoll, 2018; Swann, 2016), commonly addressed by those who focus on the relationship between Flow and athletic performance in a sport setting (Aherne, Moran, & Lonsdale, 2011; Jackson & Eklund, 2002; Jackson & Kimiecik, 2008; Jackson, Thomas, Marsh, & Smethurst, 2001; Stavrou, Jackson, Zervas, & Karteroliotis, 2007; Stoll & Lau, 2005). However, there are significant contextual differences between the field of sports psychology and that of dance, which raises the need for a more dance-specific methodology to examine such hypotheses. The chapter will present a rationale and description of the methods of this research, which draws from Jackson & Eklund's (2002) Flow questionnaires, Swann's (2016) event-focused interview method, and Jola, Ehrenberg, & Reynolds's (2012) phenomenological approach to audience perception. Overall, the thesis takes a mixed-methods approach (Bishop, 2015; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods based on their context-specific utility in line with its pragmatist stance.

Chapter 4 will first introduce the componential definitions of Meditative Flow and Meditation in Movement, then present an exploratory online survey study (Study 1) which tests the two concepts' relevance and applicability to this research. Whilst topics such as embodied cognition and meditative practice have brought together multiple disciplines to collaborate and to exchange knowledge, researchers have struggled to find a common ground upon which they can establish their discussions and theories (Deets, 2015=Schmalzl et al., 2014). Due to the immense variety in the cultural and philosophical underpinnings of these concepts, it is difficult to form definitions and conceptual frames that are relevant and applicable across disciplines. Therefore, the objective of this study was to determine clear, consistent definitions and frameworks, both for the phenomenon at hand and the practice of interest: how can one define Meditative Flow in a way that is applicable to the current research, and what are the types of movement episodes that qualify as Meditation in Movement? Through the survey, the chapter aims to explore the prevalence of Meditative Flow experiences (as defined in this thesis) among dance and movement practitioners (and, thereby, the applicability of the definition), and to identify the range of movement contexts that may involve Meditation in Movement.

Building on the survey results, Chapter 5 examines the relationship between Meditative Flow and movement performance. The chapter presents the method and results of a series of case studies (Study 2), which utilises event-focused interviews (Swann, 2016) and audience feedback (Reason & Reynolds, 2010) to explore the experiential and observable aspects of Meditative Flow during movement performance. The study also focuses on the fluidity and temporality of Meditative Flow, collecting first-person (mover) and third-person (observer) perspectives on how the changes and fluctuations in Flow may affect the two party's experiences throughout a given performance. As will be demonstrated in the first half of the chapter (Method), the methods used in this study were exploratory and emergent, developed organically to accommodate the complex nature of this topic area. Both qualitative and

quantitative data were collected through the study and analysed together through an original method of triangulation (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The second half of the chapter (Results) discusses how movers experience Meditative Flow as a cyclical process involving multiple sequential stages, and what observers perceive and experience during each of those stages. Ultimately, the chapter aims to provide rich descriptions on the nature and temporal dynamics of Meditative Flow from both a first-person and third-person perspective.

Chapter 6 presents reflective and analytical discussions based on (and expanding upon) the findings of Study 2 (Chapter 5), responding to the three research questions that were raised at the outset of the thesis. Parts 1 and 2 of the chapter will mainly engage with question 1, which addresses the mover's experience towards and within Meditative Flow. These sections will build on the idea of a cyclical model of Meditative Flow, situating it within a cognitive framework which draws on the core theories introduced in Chapters 1 and 2 (Dietrich, 2004=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013). Part 3 of the chapter responds to question 2, which addresses the relationship between Meditative Flow and physical performance. This section will first explore the idea of movement efficiency that is thought to accompany Flow (Austin, 2010=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Hahn, 2007=Sellers-Young, 1993), followed by perspectives from Zen and movement aesthetics (Salz, 2007=Sweeney, 2009=Yuasa, 1993) which shed light on the performative qualities of Flow during dance. Finally, Part 4 responds to research question 3, regarding the audience's experience of witnessing a mover fall in and out of Meditative Flow. The section connects observer's accounts (from Study 2) to theories on kinesthetic empathy (Reason & Reynolds, 2010), movement perception (Hagendoorn, 2004=Montero, 2006), and intersubjectivity (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008=Merleau-Ponty, 1962), as introduced in Chapter 2. Through these discussions, the chapter aims to provide an interdisciplinary framework on the role of Meditative Flow states ó cognitive, psychological, and aesthetic ó in the context of dance performance.

1. Background and theoretical context

1.1. Flow as a cross-disciplinary area of research

Originally proposed and developed within the field of positive psychology, accounts on Flow and other associated concepts (e.g. engagement, motivation, peak experience) have appeared across various areas of research including sports (Jackson, 1996=Jackson & Eklund, 2002=Swann et al., 2018), educational technology (Admiraal et al., 2011=Bressler & Bodzin, 2013=Hamari, et al., 2016=Liu et al., 2009), and organisational psychology (Bakker, 2008=Eisenberger et al., 2005=Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009). The field of dance has only begun to integrate the idea of Flow as defined in positive psychology, producing several doctoral theses which approach the concept from psychological (Jeong, 2012=Levine, 2006=ucznik, 2018), philosophical (Grogan, 2014), and performative (Douse, 2013) perspectives. However, if we expand our scope beyond studies that explicitly use the term 'Flow', we see a plethora of accounts which address similar states and experiences through different lenses. Such accounts draw upon phenomenological ideas (e.g. pre-reflective consciousness=Fraleigh, 1987=Shacklock, 2006), concepts embedded in Zen Buddhist traditions (e.g. *no-mind*=Hahn, 2007=Paskevskaja, 2001=Taylor, 2006), or neurocognitive understandings of meditative states (e.g. hypofrontality, selflessness=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013) to describe experiential qualities that closely resemble paratelic Flow. The current thesis welcomes these alternative perspectives as a part of its theoretical foundation, as these concepts provide rich, descriptive analyses of similar states, which can be overlooked in studies which strictly commit to existing definitions of Flow.

Whilst I am aware of the expansive ontology that this approach yields, I see it as a relevant and necessary response to the 'crisis point' (Swann et al., 2018, p.249) at which Flow research has arrived. Swann et al. (2018) explain that 'a number of criticisms and important questions have been . . . raised about Csikszentmihalyi's conceptualization of flow and the state of research on

this concept,ö (p.250) including ambiguities in its componential structure, gaps in knowledge on how to access and/or control the state, and conflation with similar, yet distinct concepts (e.g. clutch, peak experience). Given these issues, Swann et al. (2018) argue that Flow research is öawaiting a progressive shiftö (p.265), in which the concept is reconceptualised and clarified in a way that is relevant and applicable for both researchers and practitioners. Considering this view, I invite alternative interpretations of Flow-like experiences, which could potentially disrupt, develop, and enrich our current understanding of Flow. The following sections will introduce these concepts and their theoretical backgrounds as they relate to the idea of Flow, then discuss the ontological and epistemological consequences of this approach.

1.1.1. Pre-reflective consciousness in dance – a phenomenological perspective

In her seminal book *Dance and the Lived Body* (1987), dance phenomenologist² Sondra Fraleigh introduces the idea of öpre-reflective consciousnessö (p.14) in dance:

[Pre-reflective consciousness] refers to all that I am as I live my body spontaneously in the present moment, not noticing it, not looking back upon it, and not anticipating or imagining it in some future state. It refers to my lived and complete wholeness. (p.14)

Fraleigh associates pre-reflective consciousness to the idea of *body-subject*, which appears to be a reference to Merleau-Ponty's writings (1962). Fraleigh explains that the body-subject örefers to the body lived wholistically and prereflectively as the selfö (p.13), whereas the *body-object* örefers either to the body when it becomes the object of attention or to an objective attitude toward the bodyö (p.14). In alignment with preceding phenomenological accounts (Merleau-Ponty, 1962=Sartre, 1956) which distinguish between reflective and pre-reflective dimensions of awareness, Fraleigh identifies body-object and body-subject as different phenomenological

² Phenomenology, as founded by philosophers such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Depraz et al., 2002=Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008), can be considered as öboth a philosophical movement and a range of practical research approaches,ö wherein öthe main emphasis . . . is to describe or to interpret human experience as lived by the experiencer in a way that can be utilised as a source of qualitative evidence . . . ö (Giorgi, 2009, p.4).

manifestations of the body, experienced either reflectively or pre-reflectively. Whilst similar distinctions are made within more recent phenomenological discourses (Depraz, Varela, & Vermersch, 2003=Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008=Legrand, 2007)³ which discuss the structural features of consciousness itself, Fraleigh argues that these are 'temporal' concepts—for instance, the idea of body-subject is described as 'the time in which consciousness is present centred, or prereflective' (p.13). Such a description implies that there can be *moments* of pre-reflectivity and of reflectivity, which occur exclusively from one another. In this vein, Fraleigh's idea of body-subject 'that which can be sensed . . . when she [the dancer] is not reflecting on her self or her action but living the present-centred moment in her dance' (p.13) appears to surface during *moments* of pre-reflectivity.

These moments wherein a dancer is present-centred and not reflecting on his/herself relates to the idea of Flow in its attentional and experiential quality. In a phenomenological account of Flow, Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) write: 'During flow, because the sum of attention is being deployed on the task, there remains no left over psychic energy to worry about the self' (p.14). In other words, the present-centredness of attention, and the consequential lack of (self-)reflective thought, raise a clear experiential alignment between Flow and what Fraleigh (1987) calls pre-reflective consciousness.

The link between these two concepts has been addressed, albeit to a limited extent, by other dance scholars (Lefebvre Sell, 2013= Purser, 2018a=Shacklock, 2006). For instance, Karla Shacklock (2006) introduces the concept of Flow in her thesis about *dance consciousness*, noting that 'dancers often claim to experience such a sensation when performing on stage and Fraleigh's concept of the pre-reflective seems to be dealing with this very experience' (p.66).

³ The term 'pre-reflective consciousness' derives mainly from Sartre's phenomenological text (1956) which explains that we are always pre-reflectively aware of the 'imminence' of our experience (Legrand, 2007, p.584). In contemporary texts (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008=Legrand, 2007=Shear, 2009), this idea is more commonly referred to as 'pre-reflective self-consciousness' to denote its specific reference to the subjectivity of experience. In contrast, Fraleigh's (1987) writings do not explicitly address this quality of subjectivity, although her narrative does indeed imply that experiences are 'given' to the subject. In this vein, Fraleigh's notion of pre-reflective consciousness is slightly different from pre-reflective *self*-consciousness.

Shacklock redefines the idea of pre-reflective consciousness as a *non-intrattentive dance consciousness*,⁴ wherein:

. . . a dancer is purely living and experiencing the dance, without thought or knowledge of that experience. The dancer is in a state of unattended consciousness and is awake and engaged in the qualitative experience of the dance, but is nonetheless explicitly unaware of what the experience is or what the dancing body and mind are doing. (Shacklock, 2006, p.159)

Overall, Shacklock's understanding mirrors other dance scholars' accounts on the idea of pre-reflective experience in dance (Ehrenberg, 2015= Purser, 2018a=2018b=Ravn, 2010), in that it addresses *unnoticed* or *latent* (Ravn, 2010, p.30) bodily experiences and a process of moving without conscious reflection. However, what makes Shacklock's description further relevant to the concept of Flow is that the idea of non-intrattentive dance consciousness is recognised as a *state*. Whereas the idea of pre-reflectivity, at least in phenomenological accounts (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008= Legrand, 2007), appears in reference to the fundamental structures of consciousness itself (e.g. we are always pre-reflectively aware of our own experience), Shacklock's idea addresses a particular *state* which appears in the act of dancing (e.g. we experience *moments* of pre-reflectivity in dance), which indicates a sort of temporality ⁶ as is the case with Fraleigh's writings (1987). Shacklock notes that this is an *altered* state of consciousness⁴, in that it differs from *one's* ordinary and everyday states of consciousness⁶ (p.3). Further, Shacklock distinguishes between an *intrattentive* and *non-intrattentive* state through the presence, or lack thereof, of *intentional awareness*⁶ (p.78). The author indicates that pre-reflective states do *not* involve deliberate, attentive, comparative, or evaluative attitudes towards an object (e.g. one's body, mental state, or the dance), all of which tend to surface

⁴ As is mentioned by Shacklock (2006), the idea of altered consciousness during theatrical performance has been explored in the field of acting (White, 2013; Zarrilli, 2011), which commonly examines prominent theatre practitioners' training methods such as those of Konstantin Stanislavsky and Michael Chekhov. Although this is an area that can potentially relate to the current research, it is too expansive for the scope of this thesis. Thus, these areas will be left for future exploration.

during 'ordinary states of consciousness experienced during everyday life' (p.72). In essence, Shacklock's non-intrattentive dance consciousness appears to point to a state in which the dancer's awareness of his/her body, the world, and the self are experienced at a pre-reflective level – i.e. not (yet) processed as objects of thought.

Having introduced some prominent views on dance consciousness, Shacklock (2006) notes that there is very little exploration on how such states might be accessed in practice, despite its proclaimed importance in dance. For instance, Shacklock addresses Fraleigh's (1987) writings, noting that:

. . . she does seem to disregard the need for some sort of methodology for accessing, controlling or even practically investigating the states that she defines. Although Fraleigh claims that a dancer is 'at her best' whilst pre-reflective, and acknowledges that dancers have some sort of control over consciousness . . . she does not ascertain how a dancer may actually access and/or control such a state. (p.18)

Naomi Lefebvre Sell, who builds on Shacklock's research in her thesis (2013), echoes these sentiments on the long-held discussions on dancers' consciousness, noting that 'there is little research on how a dancer is to enter into this prescribed state and what they can achieve whilst in this state' (p.31). These questions align closely with those which are asked within Flow research, such as: how does one access or control Flow (Aherne et al., 2011=Chavez, 2008=Jackson, 1995=Kimiecik & Stein, 1992), and how might it influence performance (Bakker, Oerlemans, Demerouti, Slot, & Ali, 2011=Jackson et al., 2001=Schüler & Brunner, 2009=Stavrou et al., 2007)? Whilst both Shacklock (2006) and Lefebvre Sell (2013) proceed to investigate these lines of inquiry through practice-based research, the current thesis examines them from a psychological perspective, drawing on existing knowledge on Flow.

1.1.2. *No-mind* – a Zen Buddhist perspective

Accounts on Zen Buddhist movement practices (Allen, 2015=Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Paskevskaja, 2001=Sellers-Young, 1993=Yuasa, 1993) describe phenomena that closely mirror Fraleigh (1987, 2000) interpretation of pre-reflective consciousness in dance=when a mover's awareness becomes fully present in the moment of experience, his/her intentions, actions, and perceptions are experienced as one. Such experiences are expressed in various, yet analogous terms such as *no-mind* (Paskevskaja, 2001=Yuasa, 1993), *mushin* (Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Moore, 2014), and *wuxin* (Allen, 2015), depending on the practice and tradition that are also often associated with the idea of Flow (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Moore, 2014=Paskevskaja, 2001). For instance, dance ethnologist Tomie Hahn (2007) equates Flow to the extraordinary experience of heightened sensory attunement during Nihon-buyo, a Zen-based Japanese traditional dance form:

When a dancer effortlessly executes the many requirements of a dance while projecting a keen awareness of multiple sensory modes, a vibrancy of energy, or presence, arises. I believe that this state is what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to as "flow," an optimal experience of consciousness and focused awareness. (p.165)

Hahn explains that "when mental and physical coordinations effortlessly flow, a dancer can use the heightened state of focused energy to project that awareness" (p.165). This heightened awareness and effortless movement is referred to by scholars of Zen-influenced movement practices as no-mind (無心: *mushin*). Dance practitioner Anna Paskevskaja, for instance, discovered how the state of no-mind can be equated to the state of Flow, wherein "the physical and emotional seemed to converge into a total experience of the moment and the dance danced itself" (Paskevskaja, 2001, p.102). Krein & Ilundáin's chapter on *Mushin and Flow* (2014) is another example that identifies an overlap between the two concepts, noting that they both

involve ða merging of action and awareness, a full concentration on the present time, place and activity, and a loss of self-consciousnessö (p.154).

At the beginning of her article, Paskevskaja reflects on her moment of epiphany on Zen and Flow in movement, stating:

I had no explanation for this phenomenon until I started reading books on Zen, and much later Csikszentmihalyi's book, *Flow*. Csikszentmihalyi describes precisely that state of ðno-mindö when the task performed and the person engaged in the task are one. Actions and time flow in perfect harmony. (p.102)

Paskevskaja's descriptions of no-mind evoke a sense of oneness and harmony, which align with both Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) description of Flow and Fraleigh's (1987) notion of pre-reflectivity. Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) explain that ðthe normal awareness of ðself and otherö is collapsed into a single, unified, and harmonic actionö (p.14), and Fraleigh (1987) uses expressions such as ðunity of self and body in actionö (p.13) and ðthe dancer becom[ing] the danceö (p.33) to describe the phenomenon. Flow is thought to involve a sense of *action-awareness merging*, which refers to the perception that one's action is being executed simultaneously to, or even without one's intention to act (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012). This experiential quality is endorsed by many Flow researchers, who describe it in various ways that resemble the above accounts: ðYou do not see yourself as separate from what you are doingö (Csikszentmihalyi, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p.39)=ðThere is no awareness of self as separate from the actions one is performingö (Jackson & Marsh, 1996)=and ðcomplete merging with the activityö (Fritz & Avsec, 2007, p.7).

The idea of no-mind first reached the realm of performing arts through Zeami, a noh actor who wrote some of the most well-known doctrines on Zen-influenced art forms (Sellers-Young, 1993). Zeami's description of no-mind involves a ðfully aware, clear, flowing, unattached, spontaneous, awakenedö (Pilgrim, 1972, p. 143) state of being, which, according to many

practitioners, is the very essence of mastery in Zen practice (Keenan, 1989=Lishka, 1978=Pilgrim, 1972 Suzuki, 2010=Yuasa, 1993). In this state, the mind is freed of its self-conscious inner dialogue (Krein & Ilundáin, 2014, p.147) which includes questioning, directing, judging (p.147) and other thoughts concerned with the efficacy of one's own actions. These mind chatters are thought to hinder the one's bodily actions, causing movements to become tentative and restricted (Paskevskaja, 2001, p.102). The state of no-mind, therefore, represents the absence of self-reflective thoughts, and perhaps a pre-reflective ability to react to one's moment-to-moment circumstances. In artistic practices such as Nihon-buyo, the state of no-mind or Flow is regarded as the ultimate embodiment of dance (Hahn, 2007, p.165) which emphasises its role as the aim of the art form itself.

This narrative reflects one of the core mentalities of Zen Buddhist teachings, which values one's arrival in these states as the ultimate marker of enlightenment (Hämäläinen, 2007=Shore, 2003). Zen-Buddhist teachings prioritise the act of doing over thinking, asserting that certain stages of enlightenment can only occur at an embodied and pre-reflective level (Wallace, 2002)⁵. One core element of Zen Buddhism is the act of contemplating the nature of oneself and the world, not through logical analysis, but through doing (Wallace, 2002). Many Buddhist teachings recognise the impermanence and fluidity of all material and conceptual existences (Juniper, 2011), including ideas such as identity and the self. It is thought that perceptions of a permanent, unchanging concept of the self or any other physical existences are no more than illusory reflections of our own mental processes and that developing a strong attachment to such a deterministic ontology leads to suffering, as it would involve striving for

⁵ Some argue that, in original Buddhist traditions, reaching optimal states of consciousness (e.g. enlightenment) may not have been the ultimate goal of meditation (Sharf, 1995). Such notions are thought to be a product of the Meiji-era Japanese intellectuals' attempt to legitimise Zen Buddhism as a rational, empirical and socially responsible tradition of philosophy, and to avoid its endangerment during the wave of modernisation (ibid.). Whilst Buddhist meditators of the past may have experienced enlightenment or altered states of consciousness through meditation, there are no such historical accounts prior to those of scholars such as Daisetz Suzuki, who was the first author to provide a rationalised narrative of the practices (i.e. New Buddhism). Having mentioned this social background, the thesis limits its focus on this modern interpretation of Buddhism (New Buddhism), as the Eastern movement practitioners addressed in this research refer to this specific mentality.

unattainable objects (Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013; Wallace, 2002). The Buddhist philosophy encourages an open stance towards one's perceptions, and aims to facilitate an acceptance towards not knowing or at least, not logically understanding the unknown. Historical texts on Buddhist thought do not offer authoritarian narratives that provide answers to life, but rather paradoxical questions that push the reader to re-examine his/her habitual structuring of experience in terms of such dualities as subject and object, good and bad, and not (Wallace, 2002, p.40). Pre-reflective experience becomes the fruit of contemplation and the process of doing is, in itself, the act of examination.

In this context, states like no-mind are considered to be a form of enlightenment in itself, as they can produce the most direct experiences of inter/intra-personal impermanence, whereby illusionary perceptions of a unified and permanent self can dissolve altogether. In the Zen context, this realisation of self-world transcendence is thought to happen in the moment of experience, once the consciousness is awakened to a particular understanding of its own nature (Shore, 2003). In contrast to other contemporary movement practices such as Authentic Movement (Bacon, 2012; Stromsted, 2009), which sees pre-reflective experiences as a liminal space of self-exploration, the Zen narrative sees it as a point of self-dissipation (Shore, 2003; Tanaka, 2014). This narrative provides a foundation to the notion that pre-reflective experiences such as no-mind and Flow are seen as markers of mastery in the art (Allen, 2015; Hahn, 2007; Krein & Ilundáin, 2014; Sellers-Young, 1993; Yuasa, 1993), as the state itself is thought of as an enlightened (or optimal) mode of being.

1.1.3. Hypofrontality and meditation – a neurocognitive perspective

As was mentioned above, Flow involves a sense of action-awareness merging i.e. actions occurring simultaneously to, or without intention. Psychologists Arne Dietrich and Oliver Stoll (2010) explain this phenomenon in relation to sport, suggesting that, due to the intense

concentration that is required for the task (e.g. bodily movement) one's attention becomes wholly invested in the present moment, leaving little room for other self-reflective or metacognitive processes such as consciously monitoring and regulating one's own action.

Dietrich (2004) proposed the term *hypofrontality* to describe this mental state, referring to the apparent lack of explicit, higher-order cognitive functions that are normally governed by regions in the prefrontal cortex (Ashby & Casale, 2003=Dehaene & Naccache, 2001=Dietrich, 2003=Dietrich & Sparling, 2004). According to Dietrich & Stoll (2010), "explicit, higher order processing" (p.164) involves thoughts *about* one's own actions, as opposed to a felt and subjective awareness *of* them. When these processes are absent, a mover is less aware of the causal, intentional, or factual aspects of the movements (e.g. "why am I doing it?" "what do I look like?"), experiencing only a pure awareness *of* the movements as they happen. Due to the lack of explicit processing (i.e. monitoring or controlling one's own actions), a mover in the state of Flow may feel that actions are "effortlessly" occurring just as the decisions are made (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Whilst there is conflicting evidence as to whether this neurological signature is true for all Flow experiences (Dietrich & Sparling, 2004=Harmat et al., 2015=Limb & Braun, 2008=Stoll & Pithan, 2016=Ulrich, Keller, Hoenig, Waller, & Grön, 2014=Yoshida et al., 2014), the concept of hypofrontality is still prominently discussed in relation the neurological mechanism of Flow (Harris, Vine, & Wilson, 2017=Stoll, 2018). The hypofrontality theory can be thought of as the neurocognitive interpretation of no-mind, in that the deactivation of executive functions in the brain may relate to the perceived absence of mind-chatters such as "questioning, directing, [and] judging" one's own actions (Krein & Ilundáin, 2014, p.147).

The process of focusing attention on the present moment, as well as the consequential releasing of metacognition, is often associated with a range of meditative practices (Austin, 2010=Bruya, 2010a=Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013=Hadash,

Plonsker, Vago, & Bernstein, 2016=Hözel et al., 2011). Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura (2010), for instance, refer to Zen Buddhist meditative practices as a "direct path to effortless attention" (p.188), which provide "viable methods for focusing attention, and disciplines for controlling it" (p.188). Similarly, philosophical psychologist Brian Bruya (2010a), recognises the role of movements in creating a meditative state of mind—even in the simple act of walking, one can attend to "one's balance, one's gait, one's breathing" (p.240), thereby bringing normally silenced "automatic" sensorimotor processes to the foreground of attention, wiping away irrelevant and distracting thoughts. Bruya refers to such processes as "mindfulness meditation," and proposes that such processes can assist in attaining a state of Flow⁶.

As was previously mentioned, the Zen narrative promotes states in which one's sense of "self" becomes fluid, or even absent. A similar idea is discussed in Flow research, often referred to as the *loss of self-consciousness* — an experience which occurs alongside action-awareness merging (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012). Firstly, Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) explain that the intense focus towards the task inevitably requires one to eliminate self-referential thoughts (such as self-monitoring and self-critique), in line with the aforementioned accounts by Dietrich & Stoll (2010). Secondly, because the actions seem to occur in sync with decisions rather than following them (i.e. action-awareness merging), one perceives that the actions are automatic, or occurring without an agent — the "self" — who is deciding to take those actions. As a result, the individual experiences an existential shift in his/her self-perception, into a blurred sense of self-other boundaries. Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) explain this

⁶ Some researchers (Jackson & Beilock, 2008; Singer, Lidor, & Cauraugh, 1993; Vuillerme, Nougier, & Camicioli, 2002; Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016) have claimed that paying attention to one's own actions (i.e. "awareness strategy" or "internal focus") can hinder one's athletic performance. However, these claims are based on the idea that attending to the body may be disruptive in either 1.) an online context (i.e. during performance), or 2.) in the learning process of a predetermined technique. Firstly, the current argument focuses on the *pathway towards* Flow, rather than what happens online during movement performance. Secondly, there is evidence (Singer et al., 1993; Wulf & Su, 2007) that focusing on external target and imagery — as opposed to internal processes — is beneficial in motor learning. This may be true for dancers who are trying to learn or refine a set choreography (e.g. use of imagery). However, in the context of somatic practices, for instance, the goal is not to manipulate the focus of attention to produce a desired movement outcome; rather, it is to become aware of normally implicit sensory information (for correcting habits, finding tensions) by attending internally. Such a context is closer to Toner & Moran's (2014) argument that internal (or "somaesthetic") awareness may be a beneficial practice for elite athletes' further improvement.

phenomenon as the following:

Objects of perception cease being so because the perceiver ceases to be aware of a separation between herself and other— everything becomes a *subject*. In other words, for a cyclist in flow there is no longer “me and the bike,” rather these distinctions become collapsed into a unified sensation of motion. “Me” does not exist—the bike does not exist. (p.14)

The blurring line between the “self” and “other” (in this case, the bike) is concurrent with notions of self-dissipation in Zen Buddhist meditation⁷ (Shore, 2003=Wallace, 2002), as well as with the idea of “ego-lessness” that is mentioned in Lefebvre Sell’s research on meditative dance practice (2013). The lack of self-serving intentions, independent agency, and self-other boundaries seem to create not only a loss of self-consciousness but also a sense of “selflessness,” as is described in Dor-Ziderman et al. (2013) neurophenomenological interpretation of deep, meditative states.

Yair Dor-Ziderman et al. (2013) examined experienced meditators’ brain activities to explore how their neurological functions might shift alongside changes in their modes of self-processing. For the study, the authors categorised three distinct modes of self-processing: Narrative Self, Minimal Self, and selfless-ness. The distinction between the first two categories is generally agreed upon in the fields of neuroscience and philosophy (Damasio, 2010=Gallagher, 2000=Tagini & Raffone, 2010) since William James’ (1890) proposal of the “I” versus “Me” in self-referential awareness. The Narrative Self is an autobiographical representation of the objective “self” (Damasio, 2010) and the Minimal Self is the first-person view of the experience, consisting of a sense of agency in one’s actions and an ownership of the

⁷ Clinical psychologist Jack Engler (1984) has discussed the differences between the Buddhist idea of (and aim towards) “selflessness” in meditation and the Western psychoanalytical understanding of the process (and aim towards) “finding one’s identity, with a focus on their respective cultural and historical foundations. Through the work, Engler theorises that “identity building” is a process embedded in the recovery of psychopathological conditions, whereas the efficacy of a “selfless” state lies in the stages beyond recovery, upon which positive experiences can be built.

physical *ōselfō* (Knoblich & Flach, 2003). The *ōselflessō* state, on the other hand, is a relatively new concept that has emerged in response to phenomenological reports of altered self-perception during non-ordinary states of consciousness (Bernstein et al., 2015=Hadash et al., 2016=Hōzel et al., 2011=Milliere, 2017), including experiences of ego-dissolution during Zen Buddhist meditation (Austin, 1999=Shore, 2003).

Through their study, Dor-Ziderman et al. (2013) found that there is a distinct neurological shift that occurs when meditators transition between each mode of self-processing. First, the shift between the Narrative and Minimal modes of self-processing showed deactivations in the medial prefrontal cortex, a region often associated with an automatically arising self-representation and the state of mind-wandering (Christoff, Gordon, Smallwood, Smith, & Schooler, 2009=Gusnard, Akbudak, Shulman, & Raichle, 2001=Gusnard & Raichle, 2001=Hasenkamp, Wilson-Mendenhall, Duncan, & Barsalou, 2012). This mode of (self-)processing is also known as the Default Mode, due to the fact that it appears by default when we are not engaged in any particular task (Farb et al., 2007). It is thought that meditation focuses the attention on a designated task (e.g. focusing on the breath, attending to bodily sensations), thereby shifting one's attention away from the default mode of objective self-processing (Hasenkamp et al., 2012=Hōzel et al., 2011). Second, the attentional shift between the Minimal Self and selfless state showed a deactivation in regions that are associated with subjective or ego-centric modes of information processing, including as the parietal lobe, the posterior cingulate cortex, and the precuneus (Austin, 2010=Hōzel et al., 2011). It is thought that the Minimal Self is involved in the intentional enactment of a task, which leads to the subjective feeling of ownership over one's experience (Gallagher, 2000=Zahavi, 2007). Based on this evidence, alongside meditators' reflective self-reports on their perceived *ōlack of ownership,ō* Dor-Ziderman et al. (2013) concluded that the *ōselflessō* state can be distinguished from the two other modes of self-processing, Narrative and Minimal Self, in its distinct non-ego-centric

quality.

Dor-Ziderman et al.'s findings (2013) are consistent with the idea that a state of egolessness appears at deeper levels of meditation, where even the act of concentration becomes effortless and automatic, thereby allowing the mind to strip away all intentions of active engagement. The process of "releasing" intention during meditation could be what dissolves the sense of Minimal Self (i.e. an enactive agent who "owns" the experience) and leads the meditator to experience total immersion in his/her sensations in a non-intentional and passive state. The "selfless" state can thus be regarded as moments in which one's attention is (passively) fixated on the present experience itself, without an active agency in, or ownership of, that experience. Furthermore, the idea of the Narrative Self (Damasio, 2003=Gallagher, 2000) helps to define the idea of *reflective* consciousness in movement (Fraleigh, 1987=Shacklock, 2006), which can be seen as a state of metacognition and autobiographical self-reflection (e.g. "what am I doing?" "why am I doing it?" "am I doing it right?"). This state of continuous self-reflection is perhaps the "default" mode in which a mover can get caught (or become distracted by) unless s/he is engaged in an enactive process of doing (e.g. listening to, generating movement). Moreover, in order to reach an "optimal" state of movement performance, perhaps even the enactive and experiential "self" (i.e. Minimal Self) must be released, submerging oneself into a "selfless" state of pure phenomenal awareness. Such a narrative is present, for instance, in Eastern philosopher Koji Tanaka (2014) notes which describe Zen-based combative arts: "if you experience *yourself* responding to your opponent, then, in that very moment, your mind will be taken by the self of which you are aware" (p.128).

The absence of egocentric information processing (i.e. filtering and organising information based on its relevance to oneself and the task) is not only a neurologically observable characteristic of meditation but also of Flow. Evidence surrounding the hypofrontality theory (Dietrich, 2004) has shown that, during Flow, crucial brain regions

involved in selective attention (e.g. dorsolateral prefrontal cortex) and conflict monitoring (e.g. anterior cingulate cortex) are also found to be deactivated (Klasen, Weber, Kircher, Mathiak, & Mathiak, 2011; Limb & Braun, 2008; Ulrich, Keller, & Grön, 2015), indicating a release of egocentric cognitive functions. These regions are associated with what is referred to as the Task Positive Network (Fox et al., 2005; Hamilton et al., 2011), a system that activates during goal-oriented cognition (i.e. Minimal Self) in place of the Default Mode Network (i.e. Narrative Self) (Hamilton et al., 2011). The Task Positive Network is thought to be active during the initial stage of focusing attention, but as the task progresses and no longer requires effortful concentration, it is thought to decrease its activity (Harris et al., 2017).

The hypofrontality theory argues that this deactivation allows for an enhanced activation in the implicit system (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010), which coordinates real-time sensorimotor integration and context-specific actions without conscious awareness. Neuroscientist James Austin (2010) presents a similar line of reasoning in the context of Zen meditation, hypothesising that non-egocentric modes of information processing may allow for more spontaneous, effortless, fluid, flexible, and efficient (p.400) behaviours. Indeed, there are a number of psychological studies which support the notion that eliminating self-referential thinking during physical activity can enhance the athlete's performance (Jackson & Beilock, 2008; Vuillerme, Nougier, & Camicioli, 2002; Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016). However, there is a paucity of neuroscientific evidence that supports this line of reasoning, as most methods of measuring brain activity are inapplicable to movement-based activities (Harris et al., 2017). Nonetheless, these scientific perspectives seem to concur with other philosophical and experiential accounts which associate pre-reflective psychological states to optimal movement performance.

1.2. Flow and movement performance

As is alluded to by Flow researchers (Bakker et al., 2011=Jackson et al., 2001=Schüler & Brunner, 2009, Stavrou et al., 2007), dance theorists (Fraleigh, 1987=Purser, 2018a=Shacklock, 2006=Sheets-Johnstone, 1966), and some Zen-based movement practitioners (Allen, 2015=Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Paskevskaja, 2001=Yuasa, 1993), there have been a number of accounts suggesting that Flow and similar states can play an important role in movement performance. Dance phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1966) explains that the dance "comes alive in all its rich fullness" (p.13) when a dancer is pre-reflective. Similarly, Fraleigh (1987) writes about a "pre-reflective wholistic state" wherein "[w]e (the audience) envision and affirm our own resounding presence through our direct lived experience of the dancer's present-centred performance" (p.15). As is observed by Shacklock (2006), such accounts embody an implicit value that is placed on the idea of pre-reflectivity, specifically in the way that it (supposedly) manifests as the dancer's lively and impactful performance. Zen narratives present a similar narrative in which altered states such as no-mind are seen as markers of "mastery" in movement performance, and parts of this mentality appear, for instance, in accounts made by contemporary dance practitioners such as Paskevskaja (2001) and Taylor (2006). Moreover, parts of Fraleigh's writings can also be traced back to her influences from Butoh, another movement practice which borrows much of its core philosophies from Zen Buddhism (Fraleigh, 1999, 2010).

Flow research is perhaps a psychological adaptation of these philosophical and experiential accounts, founded upon the notion that these experiences epitomise "optimal" states of being and performance. Accordingly, Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi (2014) note that "[w]hen in flow, the individual operates at full capacity" (p.90), and Engeser & Rheinberg (2008) preface their study by noting: "[s]ince the beginning of the flow research, it has been

expected that flow is related to performance, and several studies have indeed reported this relationship (p.78). The narrative has been prominent among studies in sport psychology, which explore the relationship between Flow and enhanced athletic performance (Bakker et al., 2011=Jackson et al., 2001=Schüler & Brunner, 2009=Stavrou et al., 2007). Given the cross-disciplinary prominence of this belief ó that Flow plays an important role in movement performance ó many researchers have taken interest in the conditions for, and the controllability of, Flow (Aherne et al., 2011=Chavez, 2008=Jackson, 1995=Kimiecik & Stein, 1992), as well as the specific ways in which it can interact with, or manifest in physical movement (as cited above). The current thesis is interested in similar issues, specifically in the context of contemporary⁸ dance practice.

Despite the abundance of research ó some descriptive, and others, explanatory ó on the physical or performative aspect of Flow, researchers still face challenges when studying this topic. For instance, there is a lack of consensus among researchers regarding the definition and core components (or what Flow researchers call 'dimensions') of Flow itself (Swann et al., 2018). Without a well-established and agreed upon conceptualisation of the phenomenon itself, it is naturally difficult to draw clear connections between the experience and its performative effects. Additionally, empirical studies ó which often focus on the context of sports ó tend to use specific, non-transferrable performance measures, making their findings inapplicable to other movement contexts such as dance (e.g. what does 'optimal' performance mean in dance?). Finally, the fact that Flow experiences are elusive and largely uncontrollable (although some have argued otherwise ó see Chavez 2008) is a prominent issue in studying its real-time effects, as it is difficult to predict or induce such a state for the sake of a study. Some of these issues relate to the multiplicity of ontologies and epistemologies surrounding the idea of Flow (and

⁸ Whilst the area and lineage that the term 'contemporary dance' encompasses can vary depending on the context and community within which the concept is understood, the current thesis focuses on what a number of dance scholars (Ehrenberg, 2015=Parviainen, 2002=Potter, 2008=Ravn, 2010) identify as a *kinesthetically* (as opposed to visually or spatially) oriented, often non-codified (i.e. without a set of shared specific movement sequences) dance practice/culture that is widely present in European dance education and training.

similar states), and others relate to the difficulty of constructing effective methodologies to accommodate the state's elusive nature. The following sections will discuss the issue of ontology/epistemology in depth, which will then inform the methodological discussion in Chapter 3.

1.3. Epistemological pluralism in interdisciplinary research

The concept of Flow, as originally conceived in the field of positive psychology, has been predominantly studied through a positivist⁹ lens, which posits that there is 'a discoverable reality [that] exists independently of the researcher' (Scotland, 2012, p.10), and that, through 'objective,' unbiased measurements and logic, a researcher can access that 'reality' (Bishop, 2015=Green & Stinson, 1999). Such a stance can be identified in the way Flow research has followed what Swann et al. (2018) calls 'a pattern of normal science' (p.249), wherein constructs are strictly defined and operationalised to develop quantitative measurement tools (i.e. 'objective' research method) – see, for instance, Jackson & Marsh (1996) development of the Flow State Scale. Cognitive studies on Flow (Harmat et al., 2015=Harris et al., 2017=Ulrich et al., 2014) also follow a positivist design, wherein observations on participants' neural activity or behaviour are combined with questionnaire responses to ascertain whether Flow experiences can be explained 'objectively' through brain activity or changes in cognitive processes. In such studies, the overall epistemological narrative is that Flow can be defined through a set of experiential, behavioural, or neuronal characteristics, and that, by interpreting those observations through logical reasoning, it is possible to explain the causes and effects of that phenomenon.

⁹ The positivist paradigm, in its original meaning (i.e. the existence of an objective reality and the possibility of absolute impartiality) is in a sense obsolete, as not many researchers today – including those in the natural sciences – would explicitly label their theoretical views as such (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004=Scotland, 2012). As Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) note, 'positivism has long been replaced by newer philosophies of science . . . [and] is more of a straw man . . . for attack than standing for any actual practicing researchers' (p.24). However, the current thesis uses the term to represent research fields (or cultures) whose ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches are still largely driven – albeit implicitly – by positivistic views.

On the other hand, accounts on pre-reflective consciousness (Fraleigh, 1987=Sheets-Johnstone, 1966=Shacklock, 2006) and no-mind (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Paskevskaja, 2001=Yuasa, 1993) are predominantly based in *post*-positivist (e.g. constructivist, interpretivist, phenomenological) epistemologies, which reject the notion that a single "true" reality exists, or that it can be accessed through "objective" research methods (Green & Stinson, 1999). Instead, they assert that there are multiple ways in which a given experience could arise and be explained, depending on both the individual and the context. Thus, concepts such as pre-reflectivity and no-mind are rarely conceptualised in an operational way (e.g. as constructs which include or exclude certain elements or manifestations of a phenomenon), but rather treated as continuously evolving ideas which can be identified, reinterpreted, and applied in new ways.

In a research project such as the current one, wherein multiple ontological and epistemological views are placed in dialogue, one must be aware of the tensions and frictions that arise within its theoretical frame. For instance, positivism views empirical data as an objective representation of reality, which can sometimes include participants' subjective experiences (Bishop, 2015). On the other hand, many postpositivists question the very idea of "objectivity," noting that our knowledge is always subjective, as it is obtained by embodied human beings (Green & Stinson, 1999). In other words, we cannot know whether something is "objectively" true if that very information is collected and interpreted by an individual, who is, inherently, subjective. Another issue is of construct definition—whereas the positivist paradigm seeks operational definitions of "real" objects and phenomena in the world, postpositivist paradigms accept that definitions can change continuously depending on the concept's contextual and functional presence in (a given) society (Green & Stinson, 1999). This difference raises fundamental questions regarding the purposes and feasibility of construct definition itself, especially for fluidly changing, intangible experiences like Flow.

Yet, the cross-fertilisation between various theoretical and empirical accounts has brought about an enriched understanding of Flow experiences in relation to both philosophical (Banfield & Burgess, 2013=Delle Fave et al., 2011=Grogan, 2014=Waterman, 1990) and cultural (Brown, 2011=Hardie-Bick & Bonner, 2016=Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000=Moneta, 2004=Neitz & Spickard, 1990) contexts. For instance, Delle Fave et al. (2011) have discussed the wider social role of Flow by contextualising it in eudaimonistic philosophy, and Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and Neitz & Spickard (1990) have explored Flow experiences and their relationship to meditative or ritualistic practices. These accounts, whilst predominantly theoretical, contextualise the idea of Flow, not as a mere psychological cause-effect mechanism, but as embodied experiences that influence, and are influenced by, the development of specific cultures and ideologies. Within such discourses, however, there has been little mention of the epistemological tensions that exist between positivist and postpositivist views.

A wider, related area of research that has undergone a similar cross-disciplinary exchange, but whose epistemological tensions have been articulated more explicitly, is the study of embodied cognition (Anderson, 2003=Clark, 2008=Shapiro, 2010=Varela et al., 2017). The idea of embodied cognition, as described by Gallagher & Zahavi (2008), draws on the insights of phenomenology (e.g. Merleau-Ponty) to argue against the 'Cartesian mind-body dualism that . . . continued to plague the cognitive sciences' (p.5). Gallagher & Zahavi (2008) explain that phenomenology brackets metaphysical positions on the philosophy of mind (e.g. dualism, materialism, functionalism, etc.), and instead focuses on (or draws theories from) the way things are experienced through the living body. Cognitive scientists are attempting to 'naturalize' (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p.30) phenomenology, which involves investigating phenomenological perspectives through scientific approaches, or, in some cases, developing phenomenological theories through scientific insight. This initiative runs parallel to the idea of embodied cognition, in that it sees mental processes as something that cannot be fully

understood without reference to the embodied, lived-in experience of the agent (Gallagher & Varela, 2003=Schmalzl et al., 2014). Gallagher & Zahavi (2008) propose that phenomenology, as a discipline, can be an essential component in studies on consciousness, as it provides a detailed, precise and methodically constructed analysis of the experience itself. These phenomenological accounts provide the grounds for the topic of research (i.e. what experience are we trying to explain?) and clarify the method of investigation (i.e. how do we ask our questions and design our experiments?).

Whilst some scholars have already begun to draw connections between phenomenology and cognitive science (Batson, Quin, & Wilson, 2012=Jola et al., 2012=McCutcheon & Sellers-Young, 2013=Savrami, 2017=Warburton, 2011), traditional phenomenologists have shown hesitation towards the integration of scientific approaches, as those approaches can often be too computational or too reductionistic (Gallagher & Varela, 2003, p. 17) for the depth of research areas with which phenomenology engages. However, Gallagher & Varela (2003) raise an alternative perspective on this ongoing conflict, noting that Maurice Merleau-Ponty's whose writings have provided fundamental grounds for dance phenomenologists like Fraleigh (1991)¹⁰ has integrated phenomenological analyses with considerations drawn from the empirical sciences of psychology and neurology long before cognitive science was defined as such (p.17). Gallagher & Varela (2003) propose that these epistemological and methodological incongruences can be seen as necessary struggles that, just as Merleau-Ponty has shown, can fuel the construction of new research avenues. Furthermore, Drew Leder (1990), a scholar of Eastern philosophy and medicine, raises a crucial point in how scientific approaches can provide third-person perspectives on the living body, achieved through highly developed technologies and conceptual strategies uncommon to the ordinary life-world (p.7). Leder argues that such perspectives can reveal facets of our states of being that are unavailable to our own, or to

¹⁰ There have been critiques on Merleau-Ponty's writings by dance phenomenologists such as Sheets-Johnstone (2011). However, there are debates on whether these critiques are entirely necessary or justifiable (Fraleigh, 2002).

others' unmediated perceptions. Rhonda Blair (2007), who applies cognitive theories to her study on performing arts, echoes Leder's claim, stating that:

. . . science, through discovering more about material functions that support consciousness, increasingly confirms the complexity and contingency of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes. . . science does not take away 'the human,' and, hence, theatre and performance—rather, it provides tools to engage these more closely.
(p.6)

The thesis approaches the process of incorporating scientific theories and methodologies in precisely the attitudes of Gallagher & Varela (2003), Leder (1990), and Blair (2007), continuously seeking new discoveries that cross-disciplinary dialogues can bring about.

Such an attitude speaks to the idea of pragmatism (Bishop, 2015=Dewey, 1958=Feilzer, 2010=Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004=Morgan, 2014), which shifts the emphasis of ontological and epistemological debates, from the incompatibility of distinct philosophical positions, to their efficacy in the research process — what Dewey would call *inquiry*. For Dewey, inquiry is 'a process of self-conscious decision-making' (Morgan, 2014, p.1046) which is instigated when our current beliefs, based on previous experiences, cannot adequately solve the problem at hand. 'Beliefs,' here, may represent current academic knowledge, and the 'problem' may point to new research questions. According to Dewey's philosophy, our current beliefs — regardless of its underlying ontology or epistemology — is always context-specific, as all experiences occur within a specific cultural and historical frame. Based on this view, pragmatism suspends 'metaphysical discussions on the nature of reality or truth' (Morgan, 2014, p.1047), and instead focuses on the context and objective of the current inquiry. From this standpoint, both positivist and postpositivist epistemologies make 'equally important claims about the nature of human experience' (Morgan, 2014, p.1048), yet guide the research in distinct ways. The question, then, becomes: 'what difference it would make to do our research one way rather than another'

(Morgan, 2014, p.1048), rather than what kinds of knowledge can or cannot be acquired and why. Morgan (2014) summarises this view as the following:

Pragmatism not only replaces arguments about the nature of reality as the essential criterion for differentiating approaches to research, it also recognizes the value of those different approaches as research communities that guide choices about how to conduct inquiry. (p.1049)

Within this context, the purpose of research is not whether the knowledge produced by research accurately represents reality but whether it has valuable external consequences in the context of the researcher's own time and place (Bishop, 2015, p.7). Social researcher Martina Feilzer (2010) calls this position an 'antirepresentational view of knowledge' (p.8), which focuses on the utility of knowledge. According to Feilzer (2010):

. . . the notion of utility calls for reflexive research practice. Thus, any inquiry begs the question of what it is for and who it is for and how do the researcher's values influence the research, and it is these questions that need to be considered by researchers to make inquiry more than an attempt to mirror reality. (p.8)

The purpose of the current thesis is to produce findings that inform and enrich contemporary dance practice and its discourse through new knowledge on the nature and role of embodied Flow experiences. As such, it is for practitioners and scholars, who, through this knowledge, wish to deepen their understanding of the phenomenon and to apply that knowledge into their embodied practices. In this view, the ultimate goal of the research is not to mirror reality (Feilzer, 2010), nor to argue for a specific ontological or epistemological stance, but to facilitate and advance cross-disciplinary dialogues that may ultimately inform practice. In accordance with Feilzer's (2010) recommendations, this position will be continuously reiterated and considered at appropriate points in the research.

1.4. Definitions and frameworks

Whilst some connections have been made between embodied phenomena (or phenomenology), psychology, and cognitive science, researchers in this area have struggled to find a common framework which can act as a cross-disciplinary vessel (Deets, 2015=Schmalzl et al., 2014). For one, scientific research often calls for clear, operational definitions of the phenomenon (i.e. psychological or mental state) and that of the practice (e.g. interventions) in order to retain consistency across multiple studies. However, this research area (i.e. movement phenomena) finds semantic consistency difficult to achieve, mainly due to the fact that ideas such as consciousness and embodied practices tend to be described and defined differently in various disciplines (Deets, 2015=Schmalzl et al., 2014).

In a literature review on the topic of altered¹¹ states of consciousness during movement, psychologist Shannon Len Deets (2015) notes that despite its cross-cultural presence, and research attempts of scholars across disciplines, the phenomenon has not been fully explored or understood (p.182). For instance, the field of psychology has studied altered states of consciousness during hypnosis and meditation, but limits much of its focus to static rather than dynamic (i.e. movement-based) activities (Kirsch & Lynn, 1995=Sedlmeier et al., 2012=Tart, 1972=Vaitl et al., 2005). Studies in neuroscience have produced insights on how functions such as attention, memory and decision-making may all be associated with altered states of consciousness (Austin, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013=Lehmann et al., 2001). However, like psychology, these studies have not yet put forth empirical evidence on the properties of such states during movement. On the other hand, practice-led (e.g. phenomenological, ethnographic) studies in dance have provided great detail on the mover's embodied experiences (Ehrenberg,

¹¹ Deets (2015) uses the term 'altered consciousness' to refer to a wide range of embodied, extraordinary phenomena, including, but not limited to, states of trance, ecstasy, hypnosis, and meditation. Flow states during dance can also be seen as a type of 'altered' consciousness, as mentioned earlier through Shacklock's (2006) views.

2015=Potter, 2008=Ravn, 2010), as well as altered consciousness in dance (De Rios, 1986=Jilek, 1982=Krippner, 2000=St John, 2004=Zarrilli, 2012). However, these studies often focus on experiences that occur within specific practices and contexts, and their findings are not intended to be operationalised or generalised in the psychological sense.

Whilst the above context demonstrates the cross-disciplinary relevance of studying altered (as in non-ordinary) states in movement, it also elucidates the difficulty of finding consistent definitions and conceptual frameworks that can be applied across disciplines. Existing difficulties in construct definition elicit a particular responsibility of the current research, which is to maintain a multidisciplinary scope through carefully developed definitions, both for the phenomenon (e.g. what defines paratelic Flow in movement?) and its situational conditions (e.g. in what sort of movement episodes do these states appear?). The thesis aims to develop an original componential definition of paratelic Flow by examining relevant experiential accounts (particularly those from the perspective of Zen philosophy) through psychological frameworks established in Flow research. The conditions ó i.e. contexts, episodes, and practices ó in which these states might appear will be defined through the idea of meditation in movement, drawing on Zen Buddhist practice and its existing connections with the field of cognitive science. The definitions will be utilised throughout the later chapters of the thesis, so that future studies will have direct references upon which to develop their theoretical and methodological foundations.

Before these definitions are established, however, a note must be made on how some wider, more fundamental concepts such as embodiment and consciousness are defined within this thesis. Whilst the notion of ðembodimentö has played a central role in tying phenomenology and cognitive science together (Gallagher & Varela, 2003), there is still little consensus on what the term itself means, within and among various disciplines (Anderson, 2003=Glenberg, 2010=

Warburton, 2011=Ziemke, 2003)¹². On one hand, accounts from both phenomenology and cognitive science suggest that *embodiment* (or to be *embodied*) indicates how one's cognitive activities (e.g. perceiving, processing, knowing, deciding) are situated within, and shaped by, one's physicality (i.e. forms, functions, states) and the environmental conditions in which one is placed (Dreyfus, 1996=Shapiro, 2010=Wilson, 2002). In other words, this usage of the word *embodiment* elicits a fundamental nature of being human, which is to be in the world with/as a body¹³ (Longo, Schüür, Kammers, Tsakiris, & Haggard, 2008). On the other hand, sociological accounts (including those on dance) often use the term to describe how cultural and historical knowledge becomes ingrained or embedded within the body (i.e. *embodied*), which can then be *read* through the habitual ways in which we orient ourselves in, and engage with, the world (Hahn, 2007=Ignatow, 2007=Vannini, 2016=Wainwright, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Finally, there is a distinct usage of the term *embodiment* (or *embodied*) in relation to dance and other performative or movement-based practices, wherein the term signifies a particular process of bodily *enaction* (Warburton, 2011) which allows the individual to become aware of the relations that exist within, and in relation to, the body (Williamson, 2016), and to *make sense of* (Lefebvre Sell, 2013) that experience. For instance, *embodied practice* may refer to practices which actively use bodily motions to elicit or interpret meanings, and *embodied experience* may refer to the experiences that arise through such practices. While the current thesis resonates with the first interpretation (i.e. embodiment as an inherent circumstance) at an epistemological level, the term *embodied* will be used in a similar light to the second and last interpretation, in that it refers to particular scenarios in which the body (and its movements) is seen as the primary locus of specific experiences, meanings,

¹² The word *embodiment* is also used in non-human contexts, ranging from socio-anthropological perspectives addressing how objects can embody historical knowledge (Jones & Cloke, 2008; Nora, 1989), to perspectives in computer science arguing how artificial intelligence can be built as embodied, interactive agents (Anderson, 2003; Steels & Brooks, 2018). For the purposes of this thesis, however, I will focus on interpretations which place the notion of *embodiment* in the context of human phenomena and cognition.

¹³ Note that certain neurological deficits such as a damaged right parietal lobe can cause illusions of disembodiment, such as the *belief* that one's own limb does not belong to one's self (Zaidel, 2013, p.20).

and knowledge.

The idea of consciousness has also been discussed within a multitude of contexts throughout history and in many different cultures, but has not yet found a sound definition that speaks to researchers across disciplines (Laszlo, 2016=McCutcheon & Sellers-Young, 2013= Metzinger, 2000=Schneider & Velmans, 2017=Solms, 1997). The thesis first turns to a neurophenomenological definition of the term, which is "an experienced property of mental states and processes, which is lost during a dreamless deep sleep, deep anesthesia or coma" (Berkovich-Ohana & Glicksohn, 2014, p. 2). In other words, "consciousness" can be seen as a recognisable sense of being/existing in the world, experienced during waking states. The thesis also acknowledges the fluidity of consciousness, as well as the peculiarity of some of its multiple forms. As neuroscientist Dahlia Zaidel (2013) explains in the context of performers' consciousness:

. . . we should assume that there are several forms of consciousness, just as there are different forms of subjective experience. There may also be unique neuronal brain activity corresponding to subjective feelings of pain, thinking, emotional happiness, emotional sadness, hypnosis and remembering. These different states of consciousness may overlap each other completely or only partially, and the degree of overlap may itself give rise to a selective form of consciousness. (p.21)

My approach to consciousness is deeply grounded in its embodied or enactive nature, and how sensorimotor processes might bring about, and be influenced by, particular states of consciousness. As was mentioned previously, cognitive processes (including consciousness itself) are inherently embodied, meaning that consciousness and its specific layers/manifestations are deeply rooted in how we are situated in, and interact with, the world. Furthermore, what we become aware of within our consciousness is, in part, *given* to us but also achieved *by* us. Varela et al. (2017) call this the *enactive approach*, drawing on phenomenology,

Buddhist philosophy, and ideas in embodied cognition to explain how living organisms are "self-producing or "autopoietic" systems that bring forth their own cognitive domains" (p.xxv). Varela et al. (2017) explain that "cognition and the experienced world co-arise in mutual dependence . . . and that cognitive processes belong to the relational domain of the living body coupled with its environment" (p.xxv). Philosopher Alva Noë (2009) presents a similar idea in relation to consciousness, explaining that "[c]onsciousness isn't something that happens inside us: it is something we do actively in a dynamic interaction with the world around us." (p.24). Such a view resonates deeply with fundamental concepts in phenomenology, such as the idea that we always exist in relation to other objects and beings in the world (i.e. Heidegger's *Dasein*), the body as an interface between the subject and world (i.e. Merleau-Ponty's *flesh meeting flesh*), and that consciousness is "even at a pre-reflective level" always *about* something (i.e. Brentano's *intentionality*=Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008=Grogan, 2014=Ravn, 2010). Drawing on these views, I see consciousness, its contents, and our relations with these contents, as processes which arise through embodied enaction. Samuel Grogan (2014), who examined "absorption" (similar to Flow) through phenomenology, consciousness studies, and neuroscience, presents a useful summary of this understanding:

Our consciousness of our world is just that: ours, and this ownership stems from an embodied position in the world. The body provides the ("situated") anchor from which our perception extends, reinforcing the idea that the world is brought into being *by* the experiencer, *for* the experiencer, and is, in essence, "enacted" by the perceiver. (p.139)

From this standpoint, it is possible to understand certain elements of Flow, such as action-awareness merging and loss of self-consciousness, as ontological shifts in one's consciousness

that occur through specific embodied activities, whether that is dance, meditation, or sports¹⁴.

1.5. Somatic practice and kinesthetic attention

Since Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) first introduction of Flow, researchers have identified nine fundamental components that are thought to constitute its essence (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012). Three of these components focus on how Flow might be induced or attained (conditions of Flow), and the remaining six focus more on the subjective characteristics experienced during Flow (characteristics of Flow; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The idea of Flow conditions, which supposedly supports, or even facilitates the occurrence of the state, relates to the issue of finding contexts in which the phenomenon can occur—can Flow states appear in any movement activity, or do they require a specific setting or intention?

In examining dance consciousness and pre-reflective experiences, both Lefebvre Sell (2013) and Shacklock (2006) turn towards movement approaches which can be loosely defined as somatic practices¹⁵. For instance, Lefebvre Sell relates the idea of mindful meditation to Green's (1993) and Hanna's (1988) interpretation of somatics, and Shacklock explores the use of Feldenkrais in facilitating reflective and pre-reflective states in dancers. Other scholars who study dancers' embodied experiences from a phenomenological perspective (Ehrenberg, 2015; Parviainen, 2002; Purser, 2018b; Ravn, 2010) draw on contemporary dance practice, which is often characterised by its somatic and kinesthetically driven approach. Such practices are

¹⁴ Within this thesis, the word 'consciousness' is not to be confused with the term 'conscious' which is also used in some areas of discussion. In such discussions, the idea of one being 'conscious' of an object, for example, indicates that the individual is aware of, or can identify that object, whilst the term 'consciousness' points to a wider range of experiences including those which may not be so obvious to the individual. Also, the terms 'awareness' and 'aware' are to be distinguished in a similar way, where 'awareness' includes implicit experiences such as an instinctive awareness of one's surroundings, while being 'aware' of an object would entail one's explicit recognition of that object.

¹⁵ Following its emergence in the 1970s as a novel method of therapy and self-discovery that is facilitated through the process of sensing and moving, somatic movement practices have become a prevalent approach in the dance field (Eddy, 2009). This approach to movement sprouted alongside the blossoming fields of existentialism and phenomenology, and Westerners' encounters with different practices from foreign cultures. Since then, dance scholars have continuously debated on the efficacy of somatic approaches from various angles such as pedagogical systemisation, sociocultural influences, phenomenology and scientific evidence on its effect on dancers' psychophysical well-being (Batson, 2009; Brodie & Lobel, 2004; Green, 2002; Weber, 2009).

perhaps deemed relevant for studying dance phenomena, due to their emphasis on what dance scholar Shantel Ehrenberg calls a "kinesthetic mode of attention" (p.44) or a "mode of attention toward "internal and pre-reflective bodily experiences" (p.46).

Furthermore, dance consciousness, pre-reflective or otherwise, cannot be described without referencing the dancer's kinesthetic experience. As was mentioned above, consciousness itself is an embodied and enactive process. In order to further understand how our thoughts, experiences, and psychological states arise through, and change alongside, our physical interactions with/in the world, perhaps it is natural to turn towards practices which focus heavily on bodily experience or such as the above. Dance phenomenologist Aimee Purser (2018b) explains the relevance of dance practice in studying embodied experience as the following:

. . . professional dance training and practice call for very high levels of awareness of, and indeed the capacity for reflection on, what are primarily pre-reflective or tacit embodied phenomena such as practical knowledge or somatic modes of attention . . . Attending to dancers' accounts of their lived experience thus offers the researcher a perspective on embodied existence that is far more in-depth and sustained than is available from the glimpses we get through our own everyday lives where our bodies and practical knowledge are not generally foregrounded in our conscious experience. (p.321)

This is perhaps why, in discourses on dance consciousness, authors specifically look towards practices that nurture the dancer's ability to become aware of, and utilise, their sensory experience in motion. At the core of such practices is the aforementioned "kinesthetic mode of attention," which is described by Ehrenberg (2015) as:

. . . a mode of intentional consciousness while dancing, which includes a number of elements, such as listening to the body's movements, problem solving with the body, a curiosity about bodily feelings in conversation with different choreographic and

performative contexts, and various types of embodied translation processes (p.44) Ehrenberg (2015) description appears to address choreographic or performative practices wherein elements of somatic practice – characterised by the process of ‘listening deeply to the body’ (Eddy, 2009, p.6) – are embedded within the movement process. Dance scholar Susanne Ravn (2010) describes somatic practice (as a whole) in a similar way, explaining that ‘sensorial awareness becomes emphasized as the beginning point for the dancers’ development of their movement technique’ (p.28). Ravn also includes release-based technique, contemporary dance and Butoh as examples of ‘how somatic practice might take form in dance classes.’ (p.28). The current thesis places a similar focus on somatic practices as a possible source for discovering how paratelic Flow states might arise in dance, although taking a looser stance in how ‘somatics’ can be defined. Namely, the thesis focuses on the meditative process of ‘listening deeply to the body’ (Eddy, 2009, p. 6) through movement, which is one of the core traits of somatic practice (Batson & Schwartz, 2007= Brodie & Lobel, 2004=Eddy et al., 2015=Green, 2002). Furthermore, my theoretical explorations on somatic and meditative processes will be informed mainly by literature on Eastern movement practices, given that discussions on the connection between Flow and movement practice is particularly prominent within this area.

1.6. A note on ideologies embedded in theory and practice

Whilst somatic practices and the idea of pre-reflectivity provide fertile grounds for investigating dance phenomena, some scholars (Ehrenberg, 2015=Ravn & Hansen, 2013=Ravn, 2010) hold sceptical views towards the ‘ideology of wholeness’ (Ehrenberg, 2015, p.44) (e.g. notions of ‘deep’ or ‘full’ embodiment) that pervades many of these practices and theories. In an article reflecting on the ‘epistemological status of somatics,’ Dance theorist Isabelle Ginot (2010) explains:

. . . behind the insistence on the singularity of each corporeality, most somatic methods

have as a backdrop a homogenous, universal, ahistorical, and occidental body.

Furthermore, despite the interest of Feldenkrais and others in the plasticity model – the idea that most human functions are acquired and that the nervous system is in perpetual re-articulation in relation to contextual variation – an essentialist ideal of the body reasserts itself, one that brings with it illusions of the natural and organic. (p.23)

Through a close examination of how somatic practice and its embodied knowledge have been transmitted through scientific, experiential, and philosophical narratives, Ginot (2010) concludes that somatic discourses embody an agenda towards its own legitimization (p.13) – or the idea that somatic practice can somehow restore a so-called natural or original body (p.24). In response, Ginot advocates for the denaturalisation of somatics, wherein somatic discourses can acknowledge the multiplicity and heterogeneity of that which we call the body (p.25) and approach somatic experiences without blind ideological positions – e.g. a natural body, or in a body that is ‘more natural’ than another (Ginot, 2010, p.24). Ehrenberg (2015) foregrounds her study with this view in mind, noting that she does not wish to support the argument for an ideology of wholeness – or that contemporary dancers can return to a more ‘natural’ state of awareness (p.44) through kinesthetic attention. Ravn & Hansen (2010) reflect on their study from a similar perspective, explaining that approaches which stress immediacy and intuitive awareness are not meant to reveal deeper layers of experience but to create a *different* experience of what the body might feel like (p.210). In other words, these authors acknowledge that kinesthetic modes of attention and pre-reflective experiences are not necessarily ‘natural’ or ‘ideal’ ways of being but are simply one of many diverse embodied experiences that a dancer may have.

In line with these authors’ views, I see Flow, pre-reflectivity, and kinesthetic modes of attention as particular ways of being among, and in no hierarchical relation to, many others. However, the issue is that Flow, the central topic of this thesis, was conceived in the context of

positive psychology, whose ontology is based on the assumption that there are, indeed, positive and negative psychological states. Similarly, Fraleigh (1987) notion of pre-reflective consciousness and the Zen-based concept of no-mind hint at ideological views which imply desirable or even ideal states of being. Whilst appreciating Ginot (2010) and others' critiques, I believe that these narratives cannot be sufficiently explored without engaging with, rather than scrutinising, their foundational ideologies. As such, sections of this thesis will acknowledge the view that there are, indeed, certain desirable states of being or what some might call optimal that dancers may experience in their practice. Accordingly, terms like organic and natural will be used throughout the thesis to describe the subjectively perceived dimensions of various phenomena or some deriving from literature and some from participants' accounts. The importance here is that the usage of these value-laden terms should not be read as a naïve endorsement of an all-encompassing ideology (or the idea of it), but rather, an honest engagement with, and comparative exploration of, multiple resonant *context-specific* ideologies. Furthermore, I agree with Morgan (2014) argument that inquiry or regardless of its ontological or axiological foundation or will always be value-laden, and that accounts on value systems do not necessarily invalidate the research itself, as long as the researcher remains aware and critical of those systems.

Summary

This chapter began by introducing concepts that pertain to the idea of Flow, either as a related or comparable psychological phenomenon (e.g. pre-reflective experience, no-mind, hypofrontality, meditation) or as narratives and frameworks which provide the grounds for further investigation (e.g. Flow as an embodied experience=Flow and optimal movement performance=neurocognitive mechanisms of Flow and self). In discussing the connections between Flow and movement performance or a growing area of research in sport psychology or the chapter raised a

number of challenges that pertain to the ontological, epistemological, and methodological diversity of the field. Given this background, the chapter explored how positivist (e.g. psychology, cognitive science) and postpositivist (e.g. phenomenology, sociology) views can be placed in dialogue through a pragmatist (Dewey, 1958=Morgan, 2014) approach, thereby building an epistemologically flexible and inclusive paradigm that prioritises, and effectively guides, practical investigation.

Drawing on the idea of embodied cognition (Shapiro, 2010=Varela et al., 2017) ó an idea that lends to the cross-disciplinary exchange between phenomenology and cognitive science (Gallagher & Varela, 2003) ó the chapter explained some of core theoretical positions of the thesis, such as its views on embodiment (Warburton, 2011=Williamson, 2016) and consciousness (Berkovich-Ohana & Glicksohn, 2014=Noë, 2009=Zaidel, 2013). Finally, the chapter addressed the idea of somatic practice (Eddy et al., 2015=Green, 2002) and the use of kinesthetic attention techniques in dance (Ehrenberg, 2015), as approaches and contexts through which rich experiential accounts on Flow and similar embodied experiences may be conceived or obtained. This discussion was supplemented by a note on the ideological foundations that often drive the evolution and transmission of these practices, which will be treated throughout the thesis ó alongside other value systems that underpin Flow and similar constructs ó as necessary contextual information, rather than as arbitrary or all-encompassing axioms.

2. Flow, Zen, and movement practice

Introduction

Before developing the definitions and methodologies to be used in the practical segments of this thesis, there is a need to survey existing theories on Flow and its relationship with embodied and movement-based practices. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the thesis focuses on somatic approaches, as well as dance practices which utilise kinesthetic attention, as relevant cases of non-competitive, explorative, and open-ended movement contexts. Whilst there is a range of dance and movement practices that involve these elements, accounts on Flow, particularly in its paratelic form (i.e. sensation-oriented, open goals, effortless attention), are notably prevalent in literature describing, or drawing upon, practices with Zen Buddhist influences (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Moore, 2014=Paskevaska, 2001). As such, the current chapter will mainly explore accounts on Zen-influenced movement practices, including Nihon-buyo, Butoh, and some forms of martial arts.

These perspectives will be organised into two main threads of inquiry: the experience of entering and navigating through Flow, and the role of Flow during movement performance. Starting with the first thread, the chapter will explore literature on Nihon-buyo (Hahn, 2007=Sellers-Young, 1993) and Butoh (Kasai, 1999=Sweeney, 2009=Taylor, 2006) to explain how a meditative process towards, and during, Flow is embedded in somatic movement approaches. Next, the chapter will examine philosophical and experiential accounts on the qualitative relationship between Flow and movement performance (Allen, 2015=Kasai & Parsons, 2003=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014), addressing notions of effortlessness and responsivity. Lastly, cultural perspectives on Eastern and Western aesthetics (Reid, 2012=Saito, 2014=Yuasa, 1993=Zarrilli, 2011) will be examined to develop a theoretical understanding of how pre-reflectively executed movements might evoke, or be perceived as, an aesthetic experience for the viewer.

2.1. Embodied meditation as a process towards Flow attainment

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Flow has been associated to the idea of no-mind ó a state of effortless attention, heightened sensory awareness, and harmony in action (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Moore, 2014=Paskevskaja, 2001). The state is considered to be highly desirable for movement performance, as can be seen in the way practitioners describe it as the õultimate embodiment of danceö (Hahn, 2007, p.165) or the õtranscendence of techniqueö (Paskevskaja, 2001, p.105). How, then, is this state of no-mind achieved through, and experienced in movement practice? The following sections will draw from practice-based and ethnographic literature on Nihon-buyo (Hahn, 2007=Sellers-Young, 1993) and Butoh (Kasai, 1999=Kasai & Parsons, 2003=Sweeney, 2009=Taylor, 2006) to explore the process of entering and experiencing Flow through somatic movement approaches. It is, however, important to note that these movement practices are not the sole focus of this research. The thesis aims to examine a specific mode of sensory attention that can manifest in a myriad of movement episodes, including, but certainly not limited to Nihon-buyo, Butoh, or any specific type of somatic or contemporary dance practice. As such, these practices should be regarded as useful references for the purposes of this chapter=one of which is to explore established and well-documented movement practices which describe the experiential aspects of Flow from the perspective of Zen philosophy.

2.1.1. Somatic movement as an attention technique – Nihon-buyo narrative

One of the defining characteristics of Zen Buddhist philosophy is its use of movement and sensory attention as an embodied way to train one's consciousness. Yasuo Yuasa (1993), a scholar of Zen Buddhist philosophy, explains how movement itself is thought to shift one's consciousness towards an implicit and non-reflective state, through the example of repetitive

training in *bushido*, or the *ōway* of the samurai warriors (p.29)¹⁶:

When there is repeated training in the practice of performing techniques, the body-mind is disciplined, then the state of conscious movement changes into one which the hands, legs, and body unconsciously move of themselves. This is the state of *ōno mind*. (p.31)

Whilst Yuasa points to a longitudinal process of repetitive training, he nonetheless raises a pertinent view on how no-mind can be understood as a disciplined state of attention that is achieved through bodily training. Sellers-Young (1993), who writes about Zeami's teachings, agrees with Yuasa's (1993) perspective that no-mind is enabled through 'the somatic training of the musculature' (Sellers-Young, 1993, p. 51). While both accounts imply that the state of no-mind can be achieved through bodily training, it is important to distinguish between the simple mechanistic training of the muscles and tendons, and a *somatic* approach wherein one consciously seeks and develops a kinesthetic understanding of what the body can do. Indeed, Krein & Ilundáin (2014) agree on the importance of 'focused attention' (p.146) during training, and Paskevka (2001) acknowledges that the process of conscious kinesthetic attention 'cannot be circumvented' (p.103) in order to 'become one with the dance' (p.103). In other words, these authors identify a somatic (i.e. listening deeply to the body) essence within their practice, raising the process of continuous movement and kinesthetic attention as a precursor to the attainment of no-mind. Psychologists Banfield & Burgess (2013) discuss the relationship between Flow and bodily movement in a similar way, drawing on psychological (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), phenomenological (Spinelli, 2005), and cognitive (Dietrich, 2004) accounts which posit that 'the movement of the body alone is not sufficient for the generation of flow and that mental activity is always required . . . Thus it is the fusing of thought and action, rather than the supremacy of one over the other, which characterises flow' (p.64).

¹⁶ According to Yuasa (1993), *bushido* which appeared in the 12th century, was 'profoundly influenced by Buddhist self-cultivation methods, predominantly those of Esoteric and Zen Buddhism' (p.30). This *ōway* included not only martial arts and other bodily training techniques, but also scholarly and artistic practices which were thought to cultivate spiritual wisdom and aesthetic sensibility.

The synergistic relationship between body (or movement) and mind (or attention) is implicit in the artistic and pedagogical language of many Zen-based movement practices, one of which is Nihon-buyo. According to Hahn (2007), the teaching method of Nihon-buyo embraces the idea that movements directly interact with one's consciousness=actions of the body discipline the mind, and thoughts which emerge in the mind manifest directly on the body ó a perspective that is resonant with Varela et al.'s (2017) notion of embodied cognition. In lessons, the students receive detailed instructions, not only on the delicate nuances of the movements themselves but also on how to listen, and to sense, internally (Hahn, 2007). Specifically, they are told to be sensitive and mindful to each arising sensation during the dance, so that their senses become finely attuned to the intricacies of the choreography (Sellers-Young, 1993). This mindful approach is thought to allow the dancer to become deeply acquainted ó both mentally and physically ó with the dynamic flow of the choreography, and to lead her into the no-mind state.

In her book on Nihon-buyo, Sellers-Young (1993) explains that this training process can be separated into three stages: unnecessary muscle contraction caused by uncertainty=resolved tension and an intuitive understanding of kinetic energy=and finally, the sensation of movement emerging without conscious decision. According to Sellers-Young, accustoming oneself to this specific mode of sensing requires effort and concentration, but by continuing to attend to those sensations through movement, the dancer attains an implicit sense of kinetic economy. Building on, and moving beyond this stage, the dancer may reach the state of no-mind, wherein movements arise without intention. Flow researchers such as Frederick De Kock (2014) describe a similar process through which one may enter Flow, for instance, through Fitts & Posner's (1967) model of motor learning. The model involves a cognitive phase (i.e. effort and concentration), associative phase (i.e. increasing intuition), and an autonomous phase (i.e. effortless action) in the context of acquiring a physical skill ó the final phase being the point in

which Flow is thought to occur (De Kock, 2014). The alignment between De Kock's and Sellers-Young's accounts demonstrate that the training philosophy of no-mind follows the same arguments made in the theory of Flow, in that an 'optimal' state (i.e. heightened somatic awareness and autonomous movement generation) can be achieved through a process of 1.) conscious sensory focus, 2.) mind-body integration (i.e. embodiment), and 3.) automation. Here, both accounts point to a gradual shift in one's consciousness, from effortful concentration in 'controlling' the body, to an effortless (or automatic) processing *as* the body. The resulting state calls to mind Yuasa (1987) writings on no-mind, that 'the "mind" here is not the surface consciousness, but is the "mind" that penetrates into the body and deeply subjectivizes it' (p.105). Gathering from these accounts, it can be hypothesised that Flow is achieved through a process of continuous and active focus towards kinesthetic sensations, and that it entails a gradual fading of the need and intention to focus, as attention itself becomes effortless.

Here, one must note that both Sellers-Young (1993) and De Kock (2014) describe a longitudinal training process, similar to that of Yuasa's (1993) earlier account. Whilst these accounts emphasise the long-term effects of movement-based attentional training, this does not mean that this process (once 'completed') would 'ensure' the experience of Flow every time a mover performs. As noted by Lefebvre Sell (2013), such processes are a part of 'an integrated, lifelong practice where the practitioner is encouraged to keep their beginner's mind' (p.35). In other words, Zen practices do not have a point of completion wherein the mover can enter a state of Flow automatically and on-demand. Instead, the practices merely elicit the *availability* of this state and cultivate the mover's ability to consciously access that mode when they need to. As such, whilst Sellers-Young's and De Kock's accounts may accurately represent the process of becoming more acquainted with the feeling of Flow (or no-mind), the ability to access that state during a performance is heavily dependent on the mover's intentionality *in the moment*. Put differently, whilst the musculoskeletal body may be ready and well trained to execute the

movements effortlessly, the mover must consciously tap into a mode of consciousness that allows for the body to execute at that level of performance (Shacklock, 2006). The progression from effortful concentration to effortless processing, therefore, may appear both at the macroscopic level of longitudinal training, and the microscopic level of performance.

Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi's conditions of Flow (2014) may further explain how Flow can be facilitated (at the microscopic level) through refining and guiding attention. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), in order for an individual to reach the state of Flow, the task – whether it is performing movement, problem-solving, or manual labour – must involve comprehensible and attainable goals, and there must be unambiguous feedback on whether the individual is effectively executing the task. Csikszentmihalyi explains that these two elements provide clarity to an individual's moment-to-moment cognitive focus, thereby increasing his/her level of concentration. This intense concentration, according to Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi (2014), can be seen as one of the defining characteristics of Flow and may be thought of as a state in which one's attention is wholly invested in the present exchange (p.92).

In terms of movement practices such as Nihon-buho, whilst the ultimate goal may be to attain a level of automated movement execution, the immediate task is to reach an intuitive sensory awareness. As movement itself emphasises one's kinesthetic feedback (Clark, Schumann, & Mostofsky, 2015; Schmeichel & Baumeister, 2010), it clarifies and specifies the sensations to which one must attend. Kinesthetic feedback, therefore, serves as a continuous reminder for the mover to keep concentrating on (or listening to) his/her sensory input. This continuous feedback can gradually shift the mover's attention away from other distractions and towards his/her real-time movement experience – as explained by Dietrich (2004) – thereby creating a state of refined sensory awareness and present-centred focus. As the mover's consciousness transitions from effortful attention to a more automatic mode of processing, s/he might experience the sense of action-awareness merging, as was mentioned in the previous

chapter (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Engeser, 2012). This narrative brings Sellers-Young (1993) and De Kockø (2014) notions to a microscopic level, in that the feeling of ðautomaticö movement (or action-awareness merging) may occur *in the moment* of practice/performance (rather than as a result of longitudinal training), and through a process of focusing attention on the present sensory experience. Such a process brings to mind the idea of meditation (Bruya, 2010a=Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2010) as described in the previous chapter, in that both involve a process of conscious, present-centred (sensory) focus and the gradual fading of effort and distraction. Given the alignment between these accounts, there is scope to consider that the somatic approach that is embedded in Nihon-buyo is a form of movement-based meditation.

Here, it is worth clarifying the idea of ðautomaticityö ó as described above and in relation to expert sport performance (Dreyfus, 2002=Fitts & Posner, 1967=Moe, 2004) ó as the concept has been questioned for its ðdenial of a role of consciousness at this level, thus reducing expert practice to zombie-like behaviourö (Purser, 2018a, p.38). Purserø (2018a) phenomenological account on ðawareness during skilled embodied practiceö (p.38) suggests that, despite the prevalent associations between Flow and ðautomaticö movement, experiences like ðbeing in the momentö and ðbeing in your bodyö (p.38) involve a particular bodily awareness that is neither absent from, nor the object of, oneø attention. Purser refers to this state as ðinhabited transcendenceö (p.45), drawing on Beauvoirø and other existential phenomenologistsøidea of ðtranscendenceö ó ðthe freedom and the orientation or openness towards the future of being-for-itselfö (p.39) ó and the opposing ðimmanenceö ó ðthe sense of rootedness to the past of the objectified being-for-othersö (p.39). According to Purser, inhabited transcendence is:

. . . a state of being-in-the-world which is simultaneously characterised by, on the one hand, the physical and temporal groundedness and immediacy of immanence and, on the other hand, the freedom, self-determination and communicative efficacy of

transcendence. (pp. 49-50)

In other words, whilst Flow experiences may involve subjective perceptions of 'automaticity,' they do not necessarily entail an absence of bodily presence or of enactive agency. Instead, they can be considered a 'fully present and somatically grounded awareness . . . [that is] characterised by both an awareness of one's (embodied) ability to act on the world and an awareness of one's corporeal presence in the moment' (Purser, 2018a, p.49)

2.1.2. Surrendering to the unknown – Butoh narrative

Whilst Hahn (2007) and Sellers-Young (1993) accounts on Nihon-buyo highlight the role of repetitive movement as a vehicle for attentional shifts and sensorimotor refinement, such narratives are primarily grounded in the context of formalised (or choreographed) motions. Indeed, Nihon-buyo and many forms of Zen-influenced movement practices (e.g. martial arts: Judo, Aikido, etc.) are form-dependent techniques which require the enaction of specific movement sequences (Bäck & Kim, 1979=Hahn, 2007=Sellers-Young, 1993). However, other Zen-influenced movement practices such as Butoh involve an improvisational approach to somatic attunement (Fraleigh, 1999). Butoh, originally termed *Ankoku Butoh* (暗黒舞踏: 'dance of darkness') was developed by Tatsumi Hijikata in Japan during the 1960s as a part of the post-war anti-Westernization movement (Kasai, 1999=Liao, 2006). In accordance with its political stance, one of the core concepts underpinning Butoh was to strip away the conventionalised Western ideal body images, gestures, ways of life and aesthetic values (Fraleigh, 2010). Hijikata and his many successors (e.g. Kazuo Ohno) valued the idea of 'emptying' or 'stripping' the mind-body from all of its habitual engravings, and opening it to an intense, in-depth psychosomatic introspection in search of hidden emotions and intentions buried beneath the burdens (Kasai, 1999=Liao, 2006) – much like the process of Authentic Movement (Stromsted, 2009).

Similarly to Nihon-buyo, the philosophy behind Butoh is heavily influenced by Zen Buddhist mentalities (Crump, 2006=Fraleigh, 1999), which embody a strong interest in the idea of self-dissipation (e.g. embracing the fluidity of òselfö) rather than of self-identification (e.g. formulating a holistic self-view=Shore, 2008=Tanaka, 2014). Rachel Sweeney (2009), who has investigated the role of consciousness in Butoh training, explains that the process of emptying the mind-body through movement and somatic sensing can evoke a òparadoxical state of passive alertnessö (p.60) that is similar to Zeami's notion of no-mind. In this state, the mind-body is keenly attuned to its kinetic impulses that arise from its core and the ground, reacting flexibly and intuitively to the environment as an òavailableö (or adaptable) body. As is in Nihon-buyo, movements in Butoh (as studied by Sweeney) are thought to act as a vehicle which guides the mover into an altered state of consciousness. However, in the case of Butoh, the mover undergoes a specific set of non-choreographic exercises to prime the mind-body, ultimately to reach a pre-reflective state of movement exploration (Kasai, 1999=Sweeney, 2009).

The first stage of exercises in Butoh is designed to awaken the mover's awareness towards their physical habits and tensions through relaxation techniques, and to strip those habits away towards a more receptive and pliable bodily state (Kasai, 1999=Sweeney, 2009) ó similar to other somatic practices such as the Skinner Releasing Technique (Emslie, 2009), Feldenkrais Method (Ginsburg, 1999), and the Alexander Technique (Leibowitz & Connington, 2011). These exercises often involve a process of sensing the body through slow, gentle motions using imagery to help identify and eliminate excess tensions (Kasai, 1999=Somerville, 2014). Sweeney (2009) explains that such processes are meant to facilitate òa heightened awareness of the body's relationship to gravity . . . by allowing natural gravitational forces to work on the muscular structure of the bodyö (p.60). The author elaborates on this process, stating that:

Through investigating everyday movements such as walking, sitting and lying down, the student is encouraged to find a sense of neutral balance ó a kind of 'emptying' of all

unnecessary muscular control to utilise the bare minimum effort required for these positions. . . . By de-familiarising the body with its usual physiological functions, the student must relearn the maximum physical possibilities of movement in every limb.

(Sweeney, 2009, p.61)

According to Sweeney, the process of interrogating one's own motions and "emptying" unnecessary effort may allow a mover to achieve "an available and hyper aware movement state which enables the body to move in any direction at any given time" (p.63). Sweeney compares this emptied mind-body to Zeami's no-mind, in that there is little effort or control. Similar to the aforementioned process of mind-body integration (i.e. resolving tension and gaining implicit kinetic economy), the process of stripping or emptying the mind-body in Butoh is thought to shift the mover towards a more receptive and somatically attuned state.

The second stage of exercises attempts to guide movers into a deeper submersion into impulsive energies (Kasai, 1999). Similarly to the process of Authentic Movement (Stromsted, 2009), exercises in this level consist of a more free-form movement exploration (or improvisation), wherein movers are told to allow movement to form on its own, in response to, and alongside, their impulses (Kasai, 1999=Kasai & Parsons, 2003). The initial process of "stripping" is thought to serve as a way to open up the mind-body to its own impulses, allowing for a state of "psychosomatic unity" (Kasai & Parsons, 2003, p.261). In Butoh, this state is regarded as that of ultimate "emptiness," in which the mind-body acts as a vessel for one's movements and impulses to interact autonomously (Kasai & Parsons, 2003). Butoh practitioners Kasai & Parsons (2003) refer to this process as a "passive" experience of "autogenic release" (p.261), describing it as the following:

In this process, the body performs a kind of automatic compensation for movements or emotions that have been suppressed. . . . What occurs is not predictable, and yet it is the perceiver's own body that accounts for the unpredictability. Kasai notes that although the

word 'passivity' often has a negative connotation, here passivity is a positive openness and readiness for foreign stimuli to arise, either from outside or from within. (p.261)

Julia Taylor (2006), who was trained in a Butoh-influenced form of improvisation, describes a similar experience of passively following (or being 'overtaken' by) bodily impulses, and compares it to the idea of Flow. Taylor cites Victor Turner's (1982) description of Flow, claiming that it is a 'holistic sensation' of 'total involvement,' which requires 'no conscious intervention on our part' (Taylor, 2006, p.3074). Taylor's accounts can be seen as another interpretation of action-awareness merging (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012) or a feeling of automaticity in movement. However, rather than the feeling that the correct movements are being executed automatically (as is the case in Nihon-buyo), the mover may experience spontaneous, impulsive movement in the act of improvisation.

However, Taylor (2006) raises an interesting point regarding the idea of 'no conscious intervention,' noting that the process of following impulses also involves a sense of 'willful intention' (p.3073) to surrender. The author explains that, when movements are improvised and unpredictable, there is an 'instinctual resistance to surrender' into the 'confrontational unknown' (p.3076). In order to keep allowing this 'unknown' to surface, and for that to take form in movement, one must consciously and continuously 'surrender into that encounter' (p.3076). In other words, Butoh practice requires diligence and effort, not in the physical execution of movement, but in the commitment towards allowing oneself to surrender into the experience. Taylor (2006) provides an eloquent description of this attitude, stating that:

. . . the desirable kind of control needed in the Butoh dancer is a fiercely committed intention to stay present and to follow the images with fidelity to their impulses. In this way, the kind of control a Butoh dancer must retain is a steadfast and strong intention directed toward surrendering. (p.3073)

This narrative relates to another Flow condition, which is *challenge-skill balance*

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012). This concept refers to how Flow is achieved when the presented level of challenge matches one's skillset. Taylor (2006) notes on the constant demand for diligence, effort, and a full submission to the never-ending inquiry relates to the aspect of "challenge" in Flow, and the ability and willingness to keep surrendering can be considered a "skill." As Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) note: "To achieve a flow state, a person must be emotionally skilled enough to put other concerns away and become engaged with the task" (p.13). The condition of challenge-skill balance has been explored in a number of studies on Flow (Engeser & Rheinberg, 2008=Fong, Zaleski, & Leach, 2015=Keller, Ringelhan, & Blomann, 2011=Kennedy, Miele, & Metcalfe, 2014=Stoll & Lau, 2005), many of which support the notion that Flow experiences appear when the difficulty of a task matches (or is slightly higher than) the individual's skill. Figure 1 shows how this balance affects the subjective mood of an individual, and how a high set of challenge and skill is represented in the top-right region of the chart and induces Flow.

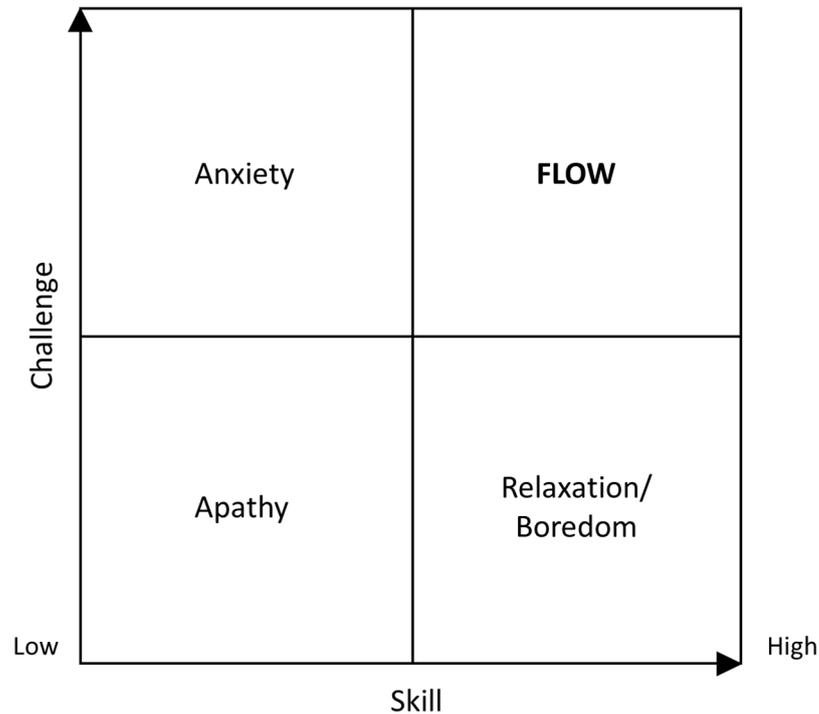


Figure 1. Challenge-skill balance. The vertical scale shows the level of challenge, and the horizontal scale shows the level of skill. Different moods occur depending on the balance between challenge and skill, as shown in the four sections within the chart. The chart shows that Flow occurs during higher ranges of both challenge and skill. When the individual lacks the skill to accommodate the challenge level of the task, he/she experiences anxiety. On the other hand, when the task is not challenging enough to suit the skill level of the individual, he/she experiences relaxation or boredom. When both challenge and skill are low, the individual may feel apathy towards the task. Adapted from “Flow, Performance and Moderators of Challenge-skill Balance,” by S. Engeser and F. Rheinberg, 2008, *Motivation and Emotion*, 32, p.160. Copyright 2008 by Springer Science+Business Media, LLC.

Taylor (2006) accounts on Butoh practice highlight the connection between improvisational movement and the idea of challenge-skill balance, in that such practices inherently involve an internal negotiation between the challenge of unpredictability and one’s ability to surrender (Heble & Caines, 2014). As is implied by Taylor (2006), the skill of surrendering entails a high level of unwavering sensory focus and immersion, which can be disrupted by self-consciousness and the urge to control the dance. This type of challenge is also present in group movement explorations such as Contact Improvisation (Mullis, 2016–Rustad, 2012) ó another movement

practice which has been associated with Flow (Urmston & Hewison, 2014). Dance scholar Eric Mullis (2016) argues that Contact Improvisation challenges the mover to maintain an ongoing focused attention on improvised bodily experience in the present moment (p.66), as the constant interaction with other movers requires each participant to fluidly and flexibly follow the ever-changing kinetic energy flow. Based on these accounts, one can speculate that free-form movement explorations (unlimited to Butoh) can be highly fertile grounds for Flow experiences. The mover faces the challenge of maintaining focus on the present moment whilst avoiding the distraction of (self-)reflective or controlling thoughts, and s/he tries to meet this challenge by surrendering and committing to that experience. When this balance between challenge and skill is achieved, the mover may experience Flow as an embodied state of present-centred consciousness.

Here, the idea of a challenge that appears within Flow experiences gives rise to the question of controlling (or managing) Flow i.e. avoiding disruptions, restoring Flow after disruption, etc. The topic of controllability has been explored by some sport psychologists (Chavez, 2008; Jackson, 1992, 1995; Sugiyama & Inomata, 2005; Swann, Keegan, Piggott, Crust, & Smith, 2012), many of whom suggest that factors such as loss of focus, negative thoughts, performance mistakes, and other environmental factors (e.g. presence of others, equipment, weather conditions, etc.) could cause disruption. In Edward Chavez's (2008) study on Flow experiences among college athletes, participants reported that Flow is controllable and could be restored after disruption through self-talk, guiding oneself towards positive thinking, task orientation, and relaxation, among other themes. Topics such as disruption, fluctuation, and self-regulation of Flow experiences overlap with (or is at least relevant to) what is often the focus of studies on the temporal dynamics of Flow, such as disruptions and nonlinear changes (Ceja & Navarro, 2012; Guastello, Johnson, & Rieke, 1999), fluctuations through phases (Mackenzie, Hodge, & Boyes, 2013; Neal, 2012; ucznik, 2018), effects of distractions (Neal,

2012=Weber, Tamborini, Westcott-Baker, & Kantor, 2009=changes in the depth of Flow (Jones, Hollenhorst, & Perna, 2003), and volitional control (Baumann & Scheffer, 2010=Reed, Hagen, Wicker, & Schallert, 1996). However, many of these studies examine Flow experiences across multiple days or occurrences, often failing to capture the moment-to-moment fluctuations that occur within a single Flow experience/occurrence (i.e. microscopic level). Furthermore, despite the overlap in focus between studies on the controllability of Flow and those on its temporal dynamics, the two areas seldom engage in dialogue to address their mutual applicability. Taylor's (2006) perspective provides a descriptive account on how a dancer might navigate through real-time fluctuations during Flow, adding to the ongoing debate on its behaviour (e.g. disruptions, fluctuations, restoration) across time.

Overall, the Butoh paradigm brings forth a non-repetitive, non-choreographed pathway towards Flow, wherein the somatic attention technique is embedded, not in movement repetition, but in movement exploration. Whereas practices with choreographed movement (such as Nihon-buyo) follow a gradual progression from concentration to mind-body integration, then to 'automation,' non-choreographed somatic practices such as Butoh systematically separate the first two phases of concentration and integration from the final stage of 'emptiness.' The first stage of exercises (i.e. gentle, mindful moving) brings the mover's consciousness to a somatically attuned state and primes the mind-body for impulsive and spontaneous movement generation. The second stage of exercises (i.e. movement exploration) applies this 'available' mind-body to the process of following impulses, wherein the mover is met with the challenge of continuously committing and surrendering to the movements paths that emerge. The idea of focusing (or focused) attention and deep sensory attunement is again illuminated in the Butoh narrative, further suggesting that a meditative approach is embedded in the process of entering and experiencing Flow through movement.

2.1.3. Flow within the context of meditative practice

Thus far, accounts from Zen-influenced movement practices have shed light on how somatic movement approaches may play a role in the process of entering and experiencing Flow. Both Nihon-buyo and Butoh emphasise the importance of sensory introspection ó or what Ehrenberg (2015) might call a ðkinesthetic mode of attentionö (p.44) ó in their practice, wherein one's attention is intentionally directed towards the sensory experience. This specific mode of introspection is intentionally and consciously initiated through a process of movement and focused attention, either through repetitive movement or through somatic exercises. This type of sensory listening has a reciprocal relationship with movement, in that the movements provide the kinetic energy to be attended to, and the sensing provides an intuitive understanding of movement and its kinetic energies. Through this reciprocal process, one's consciousness is brought into a state of present-centred focus and ðpsychosomatic unityö (Kasai & Parsons, 2003), which allow for movement to happen ðautomaticallyö (or perhaps impulsively, in the case of improvisation). The continuation of this movement process requires a sense of diligence and commitment; to continuously and openly immerse oneself into the experience. This internal negotiation provides a sense of challenge for the mover, further urging him/her to sustain a level of focused attention. Within this framework, certain characteristics of the movement process elicit a meditative quality, which involves focusing one's attention on bodily sensations and maintaining that level of focus until one reaches the desired mental (or psychosomatic) state. In other words, the process of somatic movement approaches, when examined from the perspectives of Zen mentality and the concept of Flow, involves a meditative process facilitated by (and embedded within) movement.

Whilst Zen-based narratives appear to frame such processes of meditation-in-movement as a pathway towards Flow-like states, the socio-cultural presumptions underpinning the

original (i.e. Csikszentmihalyi's) concept of Flow are somewhat incongruent with Eastern notions of meditation. Delle Fave et al. (2011) discuss the contextual differences between Flow and meditation in their chapter, *Optimal Experience and Meditation: Western and Asian Approaches to Well-Being*, through the two concepts' motivational structures and onset mechanisms. Delle Fave et al. state that the notion of Flow is associated with a Western pragmatic mentality, in which goal attainment and performance enhancement are considered central to the advancement of humanity. In this narrative, Flow facilitates the individual's 'optimal' performance through intense mental engagement, whether the activity is a daily routine, problem-solving, or sports competition (Delle Fave et al., 2011). According to the authors' argument, the quality of such performances is evaluated through its cultural value and overall productivity. Thus, the idea of Flow is often grounded in an interactive context, leading to an externally set goal. On the other hand, meditation is described as a self-contained practice with an internal motivation, such as spiritual cultivation and enlightenment. According to Delle Fave et al. (2011), the purpose of meditation is not directed towards plainly observable goals such as enhancing performance, winning competitions, or improving practical systems, but towards more intangible goals such as the personal growth of that individual. Here, Delle Fave et al.'s notion of Flow seems to align with Swann et al.'s (2018) description of *telic* Flow (or *clutch*) (e.g. goal-oriented, high performance expectations), thus excluding notions of *paratelic* Flow (e.g. experience-oriented, no distinct performance expectation) or perhaps attributing its qualities to the context of meditation.

Delle Fave et al. (2011) also raise differences between how Flow and meditative states are thought to be induced. The authors argue that Flow can be triggered by specific conditions that make the activity seem appealing to the individual, making them naturally want to continue the task. By contrast, meditative activities often require a conscious decision to initiate the activity, and immersion relies heavily on the individual's intention to continue or as is reflected in

Taylor's accounts on Butoh (2006). Furthermore, Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) address a similar issue in their reflections on how Flow plays a different role in sports from that in "contemplation." Whilst acknowledging that "the experiences of flow and contemplation strongly resemble each other" (p.22), the authors note that:

In sporting activity the primary goal is to use the body to achieve some end. In a sense the body becomes the figure while the mental state acts as the ground through which the experience is structured. In contemplative uses of the body the relationship is flip-flopped. The body provides the stable and repetitive ground or stage for the mind to do its work. (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.22)

In other words, whilst sporting activities utilise Flow to achieve physical goals, contemplative movement practices utilise bodily motions to achieve Flow-like states and to further refine one's focus and attention.

Whilst these are all valid and important contextual differences between Flow and meditation, the current research will focus on the experiential overlaps between the two, as my aim is to draw on, and synthesise, various perspectives to reframe our current understanding of Flow – specifically regarding its paratelic form. Furthermore, I propose that this relationship requires a more systematic interpretation than a simple dichotomy, and that, Flow experiences during meditative activities shall be regarded as a specific type of paratelic Flow, which can be termed *Meditative Flow*.

2.2. Meditative Flow and movement performance

The following sections explore the qualitative and aesthetic roles that Meditative Flow might play in movement performance. The first section will draw from literature on martial arts (Allen, 2015=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014) to understand how the Zen mentality positions Flow and pre-reflective experiences as the essence of masterful performance. As with previous sections

(e.g. Nihon-buyo, Butoh), specific references to literature on martial arts are not intended to signify that this particular practice is the core focus of the research. Rather, these writings are, for the time being, a helpful resource to gauge the Zen perspective on the relationship between (Meditative) Flow and movement performance. Following these discussions, the final section will explore philosophical perspectives on the aesthetics¹⁷ of pre-reflectivity (Yuasa, 1993=Zarrilli, 2011), in order to further unpack how Meditative Flow might contribute to the aesthetics of a performance, as conceived by the external eye.

2.2.1. “Optimal” performance as heightened intuition and ideal effort

Whilst Flow is often associated with enhanced productivity, creativity, or overall athletic performance (Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh, & Nakamura, 2013=Delle Fave et al., 2011=Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000=Stoll, 2018), the performance qualities associated with *Meditative* Flow (e.g. during somatic or meditative movement) may be less concrete and difficult to observe. For instance, in Butoh, a dance form which places aesthetic value on the *ōpurityō* of body motion (Reiser, 2011), the effectiveness of a performance does not rely on the accuracy of movements or the athletic ability of the performer. Rather, it lies in the un-reflected spontaneity of the performance. Put another way, movements that emerge before one can explicitly think about the action are considered to be the fruits of Butoh performance (Reiser, 2011). It is for this reason that Butoh practice has an inherent drive towards the ability to (or states in which one can) respond to, and embody, one’s psychosomatic impulses without filter. In this sense, an ideal Butoh performance would entail the display of movements which manifest without the interference of conscious self-reflection (Kasai & Parsons, 2003).

Similarly, practitioners of Zen-based martial arts see pre-reflectivity and intuitively

¹⁷ In this thesis, the term *ōaestheticō* refers to a particular quality of experience based on Shusterman’s (2009) understanding, which suggests that aesthetic experiences are *ōvividly felt and subjectively savoredō* (p.4), which makes them *ōmeaningful experience, not mere sensationō* (ibid.), and that they involve an evaluative aspect (e.g. enjoyable, rewarding).

executed movement as the physical manifestation of no-mind (or Meditative Flow), which, like many other Zen practices, is regarded as a sign of mastery in the art (Krein & Ilundáin, 2014). Barry Allen, a scholar in Eastern philosophy and arts, has attempted to elucidate the essence of mastery in Asian martial arts in his book, *A Philosophical Look at the Asian Martial Arts – Striking Beauty* (2015). Allen lays the importance of spiritual and mental maturity as a foreground in discussing the mastery of combat, reminding the reader that the drive towards mind-body unification forms the foundation of Zen Buddhist movement traditions—to train the body is to train the mind, and only through the trained (pre-reflective) mind can one achieve mastery in movement. Allen then draws together the idea of no-mind and combative effectiveness to describe a single, central psychosomatic state which governs the essence of mastery in martial arts—the Chinese word for ‘unconscious competence’ is *wuxin*, ‘no mind’. The less action depends on consciousness, the more masterful, the more perfect, the knowledge will be. Only then is movement *ziran* (from itself, spontaneous) and *wuwei* (effortlessly efficacious) (p.155). Building on this idea, Allen explains that true mastery in martial arts involves the appearance of spontaneous movement emergence, tightly synchronised with the kinetic energy of the body. Allen’s arguments posit the idea that an ability to trust one’s bodily impulses, and to allow it to manifest spontaneously and effectively, is the distinguishing factor of a master in martial arts. Furthermore, Allen claims that this quality – what the author calls ‘eloquence of movement’ (p.146), using Merce Cunningham’s words¹⁸ – can appear ‘beautiful’ or ‘fascinating’ to a spectator’s eyes, implying that beauty is a by-product of mastery in martial arts. Such claims highlight the inseparability between mastery and aesthetics in the context of Asian martial arts, suggesting that ‘optimal’ performance, in the context of Zen-influenced movement practice, may be a qualitative rather than quantitative outcome.

¹⁸ Merce Cunningham was an American choreographer who was known for his use of ‘chance operations’, wherein dancers performed (pre-rehearsed) movement sequences in ‘random’ (e.g. based on a coin-toss) order (Copeland, 2004). Allen (2015) draws on Cunningham’s expression in the context of describing movements that are not explicitly intentional or expressive, but whose momentum and energy ‘naturally’ opens clear pathways for the next.

Krein & Ilundáin (2014) have also given a qualitative description of the physical effects of no-mind, drawing on teachers' and practitioners' accounts on Zen-based martial arts to explain that, in this state, movements appear to be 'just happening' rather than 'being performed' (p.142). In line with Allen's (2015) argument, these qualities are regarded by practitioners as signs of masterful or optimal performance, which appear only in moments of non-thinking and pure doing – or, what the authors describe as an 'empty mind' or 'simply acting' (p.142). These claims are, of course, premised by the fact that the mover (i.e. student, performer) would have undertaken an extensive training process that engrains in their mind-bodies the necessary techniques and movement sequences for combat. With this in mind, one can infer that the above authors' notions of 'mastery' refer to a pre-reflective (i.e. not thought about) execution of these *learnt* techniques – similar to Sellers-Young's descriptions (1993) of 'automatically' arising choreographed movements. However, the reader shall be reminded that the discussion here is about the microscopic (i.e. during performance) manifestation of masterful movement, rather than a macroscopic (i.e. through longitudinal training) process of attaining mastery.

Given this aim, it is important to note that the requirements for masterful performance are not limited to biomechanical economy or sensory attunement – assets which can be gained through repeated practice – but also to a certain spontaneity or flexibility towards fluidly arising consequences *in the act*. Movements of combat may be 'correct' or precise, but according to the Zen mentality, they are considered neither effective nor beautiful unless they are actions which spontaneously emerge from the 'empty' and responsive mind-body. These narratives suggest that masterful performances in martial arts entail an embodied readiness to the ever-changing environment – a concept similar to the idea of an 'available' (Sweeney, 2009) and 'surrendered' (Taylor, 2006) mind-body in Butoh. Perhaps this heightened and intuitive responsivity is what defines optimal performance in Zen-based practices, which can be

considered the physical manifestation of Meditative Flow.

A similar claim can be found in Fraleigh's phenomenological accounts (1987), which assert that a dancer "fulfill[s] the aesthetic purpose of the dance" (p.19) when she fully "merges" with her intentions. Merging with one's intentions, here, appears to be a similar phenomenon to the aforementioned notion of action-awareness merging in Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012)=a state in which "intention is dissolved in action, being indistinguishable from it" (Fraleigh, 1987, p.20). Fraleigh (1987) sees this phenomenon as a state of "freedom" that arises within present-centred awareness, wherein one can "move freely, spontaneously, or in total accord with the willing" (p.19). This narrative is perhaps what provided the grounds to Fraleigh's later notions of "harmony" (2000) and "matching" (2004), which refer to an embodied attunement towards naturally arising forces, energies, and intentions. Fraleigh's accounts closely resemble the aforementioned concept of responsivity in martial arts, in that they both recognise a performative (or even aesthetic) value in this state of open, yet refined intuition. Indeed, Fraleigh (1987) sees this mode of being as the essence of mastery in dance, as she notes: "mastery in dance does not rest on willful domination of ourselves in our movement but on discovery of the ideal effort in our embodiment of movement" (p.20). Discovering "ideal effort," here, is perhaps a reference to the merging of actions and intentions, or the harmony between movement and will, as little effort is felt when movements occur simultaneously with one's intentions.

For Fraleigh, mastery in dance involves a sense of "effortless ease" and "gracefulness" – qualities that are achieved by the absence of forceful control. Her notion of effortless ease, however, does not necessarily imply specific movement qualities, for instance, like Laban's

effort components¹⁹ (e.g. light or free=Douse, 2013). Fraleigh explains:

[Effortless ease] does not mean that the movement is vapid or weak. Indeed, ease and weakness are not equitable. Strong movement may be performed with ease. Neither does effortless ease of performance imply light floating movement, only. Heavy movement, weighted, sharp, or energetic movement, may also be performed with effortless ease when such movement is intended and fulfilled with the right fit of effort ó that is, effort in perfect proportion to intention. (p.20)

Through this passage, Fraleigh clarifies that performative qualities such as effortless ease and grace are not defined by singular physical properties such as muscular effort or speed. Rather, they are defined by a specific õfitõ between one's intentions and the effort for that action.

Fraleigh's account (1987), alongside those of Allen (2015), Krein & Ilundáin (2014), demonstrate how pre-reflective states (e.g. no-mind, Meditative Flow) are thought to allow the mover to perform intuitively, spontaneously, and with idea effort ó therefore playing a significant role in movement performance. Moreover, these perspectives place an *aesthetic* value on the appearance of pre-reflectively executed movements (e.g. beauty, grace), which further presents an argument for the qualitative relationship between Meditative Flow and optimal performance.

2.2.2. Pre-reflectivity as an aesthetic quality

Whilst the above, along with other psychological (Bakker et al., 2011=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Jackson et al., 2001=Schüler & Brunner, 2009, Stavrou et al., 2007) and philosophical (Fraleigh, 1987=Purser, 2018a=Shacklock, 2006) accounts, have drawn connections between present-

¹⁹ The thesis sees the idea of effort as a combination of mental and physical factors, in line with Laban's claim that it is a õsequence of Inner Attitudes and Externalised Drives which activate an Actionõ (cited in Douse, 2013, p.75). However, the thesis expands the idea beyond Laban's categories of effort (i.e. space, weight, time, flow), as these categories do not fully encompass the intentionalities and mental drives that are involved in psychosomatic effort. Moreover, the thesis takes a subjective rather than objective (Harris, Vine & Wilson, 2017) approach to (physical and mental) effort, referring mainly to the psychological perception of one's own effort, rather than physiological measures such as neuromuscular activation.

centred awareness and movement performance, there remains a need to examine how these performative effects might be witnessed and made sense of by the viewers of the performance. Why are qualities like effortlessness, spontaneity, and heightened responsiveness considered optimal or masterful in movement performance? Why might these be considered aesthetic qualities?

As was discussed in Chapter 1, Flow and similar present-centred states of awareness can be defined by the absence of higher-order cognitive functions, such as the explicit system (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010), autobiographical self-processing (Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013), and egocentric (i.e. task-oriented, pragmatic) thinking (Austin, 2010). However, these cognitive functions are crucial components for critical/abstract thinking and empirically grounded reasoning, which are essential abilities in one's social and economic life. In fact, one of the central goals of many educational programmes is to develop these skills within the given subject (McPeck, 2016). Whilst this paradigm is prevalent in most developed countries today, the value of higher-order cognition was particularly highlighted and explicitly endorsed within the culture and philosophical paradigm of ancient Greece.

Classical Greek philosophers (e.g. Socrates, Plato) asserted that core ethical values such as justice and goodness cannot be fully understood through mere corporeal life experiences, but only through an intellectual engagement with (and acknowledgement of) the universal and unchanging truths of the world (Shusterman, 2009=Tarnas, 2010). The notion that there is a deeper, timeless order to these absolute truths (e.g. beauty, goodness) greatly informed the ideologies and aesthetics of early Greek culture, eventually manifesting in mythologies of divine figures who represented such absolute principles. Eros, for instance, who was thought to express itself in the sexual instinct (Tarnas, 2010, p.14) at the physical level, was also thought to manifest as a force which impels the philosopher's passion for intellectual beauty and wisdom (p.14). The latter force was regarded as the higher and thus more

valuable manifestation of Eros ó the god of love and passion ó a force which, once pursued, bestows philosophers òthe mystical vision of the eternal, the ultimate source of all beautyö (Tarnas, 2010, p.14). The portrayal of Eros illuminates an ideological thrust towards intellect and òhigherö understandings that lie beyond the òsurface confusion and randomnessö (Tarnas, 2010, p.11) of the corporeal, temporal, and sensory world.

In contrast, Eastern philosophies such as Zen Buddhism embodied an alternative, less intellectualist approach to virtue and ethics. In Eastern philosophies, pre-reflective experiences and enaction were commended, as they were considered to be processes which can eliminate daily distractions and unattainable desires (Charles, 2001=Wallace, 2002). The Zen Buddhist emphasis on pre-reflectivity can be identified in this narrative, which demonstrates a contrast to the classical Greek philosophy. Whilst the Platonian perspective celebrated human intellect and its capacity to access a òhigherö understanding of the world, Zen Buddhist teachings emphasised the limitations of intellect and commended a more intuitive and non-deterministic approach towards enlightenment. This philosophy can still be found in modern texts that describe Zen-influenced art forms, such as those mentioned throughout this chapter (Allen, 2015=Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Sweeney, 2009). Within its drive away from intellect and rationality, Zen philosophy holds an aesthetic appreciation towards the random, ambiguous, and asymmetric manifestations of natural (non-human) life, which, for instance, appears in Zeami's doctrines on Japanese performing arts (Zarrilli, 2011=Yuasa, 1993). For Zeami, the state of no-mind, which òlies beyond active intellectualizationö (Zarrilli, 2011, p.312) allows for the performer to enact the performance in his most instinctive ó thus òoptimalö ó state.

Although such an aesthetic sensibility may have been articulated more predominantly in Eastern traditions, this does not mean that the mentality has been absent among Western thinkers's accounts (Bruya, 2010c=Cordner, 1984=Shusterman, 2009). For instance, Fraleigh's

(1987) notions of 'graceful' movement forefronts the idea that dancers become pre-reflective when immersed in the dance, and it identifies this intuitive mode of enaction (i.e. immediate and un-reflected experiencing) as the essence of 'grace.' Christopher Cordner (1984), a philosopher primarily of Western aesthetics, presents a similar interpretation of the concept of 'graceful' actions, suggesting that a sense of effortlessness or ease in movement, enabled by the individual's 'unity of being' (p.308) (i.e. the mind not distracted by intellectual intentions) is what defines the essence of 'grace.' Moreover, earlier Western philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, William James, and Friedrich Schiller have all alluded to the connection between pre-reflective spontaneity (as opposed to conscious reflection) and masterful action in their seminal texts. For instance, James (1918) notes that 'we fail of accuracy and certainty in our attainment of the end whenever we are preoccupied with much ideal consciousness of the means' (p.1128) in his chapter on 'will' in *The Principles of Psychology*, and Schiller (2005) claims that 'grace must always be natural, in other words, instinctive' (p.137) in his essay, *On Grace and Dignity*.

Whilst the idea that pre-reflectivity (or states of non-thinking) is beneficial for movement performance has been implicitly agreed upon within both philosophical and scientific arenas, the notion has not been so closely scrutinised until researchers who study performers' and movers' consciousness began to ask: why are such states so significant, valuable, or even beautiful, to the spectator's eyes (Banes & Lepecki, 2012; Fraleigh, 1987; Lefebvre Sell, 2013; Parviainen, 2002; Purser, 2018a, 2018b; Shacklock, 2006)? This may be because traditional academic studies on aesthetics have mainly focused on the form (i.e. external or physical qualities) of artefacts and performances, rather than on the internal states and intentions of the performer or creator (Saito, 2014). Yuriko Saito (2014), a scholar of philosophy and Japanese aesthetics, explains, 'Western aesthetic tradition treats our aesthetic life predominantly from the spectator's and judge's viewpoint. Rarely does discussion revolve around the experience of the

creator, which led Friedrich Nietzsche to characterize Western aesthetics as “receiver” or “spectator” aesthetics” (p.157). In terms of dance, this means that the focus of aesthetic analyses has been limited to the spectators’ perception of the end-product (i.e. physical and observable qualities of the performance) rather than the performer’s consciousness in motion. On the other hand, as Zarrilli (2011) notes in his reflections about non-Western theatre: “Research on non-Western theories, practices, and aesthetics of acting often address issues relevant to the consciousness of the actor and audience” (p.303).

To see the performer’s consciousness as an aesthetic component of performance brings forth the idea that viewers may access the performer’s internal (or felt) state (e.g. pre-reflectivity, Flow, no-mind) by observing their actions and behaviour. Krein & Ilundáin (2014) point to this idea in noting that teachers in Zen practice are thought to have the ability to recognise the performer’s internal state through the physical performance itself, and that the existence of such an ability elicits the assumption that there are “public signs for relevant inner states” (p.141). These arguments bring forth the phenomenological concept of intersubjectivity (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008=Legrand & Ravn, 2009=Merleau-Ponty, 1962=Samaritter & Payne, 2013) which posits that “a bodily intentionality is shared by the perceiving subject and the perceived other through direct perception” (Samaritter & Payne, 2013, p.144). According to Legrand & Ravn (2009), such a phenomenon is possible “because intentions organizing bodily movements are (and have to be) reflected in observable idiosyncrasies of the intentional behavior itself” (p.392). Such an “intersubjective” awareness is also present in the artistic language of Butoh, which, according to Kasai & Parsons (2003) is an act of “perception” rather than “expression.” In Butoh, a dancer does not “express” to others his/her own internal states, but simply “perceives” it in motion, with the assumption that the viewers’ consciousness can resonate and shift alongside the movers’ – a phenomenon that Kasai (2009) calls “body-mind

echoing (p.23). In this vein, Kasai sees Butoh as a "somaesthetic"²⁰ art form which extends beyond its visual manifestations and into the audience's felt somatic experience. Kasai's notion of "body-mind echoing" elicits the idea that movements are (or can become) a medium of transmission for bodily sensations, rather than just visually perceived events in the viewer's awareness. In the context of this research, movements may function as a medium of kinesthetically sense-able pre-reflectivity (or Flow).

Dance scholars Reason & Reynolds (2010) associate the idea of embodied resonances between the dancer and audience with the concept of *kinesthetic empathy*, which describes an automatic "inner mimicry" (p.62) that occurs when witnessing another individual move. The authors suggest that, through kinesthetic empathy, viewers may feel a sensation in their own bodies as if they were moving *with* or *as* the dancer on stage²¹. Jola et al. (2012) explain that kinesthetic empathy may be enabled by what neuroscientists refer to as mirror neurons (Gallese, 2001) in the brain, which causes an automatic internal simulation of the movements that are perceived²². The theory of kinesthetic empathy provides a neuroscientific interpretation of intersubjectivity in dance performance, further implicating the notion that audience members may be able to resonate somatically with the mover's felt sense of Flow or an effortless and uncalculated ease of motion. These moments of shared (or resonant) embodiment may evoke an

²⁰ Although the term "somaesthetic" is reminiscent of Shusterman's (1999) "somaesthetics," Kasai (2009) does not explicitly refer to Shusterman's work in this discussion. Nonetheless, there is an alignment between Shusterman's notion of "that one may cultivate aesthetic sensibilities through embodied practices" and that of Kasai, who describes an artform which is meant to produce aesthetic experiences (both for the performer and viewer) via the *whole* soma or i.e. not solely through vision, hearing, or any singular sensory mode.

²¹ The idea of kinesthetic empathy became rooted in dance studies through expressions used by dance critic John Martin during the mid-1900s (Martin, 1939; Reason & Reynolds, 2010). Martin (1939) highlighted the spectators' inherent ability to internally mimic the motions of the dancer, and to directly feel the emotions to which each postural shift, gesture, and sensory experience is connected or not representationally, but experientially. In this way, Martin's writings have illuminated the active role of the audience as a deeply engaged "vicarious" experienter of the dance performance, implementing the notion that seeing movement is feeling movement, and that feeling movement causes an inherent emotional impact. This understanding of dance spectatorship involves a fluid interconnection between visual, kinesthetic and emotional functions or has since then become a widely accepted framework in dance and performance studies (Foster, 2010; Jola et al., 2012; Reason & Reynolds, 2010).

²² Jola et al. (2012) report that "neurons in the frontal and parietal cortices of monkey brain fire both when a monkey grasps for food as well as when the monkey simply observes the experimenter executing the same grasping action" (p.19). Researchers in neuroscience and psychology have proposed various interpretations of this discovery, including the notion that human brains, too, have a similar function wherein an individual sees another individual move, and senses an automatic projection of that same movement in his/her own body (Gallese, 2001; Iacoboni, 2009; Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004).

aesthetic experience that is identified in the Butoh literature—a collective state of pre-reflectivity.

Summary

The chapter explored the relationship between Flow and embodied practices through literature on Zen-influenced movement practices such as Nihon-buyo, Butoh, and Eastern martial arts.

The chapter was organised into two threads of inquiry: the experience of entering and navigating through Flow, and the role of Flow during movement performance. The first thread examined practice-based and ethnographical accounts on Nihon-buyo and Butoh (Hahn, 2007; Kasai, 1999; Sellers-Young, 1993; Sweeney, 2009; Taylor, 2006; Yuasa, 1993) alongside psychological accounts on the conditions of Flow (Chavez, 2008; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Engeser, 2012; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) to explore how somatic movement approaches may play a role in the process of entering and experiencing paratelic Flow. Through these discussions, the chapter identified a meditative process that is embedded in these movement approaches, which involves elements such as the refinement of attention through sensory listening, and an open attitude towards unpredictability. Based on the idea that these practices (Nihon-buyo, Butoh) involve a type of movement-based meditation, the chapter proposed that (paratelic) Flow states that appear within such contexts can be termed ‘Meditative Flow.’

In the second thread of inquiry, accounts on the ideologies of Eastern martial arts (Allen, 2015; Krein & Ilundáin, 2014), along with some of Fraleigh’s (1987) philosophical writings, demonstrated that Flow and similar states may have a qualitative connection to movement performance. Namely, the accounts raised qualities such as responsivity, spontaneity, and ideal effort as indicators of mastery that appear during moments of pre-reflective experience. Finally, through the examination of cultural and philosophical perspectives on Eastern and Western aesthetics (Charles, 2001; Tarnas, 2010; Zarrilli, 2011), the chapter explored ideas such as

intersubjectivity (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008; Merleau-Ponty, 1962), somesthetic art (Kasai, 2009; Shusterman, 1999), and an aesthetic sensibility towards un-calculated action, which may shed light on how the mover's Meditative Flow state can invoke aesthetic experiences for the viewer.

3. Methodology

Introduction

As dancers, philosophers, and scientists continue their dialogue in search of effective ways to study embodied phenomena and consciousness, scholars from all fields have continuously raised the importance of careful methodological considerations (Batson et al., 2012=Gallese, 2011=Jola et al., 2012=Larkin, Eatough, & Osborn, 2011=Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). As was discussed in Chapter 1, the thesis takes a pragmatic approach in that it sees epistemological plurality, not as an obstacle, but as a strength for interdisciplinary research. The goal is to produce findings which inform contemporary dance practice and its discourses, rather than to make philosophical claims on ‘the nature of reality and truth’ (Morgan, 2014, p.1047). As such, the variety of perspectives (and their respective epistemological backgrounds) are treated as ‘equally important claims about the nature of human experience’ (Morgan, 2014, p.1048) which may produce new insights through dialogue.

The past two chapters have explored various accounts surrounding Flow, pre-reflective experiences, and relevant movement practices, identifying conceptual overlaps between phenomenological, ethnographical, and psychological perspectives. Through these discussions, two speculations emerge:

1. Paratelic Flow (a state which can be compared to the idea of *no-mind*) may occur during meditative processes that are embedded in somatic movement, involving a conscious and continuous process of present-centred (sensory) attention.
2. Meditative Flow (i.e. paratelic Flow states during meditative practice) seems to play an important role in movement performance, firstly as a neurological state of efficient sensorimotor processing, and secondly, as an observable/sense-able aesthetic quality.

On the basis of these speculations, I raise two threads of inquiry that will guide the empirical

studies of this thesis:

- Attaining paratelic Flow through/during embodied meditation
 - a.) Do dancers and movement practitioners experience Flow states during meditative movement episodes (i.e. *Meditative Flow*)?
 - b.) If so, what sorts of movement contexts and episodes might involve 'meditative' movement?
- The role of Meditative Flow during movement performance
 - c.) How might movers experience Meditative Flow during movement performance?
 - d.) How might these states interact with the quality and aesthetics of the mover's physical performance?

The current chapter will explore relevant methodological approaches that are used within the field of psychology and that of dance, then discuss how these approaches may be integrated to form a mixed-methods design or an approach that is considered compatible with pragmatist views (Bishop, 2015; Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The first section of the chapter will focus on exploring Flow experiences that occur during meditative movement scenarios (i.e. questions a. & b.) through a questionnaire/survey method. The second section of this chapter addresses the idea of Meditative Flow experiences during movement performance (i.e. questions c. & d.), exploring ways of relating the mover's experience to his/her physical performance, as well as to the viewer's perceptions. An overview of the two studies conducted in the thesis or an exploratory survey (Forza, 2002) and a series of event-focused interviews (Swann, 2016) incorporating audience feedback (Jola et al., 2012) or will be given at the end of each section. Finally, the chapter will discuss issues on rigour and validity within the context of mixed-methods and qualitative research (Carminati, 2018; Noble & Smith, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006).

3.1. Identifying Flow experiences during meditative moving

Accounts on Flow and similar experiences during Zen-based movement practices (Hahn, 2007= Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Paskevskaja, 2001=Taylor, 2006) elicit the idea of a meditative process that is embedded in their somatic approaches in training and performance. Neuroscientific (Austin, 2010=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013) and psychological (Bruya, 2010a=De Kock, 2014=Delle Fave et al., 2011=Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014=Peifer, 2012) theories further prompt the view that elements of meditation (e.g. focusing attention, eliminating distractions, somatic awareness) may facilitate a state of (Meditative) Flow (e.g. present-centred awareness, lack of explicit cognition, loss of self-consciousness). However, in line with Swann et al. (2018) and Deets (2015) concerns, there is a lack of semantic consistency and definitional clarity within this pool of research (e.g. pre-reflective experience, Flow, no-mind, meditation), which causes difficulty in cross-referencing these accounts to create a unified framework – especially one that would suit the conditions of empirical or scientific research. Moreover, existing empirical evidence from psychological and neuroscientific studies are mostly inconclusive (e.g. hypofrontality theory), making them premature to be collated into a generalisable theory (Harris et al., 2017). Overall, there is a paucity of evidence that shows whether (and how consistently) Flow experiences occur during meditative or somatic movement episodes. Considering this context, the first step of the thesis is to develop a precise definition of the phenomenon (i.e. Meditative Flow), as well as the parameters of the practice/activity (i.e. meditative or somatic movement), with careful attention to their cross-disciplinary relevance (i.e. alignment with psychological, philosophical, and artistic contexts). In conjunction with this aim, the thesis also attempts to find examples of dancers and movement practitioners who experience Flow during somatic or meditative movement episodes (i.e. *Meditative* Flow).

In psychological studies on Flow, the identification of Flow experiences within a specific activity often involves a questionnaire method (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012). The following section will explore existing Flow questionnaires, while addressing its componential structure to inform the defining process of Meditative Flow. Additionally, the section will discuss the idea of meditation, which can be regarded as an essence of the specific activity of interest (i.e. meditative moving).

3.1.1. Identifying Flow through questionnaires

In fields such as cognitive psychology and sports science, Flow is often measured quantitatively through formalised questionnaires that ask participants to report on the frequency or intensity of Flow experiences through a multiple component Likert-scale (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). These questionnaires are generally based on the componential definition of Flow (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012=Jackson & Marsh, 1996=Moneta, 2012=Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014=Swann, 2016), which include the following nine components:

1. Clear goals
2. Unambiguous feedback
3. Challenge-skill balance
4. Concentration on the task at hand
5. Sense of control
6. Action-awareness merging
7. Loss of self-consciousness
8. Losing track of time
9. Autotelic experience

The questionnaires contain multiple questions addressing each of these components in randomised order. Two of the most commonly used Flow questionnaires are the Dispositional

Flow Scale (DFS) and the Flow State Scale (FSS) (Jackson & Eklund, 2002=Kawabata & Mallett, 2011=Kawabata, Mallett, & Jackson, 2008). While the Dispositional Flow Scale gives results on an individual's tendency to experience Flow by measuring the frequency of its occurrence in a given activity, the Flow State Scale gives results on the subjective intensity, degree, or extent of Flow based on a single occurrence or event. Researchers have also made alterations on these two scales to fit the purpose of their studies, such as Engeser & Rheinberg's (2008) use of the Flow Short Scale – a simplified version which is useful for research involving a large number of participants or measurements. As the current research focuses on the occurrence of Flow during a specific type of activity (i.e. meditative or somatic moving) the nine components of Flow, as they appear on the Dispositional Flow Scale and Flow State Scale, can be a useful componential structure to develop the definition of Meditative Flow. This definition can then be applied to survey dancers and movement practitioners on their experiences during meditative movement episodes.

However, there are a few considerations to be made before applying this structure to the current research, as there are contextual (e.g. sports vs meditation) and cultural (e.g. East vs West) incongruencies between the concept of Flow and that of meditation (or *Meditative Flow*) – as was mentioned in the previous chapter. For instance, according to a version of the Flow State Scale used in sports psychology (Jackson & Marsh, 1996), Flow experiences involve –feeling *competent* enough to meet the *high demands* of the situation, –knowing what is to be *achieved*, –making the *correct* movements without thinking about trying to do so, –and –being aware of how *well* s/he is performing, –which all indicate a competitive situation. The phrases imply that the participants are given a certain set of goals which demand their competence, and that there is a clear distinction between correct versus incorrect motions, and/or good versus poor performance – much like Swann et al.'s (2018) notion of telic Flow. However, in the context of meditative movement practices, the goal is often centred around the individual's

internal state ó such as deep concentration or somatic awareness (Deets, 2015) ó which consequently denies any objective or external judgement on the competence of the individual. Even if the “desired outcome” were to be defined as the attainment of altered states such as Meditative Flow, this is rarely made explicit within the guidance stages of the process. At best, they appear as suggested outcomes that are implicitly embedded in the philosophy or the context of the practice itself (e.g. “hidden curriculum” in somatic movement practices=Fortin et al., 2015). This context underlying meditative moving may render the language used in existing scales incompatible for a dance or movement practitioner. In order to develop a set of components that is relevant for Meditative Flow and the context of meditative moving, some alterations must be made on the language of these scales. These alterations will be covered in detail in the following chapter, which presents the first empirical study of the thesis.

3.1.2. Defining “meditative” moving

Another consideration to be made upon the use of questionnaires is the definition of meditative or somatic moving, as there is a myriad of movement practices which involve the act of focusing on bodily sensations (e.g. contemporary or Western somatic practices, traditional Eastern practices, etc.). In order to ensure that the participants’ reports are based on experiences that occur specifically during meditative moving episodes, the study must also be able to distinguish between meditative and non-meditative movement episodes.

Schmalzl et al. (2014) refer to contemporary somatic practices (e.g. Feldenkrais Method, Alexander Technique), along with other traditional movement practices that involve meditative aspects (e.g. Yoga, Qigong, Tai Chi) as Movement-based Embodied Contemplative Practice (MECP). The three main aspects constituting Schmalzl’s definition of MECP can be identified in the term itself: they are movement-based, they focus on the process of embodiment, and they involve deep, continuous concentration (i.e. contemplation). The aspect of contemplation is

described as a “disciplined process of becoming reflectively attentive to experience” (Schmalzl et al., 2014, p. 3), involving elements such as conscious avoidance of distractions and habits, sustained attention to the moment-to-moment experience, and allowing new sensations and movements to emerge – consistent with the meditative process that was described in Chapter 2. Whilst this framework successfully encompasses various somatic and Eastern movement practices that may be relevant to the current research, the two elements, “movement-based” and “embodied” are redundant specifications in the context of dance research. On the other hand, the remaining element, “contemplation/meditation” requires further unpacking in order to develop a set of definitional criteria that encases the movement practices of interest.

Whilst the idea of meditation (i.e. focusing attention on the present moment and sensory experience) has, to some extent, illuminated a specific context in which paratelic Flow states may occur, the concept of meditation itself remains ill-defined. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness* (2007), Antoine Lutz et al. explain that the term “meditation” can refer to countless different practices, all with largely varying qualities, as meditative activities have been present across multiple regions, cultures and social contexts throughout centuries. Another common confusion regarding the term meditation is the fact that it has been used as both a type of practice and a state of mind, depending on the context of the discussion (Lutz, 2007). As the current aim is to clarify the properties of a movement approach or context rather than its experiential quality, the following discussion will focus on perspectives which see meditation as a practice, rather than as a mental state.

As a working definition of meditation for studies in health and behavioural psychobiology, Cardoso et al. (2004) list five criteria (p.59):

1. Utilisation of specific technique such as mantras, singular focus, breathing, etc.
2. Continuous focus on one “anchoring” aspect, such as a sensation or focal point
3. Avoidance of logical analysis, judgments, or expectations in the experience

4. Involvement of psychological or physical relaxation

5. Induced or initiated by the individual, independent of external pressure

Cardoso et al. (2004) criteria, which were developed as a part of their research project on meditation in health, have since been addressed in a number of neuroscientific studies on long-term meditators (Davanger, Ellingsen, Holen, & Hugdahl, 2010; Hinterberger, Kohls, Kamei, Feilding, & Walach, 2011; Tei et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2014) as well as intervention studies on the effects of meditative practices (Leite et al., 2010; Nesvold et al., 2012). Whilst some researchers (Bond et al., 2009) have attempted to further clarify this definition with additional components (e.g. appearance of altered states; influence of religious or spiritual context), Cardoso et al. (2004) componential definition appears to be a commonly acknowledged framework among psychological and neuroscientific studies on meditative practices.

Much of these components are consistent with the definitions given in studies on movement-based meditative practices (Jahnke, Larkey, Rogers, Etnier, & Lin, 2010; Schmalzl et al., 2014), which relate the element of 'anchoring' to a body-based focal point (e.g. 'focus on breathing'), and suggest that movement itself can be considered as a 'specific technique' of meditation (e.g. 'movement-based', 'embodied', or using a 'form of movement or body positioning'). The element of 'psychophysical relaxation' has also been mentioned in Linda Larkey et al.'s study (2009) on Meditative Movement, described as 'cleared or calm state of mind with a goal of deep states of relaxation' (p.1). Given the prevalence of its use, as well as its compatibility with movement-based practices, Cardoso et al. (2004) componential definition may be useful to apply alongside the Flow questionnaire as a set of filtering criteria to ensure that participants are reporting on their Flow experiences specifically during meditative moving episodes. Furthermore, these components help to address question b.) what types of movement episodes involve 'meditative' elements? Participants can name specific movement practices in which these components are present, so as to clarify the range of practices that

involve meditative moving.

3.1.3. Method 1: exploratory survey on Meditative Flow experiences

The above discussions inform the first empirical study of the thesis, which is an online survey addressing questions a.) and b.)=do practitioners consistently experience Flow during meditative moving, and what sorts of movement contexts and episodes might 'meditative moving' include?

Whilst the aforementioned Flow scales (i.e. DFS, FSS) are often used for statistical analysis in the context of psychology, wherein the frequency, levels, temporal changes, and/or component-based differences across multiple Flow instances (or individuals) are evaluated, this is not the case for the first step of this thesis. Whilst the above aspects are addressed later in the thesis through a different method of investigation, the aim of the first study is merely to address the prevalence of Flow experiences during specific movement episodes within a particular demographic (i.e. dance and movement practitioners). This approach can be regarded as a form of 'exploratory' or 'descriptive' survey (Forza, 2002), wherein the objective is 1.) to determine the preliminary boundaries of the concept of interest, and 2.) to describe the distribution of the phenomenon in a particular population.

Normally in a survey which applies componential construct definitions, the items of the survey must accurately represent the construct to be measured (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011=Drost, 2011=Forza, 2002). According to Burton & Mazerolle's (2011) accounts on survey instruments, this accuracy is often referred to as construct validity='the degree to which an operational measure correlates with the theoretical concept investigated' (p.28). The construct validity of an instrument involves multiple layers of validity, including face, content, discriminant, convergent, and predictive validity (Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). Whilst many of these layers can only be tested through pilot studies involving rigorous statistical methods, face

and content validity are often distinguished as criteria which can be fulfilled through exploratory and qualitative investigation based on literature and expert opinion (e.g. Delphi method=Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004) (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011=Drost, 2011). Face validity, in particular, is often recognised as a preliminary fulfilment which ensures "an instrument's ease of use, clarity, and readability" (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011, p.29), based on its grounded-ness in theoretical literature, and on multiple expert's judgements.

I see the current thesis (as a whole) as this preliminary step of developing and proposing face-valid concepts (i.e. Meditative Flow=meditation within somatic movement), the findings (and resulting construct definitions) of which can then later be tested (or "validated") for their capacity to function in quantitative research. As such, while some alterations will be made on existing componential definitions (e.g. Flow, meditation) these new definitions need not be regarded as "instruments" (i.e. operational measures) that require full construct validity. Rather, the proposed definitions and the survey are meant to serve as a foundation for the main practical study by providing a way to filter and recruit suitable participants. In other words, if practitioners confirm that they are familiar with these concepts, the proposed definitions will serve the purpose of specifying "to a certain degree" relevant demographic information on the participants' background and experience (e.g. "do they understand the concept of *Meditative Flow*?", "have they experienced it?", "do they have experience in *meditative* movement practices?" etc.).

3.2. The role of Meditative Flow during movement performance

Whilst surveys and questionnaires can ensure definitional clarity and provide statistical evidence on the occurrence of Flow during specific events, these methods fail to capture an in-depth, qualitative view on what those experiences might feel like in the living, moving body, how they may change throughout the event, or what they might look like to an observer's eyes

(Jackson, 1992=Kimiecik & Stein, 1992=Swann, 2016). These aspects are addressed in the second thread of inquiry: the role of Meditative Flow during movement performance (i.e. questions c. & e.). Existing accounts (see Chapters 1 & 2) support the notion that Meditative Flow may play an important role in movement performance, firstly as a neurological state of optimal sensorimotor processing, and secondly, as a specific type of aesthetic. In order to further investigate the experiential, temporal, physical, and aesthetic aspects of Meditative Flow during movement performance, the thesis takes a more inductive and qualitative approach in the second empirical study. The following sections provide a brief review of existing methods, firstly regarding a qualitative approach in studying the subjective experience of Flow. Secondly, the section will review methods of analysing dance/movement performance and the audience's experience in order to identify effective ways of exploring how Meditative Flow can influence and interact with movement performance and its reception.

3.2.1. Exploring the experiential nuances of Flow

As was mentioned above, subjective experiences of Flow during specific activities are often measured through questionnaire methods (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012=Moneta, 2012=Stoll, 2018=Swann, 2016). Christian Swann (2016), who studies Flow during sports activities, has recognised the limitations of this method, including the fact that the quantitative nature of the approach could reduce the richness of these experiences to disembodied facts. For instance, Chavez (2008) reports that many athletes claim to be able to restore their level of Flow during their activity after it has been disrupted. This finding elicits the idea that Flow experiences may involve temporal fluctuations which are manipulated by the owner of the experience – a notion that cannot be examined in depth through a post-activity questionnaire. Moreover, Swann (2016) warns that questionnaires could potentially overlook the importance of participants' self-understanding and ownership of the experience, resulting in researchers claiming that Flow has

occurred while the participants themselves may not identify them as such.

As such, Swann (2016) raises a more qualitative approach to exploring Flow experiences through the use of semi-structured interviews. In line with Swann's suggestion, interview methods have been used in a number of studies that explore Flow experiences during sports (Bernier, Thienot, Codron, & Fournier, 2009; Hefferon & Ollis, 2006; Jackson, 1995, 1996; Partington, Partington & Olivier, 2009; T. Seifert & Hedderson, 2010; Sugiyama & Inomata, 2005; Swann et al., 2016; Swann, Piggott, Crust, Keegan, & Hemmings, 2015; Young, 2000). However, Swann (2016) notes that some of these studies have taken a deductive approach of analysis, wherein interview responses are coded based on the existing nine components of Flow. According to Swann, these approaches are limited in their capacity to recognise and highlight activity-specific elements of the participants' Flow experiences (e.g. imagery, body awareness, perception of environment) that may not readily fit the nine-component framework. Instead, Swann suggests that an inductive approach (e.g. grounded theory, IPA, thematic analysis) may be more beneficial in obtaining critical descriptions of flow with potential for refined understanding of these experiences within specific sporting contexts (p.8).

Furthermore, sport psychologists Oliver Stoll (2018) and Swann (2016) both identify the benefit of an event-focused interview design (Seifert & Hedderson, 2010), wherein the interviews are conducted soon after the activity/experience. This approach compensates for one of the biggest limitations of interview methods, which is the possibility of inaccurate subjective recollections of the participants' experience. As qualitative interviews often require pre-planning and detailed scheduling, it is difficult to manage the timing in a way that allows researchers to capture the participants' experiences while their memories are still fresh. Seifert & Hedderson's (2010) study shows an example of how event-focused interviews can account for this problem. In their study, the researchers closely observed the athletes in their natural environment and approached them immediately after their performances, so that the athletes could give detailed

accounts on their most recent experiences. In light of these discussions, the current thesis identifies event-focused, semi-structured interviews, along with an inductive analysis approach, as suitable methods of investigating the experience of Meditative Flow, specifically in terms of its felt and lived-in nuances.

3.2.2. Interpreting kinesthetic experience

Thus far, I have discussed the benefits of interview methods as a way to explore the subjective experience of Flow. This method relies heavily (if not solely) on verbal articulation, which, especially in the context of dance (i.e. dealing with non-verbal sensory experience), must be positioned carefully so that it is not conflated with the participant's experience²³ itself.

Interviews, like all other non-self-referential methods, do not necessarily grant researchers access to the participant's first-person experience. As Depraz et al. (2003) write in *On Becoming Aware: A Pragmatics of Experiencing* "their book on exploring human experience "[verbal reports] are merely the tip of the iceberg of the full range of a person's lived experience" (p.7). The authors go further to acknowledge what they call the "excavation fallacy," which argues that "by exploring experience with a method . . . [you are] in fact, deforming or even creating what you claim to 'experience'" (p.8). This argument, deriving from Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology and Derridean deconstructive analysis, claims that "there is no such thing as a 'deep' pre-linguistic layer of experience, since any account is 'always already' enfolded in language" (p.8).

Depraz et al.'s (2003) motivation for their book, however, is "not to form a theory, system, or unifying philosophy of experience and consciousness" (p.3) but rather, to address the need for methods to access first-person experiences (and accounts) that are relevant and

²³ "Experience," here, can be understood as "the lived, first-hand acquaintance with, and account of the entire span of our minds and actions, with the emphasis not on the context of the action but on the immediate and embodied, and thus inextricably personal, nature of the content of the action" (p.2) as described by Depraz et al (2003).

applicable to various academic (e.g. psychology, neuroscience, phenomenology) and practical (e.g. spiritual practice) disciplines. The authors propose, from a *pragmatic* stance, a re-awakening of introspective psychology which could open psychological research programmes to a psycho-phenomenology (p.7). From this stance, Depraz et al. (2003) first acknowledge that no *a priori* arguments or methodological contortions are going to solve this problem [i.e. ‘excavation fallacy’] for us with a wave of the wand (p.8). However, they also point out that no methodological approach to experience is neutral . . . every examination is an interpretation, and all interpretation reveals and conceals at the same time (p.9). As such, Depraz et al. (2003) propose that experience always exists at its own level of examination, depending on the kinds of effort and methods brought into play in that very examination (p.10).

In making this proposal, the Depraz et al. note two points: first, that experience is not a fixed, predelineated domain, but is instead changing, changeable, and fluid (p.10) in that any new experience – including the act of investigating experience itself – may transform the experiencer’s ability to have, be conscious of, or verbalise their experience. However, the authors argue that this transformation is not without rules or results (p.10) and thus does not deform or fabricate experience in an arbitrary way. Second, and based on this point, the authors propose that descriptions of experience are not to be taken as solid ‘facts’, but as valid intersubjective items of knowledge, as quasi-objects of a cognitive kind (p.9), designating verbal accounts as socially mediated representations of first-person experience, no more, but also, no less (p.9). These positions shed light on the importance of making clear what actions were taken to examine the experience (e.g. introspective practice, phenomenological reflection, etc.), how the experience was transmitted (e.g. conversation, written report, non-verbal, etc.), and by whom, in what context, the data was interpreted (e.g. from a psychological, phenomenological, or ethnographical perspective).

Such considerations also appear in dance studies that examine kinesthetic experience (Ehrenberg, 2015; Potter, 2008; Purser, 2018b; Ravn, 2010; Ravn & Hansen, 2013), either as methodological rationales or as one of the core topics of the study. For instance, dance ethnographer Caroline Potter (2008) proposes that dancers' sensory experiences are institutionally-shaped in that they are both a product of dance training and the process by which successful training is achieved (p.447). Potter (2008) draws on anthropologist David Howes' writings (1991), which explain that the patterning of sense experience varies from one culture to the next in accordance with the meaning and emphasis attached to each of the modalities of perception (Howe, 1991, p.3). Works by other dance scholars resonate with this view (Foster, 2010; Purser, 2018b; Ravn, 2010; Ravn & Hansen, 2013), endorsing the idea that various social factors such as cultural ideology and practice-specific imagery can influence how dancers conceive (or become aware) of their sensory experience. The connection between social influences and the formation of sense experience is in no way specific to dancers or to dance practice (as can be seen by Howes' general statement). However, dancers are often considered to have a uniquely heightened awareness of their kinesthetic experience, which, again, is shaped by their continued participation in dance; a kinesthetically driven practice. Returning for a moment to Purser's (2018b) claim, that professional dance training and practice call for very high levels of awareness of, and . . . the capacity for reflection on . . . pre-reflective or tacit embodied phenomena (p.321) (see Chapter 1, p.40), it is possible to see the dancer as an active and competent participant in the examination of experience. Ehrenberg (2015) refers to this as kinesthetic intelligence (p.44) which is explored in her study through verbal accounts and phenomenological approaches.

In dance studies, this intelligence, or a certain embodied competence (Ravn & Hansen, 2013, p.205) is also often held by researchers, when they themselves are experienced dancers (Ehrenberg, 2015; Potter, 2008; Ravn, 2010; Ravn & Hansen, 2013). Ravn (2010), for

instance, has explored dancers' sense of weight by utilising her 'own embodied competence as a dancer' (p.23) to experience movement alongside, observe, and elicit/interpret experiential accounts from, the participants of her study. Later on, Ravn & Hansen (2013) reflect on the methodology of this study, noting that '[t]he embodied competence of the researcher facilitated her ability 'to see something' that would otherwise have remained unnoticed' (p.205).

Ehrenberg (2015) makes a similar note on her own methodology, writing that '[a] shared competence between the dancer-participants and researcher was beneficial because it enabled a mutual understanding of language and lived dancing experience, which helped bring out certain issues in the interview-discussions' (p.45-46). In discussing this approach, however, the above authors add that it is important to be reflexive of the influences that those unique perspectives may have on the research. Ravn & Hansen (2013), for example, write that the researcher's challenge was 'to find ways to be able to doubt and be critical of what her competences might mean to the research process and to be able to question the implicit structure and logic in the practices and meanings given by the dancers' (Ravn & Hansen, 2013). Similarly, Ehrenberg (2015) draws on methodologist John Creswell's (2007) writings to emphasise the importance of 'actively report[ing] on values and biases' (p.18) and positioning oneself as the interpreter of the research.

A notable aspect of these accounts is their attention towards social influences and exchanges, in that they address 1.) how dancers experience their bodily movement, 2.) how dancers make sense of or articulate that experience, or 3.) how the researcher's embodied knowledge affects his/her interpretation of those accounts. As a researcher, I am also influenced by and draw continuously from my previous dance experience. Not only in the interview process, but also during the various stages of the study – such as participant recruitment, instructions during data collection, and interpretive analysis – my understanding of dance-specific language (e.g. 'listening to the body'; 'allowing movements to arise') helped to

effectively communicate particular forms of embodied knowledge. Moreover, my òlived dance experienceö (Ehrenberg, 2015, p.45) helped me to see movement and to interpret verbal accounts through a dancer's lens, which brought about new themes and avenues of questioning which may have otherwise remained unnoticed (Ravn, 2010). These influences, along with the participants' backgrounds and how those backgrounds may have affected their awareness and reflections of their experience, will be articulated in later chapters.

3.2.3. Exploring the relationship between Flow and movement performance

Whilst the discipline of neurophenomenology has laid the foundation for relating theories such as hypofrontality and enhanced sensorimotor processing to subjective and experiential accounts on Flow and meditation (e.g. effortlessness, absorption, selfless-ness), applying these methods to movement-based practices raises a challenge. This is mainly due to the fact that technological tools used in neuroscientific studies ó such as electroencephalogram (EEG) devices (Berkovich-Ohana, Glicksohn, & Goldstein, 2014=Kakumanu et al., 2018=Van Lutterveld et al., 2017) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) (Baron Short et al., 2010=Hagerty et al., 2013=Mahone, Travis, Gervirtz, & Hubbard, 2018) ó generally cannot be used during rigorous physical activity²⁴. As such, researchers of movement-based practices still find difficulty in testing or applying the methods, findings, and theoretical frameworks that exist within neurophenomenological research. How, then, can the connection between Flow and its relation to movement performance be identified, analysed, and described?

A number of researchers have attempted to gather empirical evidence on how Flow might affect an individual's behaviour and physical performance (Bakker et al., 2011=Jackson et al.,

²⁴ This restriction has started to loosen as technological advancements have been made to enable their use during more athletic activities. The EEG technology, for example, has been modified into a mobile device which can be worn during motion (Aspinall, Mavros, Coyne, & Roe, 2013; Gargiulo et al., 2008). However, this is still a novel method which has yet to establish a set of tools and techniques which can accurately, effectively, and reliably measure changes in consciousness during motion.

2001=Schüler & Brunner, 2009, Stavrou et al., 2007). However, the majority of these studies focus on the context of telic Flow experiences (Swann et al., 2018), such as sports, work and other goal-oriented ó as opposed to explorative ó activities. For instance, athletesøself-reports on their Flow experiences have been collected alongside data on their performance levels in various sports to test the notion that Flow is accompanied by optimal athletic performance (Jackson et al., 2001=Stavrou et al., 2007). Although some of these studies have identified relationships between Flow and enhanced athletic performance, the performance levels were measured through quantifiable indicators, such as recorded speed in a race or the number of errors made in a competition. As the current thesis focuses on paratelic Flow states which are grounded in a more explorative context (e.g. dance, somatic practices, and meditative episodes), evaluating its performative effects through preconceived indicators such as õgoodö and õpoorö or õhighö and õlowö performance runs against the premises of the activity. Moreover, based on the notion that Meditative Flow experiences may relate to *qualitative* changes in movement performance (see Chapter 2, p.67), the aim should be to produce qualitative and descriptive observations that would respond to the wider question; how, if at all, do Flow experiences manifest as, or interact with, observable performance qualities?

Louise Emma Douseø doctoral thesis (2013) on Flow addresses a similar line of inquiry by exploring the qualitative changes in a dancerø movement performance through the use of a 3-D motion capture system. In Douseø research, the motion capture system was used as a mediation tool which supported the researcherø interpretive analysis of the movement performance. The researcher identified herself as a õcreative practitionerö (p. 14), who draws from her background and expertise to observe and analyse the mediated visual representations of performersø movements. Whilst this use of technology is an innovative and progressive methodology in the context of practice-based research, the conditions of a digitally captured and animated movement performance widely diverge from a live dance performance situation. For

instance, there are multiple layers of media between mover and performer, and the animations lack minute details on exact muscular motions and facial expressions. Additionally, whilst a live audience can only see the performance once, often from a single, set angle, the animated performance enables the observer to rewind the footage or to change viewing positions during performance. These factors could possibly skew one's evaluations and render the results inapplicable to the context of live dance observation.

The current research approaches the relationship between Meditative Flow and movement performance from a similar angle to Douse (2013), by utilising the human eye to analyse movement qualities. However, the thesis diverges from Douse's approach by incorporating multiple viewer's perspectives in the observation and identification of a mover's Meditative Flow state, so as to examine the performance from an intersubjective (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson; 2006) perspective. The following section provides a rationale for this audience-based approach in analysing movement performance, drawing on existing studies which examine the phenomenon of watching dance.

3.2.4. Audience-based perceptual analysis

Psychologists Corrine Jola et al. (2012) have conducted an interdisciplinary project entitled *The Experience of Watching Dance*, which explores a range of topics regarding audience experience, including kinesthetic empathy (Ehrenberg & Wood, 2012), emotion (Grosbas, Tan, & Pollick, 2012), and within-audience synchronisations in brain activity (Jola et al., 2013). Jola et al. (2012) focus on 'theatre dance' (e.g. Bharatanatyam, contemporary dance, and ballet) to raise an important point on the nature of dance as an artform:

. . . theatre dance combines physical (athletic) components with artistic (aesthetic) values.

Unlike competitive sports, gymnastics or athletics, or even competitive dance (such as ballroom competitions), the quality of theatre dance cannot be measured in terms of a

score by which one beats an opponent. . . . A theatre dance performance is a multifunctional socio-cultural event constituted of many diverse strands, including the dancers, the music that accompanies the movements, the costumes, the lighting, the set, the other audience members, and so on, that work together to impact on the spectator in the moment of watching. (p.19)

Whilst their notion of 'theatre dance' does not fully encapsulate the scope of movement practices addressed in the current thesis, the authors' assertions on the nature of dance performance (Orgs, Caspersen, & Haggard, 2016)²⁵ are relevant to the current context, in that it recognises the active role of the spectator who makes aesthetic judgements based on their own lived-in experiences. In the context of performance evaluation in Zen-based movement practices, Krein & Ilundáin (2014) point out that the instructor who, in other words, would be the spectator of the training process has an essential role in the evaluation of the performance, as an empathetic, yet critical observer. Similarly, both Hahn (2007) and Sellers-Young (1993) accounts on the aesthetic evaluation of Nihon-bu are based on their interpretations of how practitioners and teachers describe a masterful performer through their understanding of the performer's internal processes. In other words, it is not only the measurable (e.g. mediated through technology and/or quantitative analysis) properties of movement that are influenced by Meditative Flow, but also the aesthetic or performative aspects that are felt and lived-in by another witness of that movement.

In his article on somatics and phenomenology, psychologist Glenn Hartelius (2007) notes that perceiving is an active, creative, participatory process wherein perceptions are shaped by the sociocultural and biological situation of the mind. For instance, when an audience member perceives a dance performance, the sensory information is processed through the viewer's visual

²⁵ The current thesis defines the term 'performance' based on Orgs et al.'s (2016) views which focus on the presence of a spectator (viewer), rather than on the qualities of a dancer's (or artists') internal mode of being/doing (Butler, 1988; Rosson, 2013; Zarrilli, 2011).

and auditory systems, combined into a singular, continuous perception of a body (or bodies) in space. The perceived body(ies) and movements may also be felt kinesthetically in the viewer's own embodied awareness (Cross, Kirsch, Ticini, & Schütz-Bosbach, 2011), and further processed (i.e. evaluated or contextualised) in relation to the viewer's past experiences and cultural knowledge (Reynolds & Reason, 2012=Zarrilli, 2011). In his discussion on the issues and processes of transforming phenomenological experience into scientific observations, Hartelius (2007) states that a commonality in these actively conceived perceptions (i.e. phenomenological accounts) must be identified through discussion and dialogue. In the context of this thesis, which turns towards the audience's accounts to extrapolate the performative effects of a dancer's consciousness, Hartelius's claim serves as a foundation to formulate its interdisciplinary methodology. Such a methodology can involve:

- 1.) Holding dialogues with participants (e.g. audience members) to extract a particular experience of 'object identification' (Hartelius, 2007, p.35) – the 'object' being the dancer's Meditative Flow,
- 2.) Finding commonalities among these experiences to hypothesise what observable aspects (e.g. performance qualities) signify that object, and
- 3.) Further consulting the participants' accounts to define how those observable aspects are transmitted to, and processed within, their perceptions.

In developing this methodology, some existing approaches in extracting and analysing audience's perceptions shall be further examined.

Jola et al. (2012) draw upon Max van Manen's (1990) hermeneutical view in exploring audience perception, which 'emphasizes the role of conscious reflection and also the use of language as a part of lived experience' (p.28). Based on this view, the authors propose that 'a spectator's 'experience' of the performance is not located solely in what takes place while they are watching but encompasses re-construction and interpretation through subsequent reflection

in social contexts (p.28). In practice, their approach entails an exploratory and interactive process of reflective (post-performance) articulation, which allows the audience to tease out what they themselves consider to be important about what they have seen (p.28). In this sense, Jola et al. rely on the spectators' ability to draw relevant points in their self-reflections and to construct subjectively accurate representations of their experience. Here, the collective (i.e. between audience and researcher) acts of reflecting on, interpreting and reconstructing the experience can be seen as a continuous process of both generating and analysing qualitative data, which ultimately provides a contextualised view of the real-time experience of watching dance. What Jola et al. (2012) highlight in these accounts is the significance of reflection and articulation, not only as a method of extracting information but also as the *conception* of perspectives on how a dance performance becomes (or is) an aesthetic experience. The current thesis resonates with the above authors' stances, in that it regards the audiences' accounts (and the process in which they were conceived) as a potentially valuable key to uncovering how the performance is received by a viewer.

There are, however, limitations in applying this approach to the current context, as the thesis attempts to utilise qualitative, reflective accounts to formulate systematic (i.e. applicable to other practical situations) theories on the relationships between the dancers' and audiences' experiences. For instance, the experience of watching dance involves multiple sensory and cognitive layers of perception, such as kinesthetic empathy, embodied anticipation, cultural appreciation, and sensual or escapist motivations, as described in Reason & Reynolds' (2010) study. This complexity presents a challenge in refining the research focus to a particular aspect of the audience experience, which, in the case of this thesis, are perceptual experiences which reference the dancer's state of Meditative Flow. Additionally, qualitative approaches like phenomenology and ethnography are meant to be undertaken with a sensitivity towards, and deep integration of, the participants' cultural and ideological backgrounds, as their purpose is to

analyse in detail how participants perceive and make sense of things (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p.57). Whilst such an approach may be useful to understand how certain elements of a dance performance are perceived and processed within an individual audience, the amount of information becomes too expansive in terms of identifying *consistencies* among multiple audience members, in terms of their perceptions (or lack thereof) of a dancer's Meditative Flow. Moreover, the thesis specifically aims to understand what sort of *performative qualities* might signify the dancer's Meditative Flow state, based on what the audience members claim to perceive.

The current thesis attempts to account for these challenges by designing the data collection process in a way that directs the audience's attention towards the main topic of the research. This includes carefully crafted pre-performance verbal instructions, during-performance technological intervention, and post-performance interview structures. Details of these measures – which were developed and tested through a series of pilot studies – will be given in the fifth chapter, which covers the second empirical study of this thesis. Another consideration regarding this audience-based method is the issue of matching the audience's and dancer's accounts in terms of timing. In order to examine how an audience's perception might change based on the dancer's internal state, one must ensure that the two parties are reporting on the same point(s) in time within the performance. As an exploratory strategy, the participants' interview accounts were accompanied by visual timelines (developed collaboratively between each participant and myself) which represent their experiences/perceptions throughout the performance (a detailed description of this method will be given in Chapter 5).

3.2.5. Method 2: first- and third-person event-focused interviews

The second study of this thesis involves a series of event-focused interviews conducted on both the mover (i.e. 'experiencer' of Meditative Flow) and observers (i.e. external 'perceivers' of

Meditative Flow) of a single movement performance, which examine the role of Meditative Flow during a performance scenario. The study responds to questions c.) and d.): how do movers experience Meditative Flow during movement performance—and how might these states interact with the qualities and aesthetics of the mover's physical performance? As for the second question, the study approaches the topic of performance outcomes/quality from an audience-based perspective, asking: how do observers perceive and describe the experience of witnessing a performer move in and out of Meditative Flow?

This study can be seen as an idiographic rather than nomothetic research (Robinson, 2014), wherein the subjective phenomena of an individual or a small group of individuals are examined in depth. One qualitative research design that suits this context is a case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008), in which a small number of participants are interviewed in a natural (or true-to-life) context. However, it is difficult to predict or to induce Flow experiences in a natural setting, especially when the activity is self-led or where there are no structured tasks whose difficulty levels can be manipulated. Therefore, rather than examining a truly "natural" dance setting (e.g. daily class, theatre performance, studio workshop, etc.) wherein multiple fluidly changing goals and purposes are bound to arise, I organised a studio-based movement session wherein the participants were made aware that its purpose is to study Flow. Given this understanding, the movers were asked to engage in their practice of choice (i.e. one during which they have previously experienced Flow) in a way that is as close to their normal approach as possible. I see this as a mid-point between a case study and a structured experiment (Barker, McCarthy, Jones, & Moran, 2011; Baxter & Jack, 2008), wherein participants are placed in a specific research context or much like a lab or but with scope to engage in their regular routine. Additionally, the study was repeated three times with different participants, drawing on the idea of a multiple-case study design (Baxter & Jack, 2008), which replicates a single case study to compare their results and to find consistencies or differences in the findings.

Whilst qualitative methods (e.g. case study, interpretive interviews) involve a simultaneous (or back-to-back) process of data collection and analysis (Elliot & Timulak, 2005), the current study conducted the data collection sessions in close succession to each other (within a month), followed by a single analysis process collating all of the results. This was a conscious move away from qualitative research designs which utilise acquired data to inform and adapt further processes, as such approaches may make the study and its design/procedure difficult to reproduce in future research. The current study attempted to ensure consistency within the three trials, not only by unifying its procedures but also by organising its time sequences so that the results of one session would not explicitly influence how the next session was carried out.

Whilst I am aware that this approach has some shortcomings in areas that traditional case-studies or phenomenological approaches might cover ó such as a deep engagement with sociocultural or philosophical perspectives ó these elements were not central to the purposes of this study. The intention was to consult the movers and observers of a single session to understand how Meditative Flow plays a role in the context of movement performance, rather than to develop a wider view on the experience of performing or watching dance. I propose this approach as a novel and exploratory way to integrate first- and third-person perspectives of a single event to examine how Meditative Flow states are felt and seen in the context of movement performance.

3.3. Mixed-methods research and issues on rigour and validity

As was mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the thesis utilises a mixed-method design. A mixed-methods design, according to interdisciplinary researcher Felicity Bishop (2015), is a research design in which òqualitative and quantitative approaches (or -componentsø) are utilized together in a single study or series of related studiesö (p.6). Mixed-methods designs are considered compatible with pragmatism, as it ògenerally acknowledge[s] the epistemological

differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches but do[es] not see these forms of inquiry as incommensurableö (Bishop, 2015, p.7). The benefits of a mixed-methods design within pragmatist approaches have been discussed by scholars who work within psychology, education, and social sciences (Bishop, 2015; Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), which often face challenges in incorporating ó and reconciling the differences between ó positivist and postpositivist epistemologies. As quantitative methods are often attached to positivist views, and qualitative methods to postpositivist views, the two methods face the same incompatibility disputes as their parent epistemologies (Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). However, as Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) note, quantitative and qualitative methods share core aspects that reflect their overall objective and scope; both õuse empirical observations to address research questionsö (p.15), describe, interpret, and make explanatory arguments based on those observations, and õincorporate safeguards into their inquiries in order to minimize confirmation biasö (p.15). Based on a pragmatic view, which focuses not on epistemological positions but on the outcomes of the inquiry, quantitative and qualitative methods can õinform and supplement each other . . . to produce a more complete pictureö (Feilzer, 2010) of the phenomenon at hand.

Mixed-methods designs can take various forms, as can be seen in the numerous typologies ó based on the purposes for, ordering of, and emphases on quantitative and qualitative elements ó that have been proposed (Bishop, 2015; Creswell et al., 2003; Greene, Caracelli, Graham, 1989; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori, Teddlie, & Teddlie, 1998). As noted by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), õresearchers should mindfully create designs that effectively answer their research questionsö (p.20), meaning that one must consider what the research questions are, what materials can be used to answer them, and how one intends on making sense of the material. Based on Johnson & Onwuegbuzie's (2004) framework, the current thesis follows a *within-stage mixed-model design* embedded within an

across-stage mixed-model design, meaning that each of the two studies involves both qualitative and quantitative elements but with a different emphasis (i.e. Study 1: quantitative emphasis; Study 2: qualitative emphasis). In this sense, the thesis mixes qualitative and quantitative elements both concurrently (i.e. within-stage) and sequentially (i.e. across-stage).

The purpose of the first study is to explore dancers' and movement practitioners' Flow experiences widely by asking whether, and in what situations, they have experienced elements of Meditative Flow. As was mentioned in section 3.1.3. of this chapter, this study serves as a pilot to the second main study in that it determines the preliminary boundaries of the concept and identifies potential participants for further investigation. As the purpose is to gauge the distribution of a phenomenon rather than to examine them in depth, the survey focuses mainly on quantitative data on the participants' previous experiences. The following interview study is the main investigation of the thesis, which directly addresses the three research questions that were proposed at the outset: how might dancers and movement practitioners experience paratelic Flow; how might these states interact with the mover's physical performance; and how might viewers perceive and describe this phenomenon? As these questions are open-ended and exploratory in nature (i.e. 'in what way' rather than 'how much/many'), the study places an overall emphasis on qualitative data, which is the participants' verbal accounts. However, the verbal accounts are analysed together with visual timelines which were developed collaboratively between each participant and myself. Parts of this analysis contain quantitative elements such as frequencies in which the observers' responses matched that of the mover. This type of mixed-methods analysis is referred to by Creswell et al. (2003) as *triangulation*, which can 'offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method' (p.183). In the current study, this method is used to organise the participants' (i.e. movers' and observers') responses in a temporal frame and to examine their divergence and convergence across time. As the verbal accounts on their own do not provide information on specific time

points or perceived levels/intensities of Flow, the visual timelines are used as supplementary information which can offset this weakness.

Taking a pragmatic approach, the thesis utilises both qualitative and quantitative methods while placing different emphases based on the purposes of each stage. In taking such a fluid approach, however, one must consider ways of assessing the validity of that research. In contrast to the established definitions of (and procedures for evaluating) validity in quantitative, mono-method research, the meaning of validity in mixed-methods research is still heavily debated (Feilzer, 2010; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Onwuegbuzie & Johnson (2006), for instance, argues that validity, in the context of mixed-methods research is not about singular truths (p.48) but about obtaining findings and/or making inferences that are credible, trustworthy, dependable, transferable, and/or confirmable (p.52). Similarly, Feilzer (2010), notes that validity is not the same as truth in the scientific sense and that it requires reflection on the question or theory to which the data speak (p.14).

A similar debate exists within qualitative research as a whole – albeit with a much larger pool of literature (Carminati, 2018; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Noble & Smith, 2015; Smith, 2017; Smith & McGanon, 2018). In place of terms like validity, reliability, and generalisability – as commonly used in quantitative research – qualitative researchers have proposed terms such as credibility, transferability, and consistency to address assessment criteria that are more relevant for their research paradigms. *Credibility* (or *truth-value*), as originally defined by Lincoln & Guba (1985), requires that researchers outline personal experiences and viewpoints that may have resulted in methodological bias (Noble & Smith, 2015, p.2) and that participants' perspectives are clearly presented. *Transferability* (or *applicability*) requires that consideration is given to whether findings can be applied to other contexts, settings or groups (Noble & Smith, 2015, p.2) and *consistency* (or *trustworthiness*) refers to whether the researcher's decisions throughout the study are made transparent so other researchers can

arrive at similar or comparable findings (Noble & Smith, 2015, p.2). According to Carminati (2018), these terms of credibility, transferability, and consistency are thought to correspond to (or replace) the concepts of internal validity, external validity (or generalisability), and reliability, respectively. Additionally, the term *confirmability* (or *neutrality*) refers to the overall rigour of the research or comparable to the idea of objectivity in quantitative research (Carminati, 2018) which can be achieved when the above criteria have all been fulfilled. According to Noble & Smith (2015), confirmability centres on acknowledging the complexity of prolonged engagement with participants and that the methods undertaken and findings are intrinsically linked to the researchers' philosophical position, experiences and perspectives (p.2). As the current thesis places an overall emphasis on qualitative data and analysis, these criteria are relevant and applicable measures for assessing its rigour. Noble & Smith (2015) recommend a number of strategies to ensure rigour in qualitative research, such as a detailed documentation of the research process, continuous revisiting of audio-visual interview recordings, and the use of rich, verbatim extracts from participants' accounts. These strategies, alongside reflections on my position (Creswell & Miller, 2000) as a researcher (e.g. training, theoretical stance, relationship to participants or as was mentioned in section 3.2.2. of this chapter), are incorporated into the practical stages of this thesis.

In the mixed-methods domain, Teddlie & Tashakkori (2003), who have published one of the most widely cited frameworks, add two dimensions to assessing validity (or what they refer to as *inference quality*) in mixed-methods research: *design quality* and *interpretive rigour*. Design quality involves elements such as *design suitability/fidelity* and *analytic adequacy*, which address the quality, rigour, and appropriateness of the methods undertaken. On the other hand, interpretive rigour includes elements such as *interpretive agreement/distinctiveness* and *theoretical consistency*, which assess the study's conclusions based on their correspondence with the data, coherence with existing theories, and explanatory strength in relation to other

possible inferences. The current thesis considers these criteria alongside those in qualitative research, as it follows a (within- and across-stage) mixed-model design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). Building on Teddlie & Tashakkori's (2003) accounts, Onwuegbuzie & Johnson (2006) recommend some strategies that could be implemented across different stages of the research process. For instance, the authors suggest 'paradigmatic mixing' (p.59) in which a researcher recognises 'subjective, intersubjective, and objective types of reality,' takes an 'intersubjective approach to knowledge generation,' and explicitly describes 'how one judged one's own study' (p.59). In terms of data analysis, Onwuegbuzie & Johnson (2006) discusses methods of 'data conversion' (e.g. 'quantitising' qualitative data), such as counting: '... qualitative researchers can sometimes obtain more meaning by obtaining counts of observations in addition to their narrative descriptions' (p.58). However, the authors also note that assessing the validity of a mixed-methods study 'should be seen as a continuous process rather than as a fixed attribute of a specific research study' (p.56), as mixed-methods research 'tends to iterative and interactive . . . such that, in a sense, *inference closure* (i.e., being able to make definitive statements about the quality of inferences made) might never be fully reached within a particular study' (p.56). With this account in mind, the thesis incorporates Onwuegbuzie & Johnson's (2006) recommendations as possible ways to maintain rigour in its exploratory methodology.

Summary

The chapter explored existing and novel methods of studying the experience, conditions (or contextual situation), and performative outcomes of Meditative Flow in movement-based contexts, in order to identify effective ways to address the research questions raised at the beginning of this chapter.

The first section introduced an existing questionnaire method (Jackson & Eklund, 2002=

Kawabata & Mallett, 2011=Kawabata et al., 2008=Moneta, 2012) which is used to identify Flow experiences that occur within a given activity (i.e. questions a. & b.). Some considerations were made regarding the use of this method, including the contextual differences between a sports setting and a meditative or somatic dance setting, as well as the issue of defining the activity at hand (i.e. meditative movement). With these considerations in mind, the section presented the first research method of this thesis, which is an exploratory survey (Forza, 2002) that examines the prevalence of Meditative Flow experiences among dance and movement practitioners, during meditative or somatic movement episodes. Alongside the above aim, the survey attempts to test whether the componential structure of two original concepts, Meditative Flow and meditation-in-movement, are applicable to the current research.

The second section of the chapter addressed questions c. and d., which engage with the experiential and observable (or physical) aspects of Meditative Flow during movement performance. The section introduced the idea of event-focused, semi-structured interviews (Swann, 2016), as a way to examine the contextually grounded and subjectively felt qualities of Meditative Flow, through a qualitative and inductive approach. In proposing this approach, the section also discussed the implications of using qualitative interviews to investigate sensory and kinesthetic experience, addressing the importance of self-reflexivity and an awareness of the participants' kinesthetic intelligence (Ehrenberg, 2015; Pooter, 2008). Next, the section explored ways of analysing the performative outcomes of Meditative Flow, drawing upon existing methods and approaches that are used in dance studies which focus on audience experience (Jola et al., 2012; Reason & Reynolds, 2010). With the above considerations, the section has presented an overview of the second study in this thesis, which involves a series of event-focused, semi-structured interviews conducted on both the mover and the observers of a single performance (i.e. event).

Finally, the chapter gave an overview of the thesis' mixed-methods approach (Bishop,

2015; Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), which involves both within-stage and across-stage mixed-model designs (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Given this fluid approach, the section also addressed issues on rigour and validity that arise when mixing quantitative and qualitative methods. Drawing from accounts on qualitative research (Carminati, 2018; Noble & Smith, 2015; Smith, 2017; Smith & McGanon, 2018), alongside those on mixed-methods designs (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003), the section raised alternative assessment criteria such as credibility, transferability, consistency, design quality, and interpretive rigour. In response to these accounts, the section discussed how the current thesis will ensure rigour through reflexive practice and methodological design.

4. Study 1: Meditative Flow experiences among movement practitioners

4.1. Introduction

Meditative Flow is defined in this thesis as a state of present-centred, effortless attention, which can occur during non-competitive, explorative, and open-ended movement activities (i.e. paratelic Flow ó Swann et al., 2018). This type of experience can be identified in a range of practitioners' accounts, including those on Zen-influenced movement practices (Fraleigh, 1999=Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Taylor, 2006) and other contemporary dance practices (Douse, 2013=Mullis, 2016=Urmston & Hewison, 2014=ucznik, 2018). Whilst both psychological and cognitive research (Bruya, 2010b=Csikszentmihalyi, 1990=Engeser, 2012=Peifer, 2012) have provided compelling arguments tying Flow, movement, and meditation together, this multifaceted phenomenon has yet to find a consistent conceptual frame that is suitable for its cross-disciplinary scope.

As is the case with many studies on altered states during movement-based activities, this difficulty is mainly caused by the variety of ways in which embodied experiences and practices have been portrayed and defined (Deets, 2015=Schmalzl et al., 2014 ó see Chapter 1). Due to this difficulty, there have not been surveys which have examined how, when, and whether such states can appear during meditative or somatically informed movement, with the precision of demographic statistics. Whilst there have been numerous surveys focusing on specific types of meditation (Baer et al., 2008; Bernstein & Grasso, 2001; Jacob, Jovic, & Brinkerhoff, 2009; Ross, Friedmann, Bevans, & Thomas, 2013; Shafil, Lavelly, & Jafe, 1974), as well as surveys conducted on the topic of Flow (Jackson, Ford, Kimiecik, & Marsh, 1998; Lu, Zhou, & Wang, 2009; Nielsen & Cleal, 2010; Rettie, 2001; Shin, 2006), few have focused on the range of

meditative episodes in which Flow-like experiences can occur, or on the prevalence of paratelic Flow experiences during movement.

As was mentioned in the Introduction chapter, one of the aims of this thesis is to examine paratelic Flow experiences, particularly in the context of dance. As a foregrounding step, this chapter attempts to develop and propose definitions for both the phenomenon at hand and the movement approach of interest, and to explore the definitions' applicability in this research through an online survey. The definitions and their rationales will be presented in the first half of the chapter, drawing on existing componential structures of Flow as well as from that of meditation. The developed componential definitions (i.e. Meditative Flow, Meditation in Movement) were embedded into an exploratory online survey, which was guided by the following hypotheses:

- a. Meditative Flow can occur during Meditation in Movement²⁶
- b. The components of Meditation in Movement are present in a variety of movement episodes, unlimited to specific meditative, somatic, or dance-related practices

Through this exploration, the study addresses the prevalence of Flow experiences during meditative movement episodes within the current dance and movement practice community. The study serves as a pilot to the thesis' main study (Chapter 5), in that the proposed definitions, the pool of participants, and their survey responses will inform its recruitment process.

4.1.1. Definition for Meditative Flow

The following section presents a rationale for the componential definition of Meditative Flow that is used within this thesis, drawing on an existing framework in Flow research (Moneta, 2012). As was mentioned in Chapter 3, some of the language that is used in the original nine

²⁶ Hypothesis a. does not imply the assumption that Meditative Flow occurs *only* during Meditation in Movement; rather, it assumes that Meditation in Movement could be *one* or possibly prominent or mode of movement approach in which Meditative Flow may occur.

components (as well as in the Flow scales) do not suit the context of Meditative Flow or of exploratory practices such as somatic movement. This section will examine the contextual and processual underpinnings of the nine Flow components, first within the original definition, then within a meditative context. Based on these discussions, the section will propose an altered version of the nine Flow components, reworded to suit the context of meditation and movement practice.

As was previously mentioned, the items which appear in the commonly used Flow scales (i.e. Flow State Scale, Dispositional Flow Scale) can be categorised into nine components: clear goals, unambiguous feedback, challenge-skill balance, concentration on the task at hand, sense of control, action-awareness merging, loss of self-consciousness, losing track of time, and autotelic experience. According to Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi (2009), the first three components constitute the conditions of Flow, which induce the remaining six experiential components. Additionally, some Flow researchers (Kawabata & Mallett, 2011=Quinn, 2005) have suggested that there are antecedent-consequence relationships between the six remaining components. Such frameworks are useful in examining the componential structure of Flow, as well as the contextual and processual frames (Delle Fave et al., 2011) which underlie those components. However, as the exact relationships among the six experiential components are still under debate, the current chapter will present a simplified model of these components, loosely based on Quinn's (2005) framework.

The six experiential components can be separated into three levels which appear sequentially after the 'condition' components have been fulfilled. The condition components induce the first level of experience, which is 'concentration on the task at hand.' This leads to the second level, 'action-awareness merging,' 'loss of self-consciousness,' and 'transformation of time.' Finally, the third level of experiences appear, which are 'sense of control' and 'autotelic experience' (i.e. rewarding sensation) (see Figure 2 developed originally for this

thesis ó for visual chart).

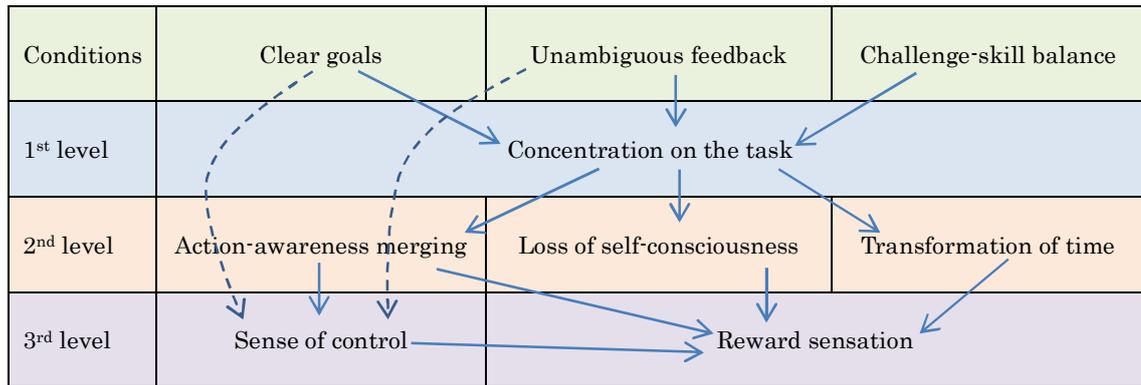


Figure 2. Causal effects and levels of Flow components.

Although each level of experience generally induces the next as a combination of its components, the last component, “sense of control” is specifically dependent on the first two condition components, “clear goal” and “unambiguous feedback,” as well as on the experiential component, “action-awareness merging.” This is because, in order for an individual to feel “control,” there must be an *object* to be controlled. As long as the goal defines the task (e.g. hit a target with a ball), and the feedback efficiently evaluates the performance (e.g. visual feedback of the location of the ball), the object of control (e.g. movement of the body and ball) is clear, and therefore, the individual can judge whether or not s/he feels a “sense of control.” The perception of action-awareness merging, then, becomes the precedent for a heightened sense of control, as it involves the individual’s heightened efficiency in executing the task.

In the case of *Meditative Flow*, on the other hand, the three condition components may not present themselves in the same structure. As aforementioned, meditative processes are often self-directed and are not initiated through external motivations (Delle Fave et al., 2011). Whilst the condition components in the original scales are expressed as parameters of the external circumstances (goal, feedback, difficulty), in the context of meditation, they become parameters which are internally set. For example, certain meditation techniques include concentrating on one’s breath, attending to the sensations caused by each inhale and exhale, and continuing to

focus on the breath for as long and as intensely as possible (Bruya, 2010a=Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2010=Frewen, Evans, Maraj, Dozois, & Partridge, 2008). In other words, the condition components, in the context of meditation, could be expressed as the *task* of focusing (goal), the perceived *level* of focus (feedback), and the balance between the difficulty and ability to *maintain* that focus (challenge-skill balance). Moreover, considering the above nature of meditative activities, the first experience component, "concentration on the task at hand" may be much more consequential and self-explanatory than it is in the original paradigm, as, in meditation, concentration is explicitly and intentionally facilitated rather than being triggered through external conditions (e.g. challenge-skill balance).

Once the first level of experience is reached, the other components and levels may appear just as they do in other concepts of Flow, except for the last component, "sense of control." In the general Flow context, fulfilling this component entails that the object(ive) of the task is "under control." However, because meditative activities often do not involve externally set objectives, the phrase "sense of control" may cause confusion for a meditator. For the meditating individual, the feeling of "control" may be more prominent during the initial stage of intentional concentration, then gradually dissolve once concentration itself becomes effortless (Delle Fave et al., 2011). In movement-based activities, such a state of effortless concentration may manifest as a physical sensation of "rightness," or the feeling of "everything falling into place" (Sellers-Young, 1993). A similar interpretation may be the feeling of "being moved," or the "movement guiding the body" ó i.e. being taken over and "controlled" by the movement (Kasai, 1999). These experiences are closely related to the idea of action-awareness merging, as once the individual begins to move in tune with (or virtually without) his/her own intention, s/he would naturally perceive his/her movements to be "controlled" (or led, guided) by something other than oneself, resulting in the sensation of effortless "control" (see Figure 3 ó developed originally for this thesis ó for visual chart).

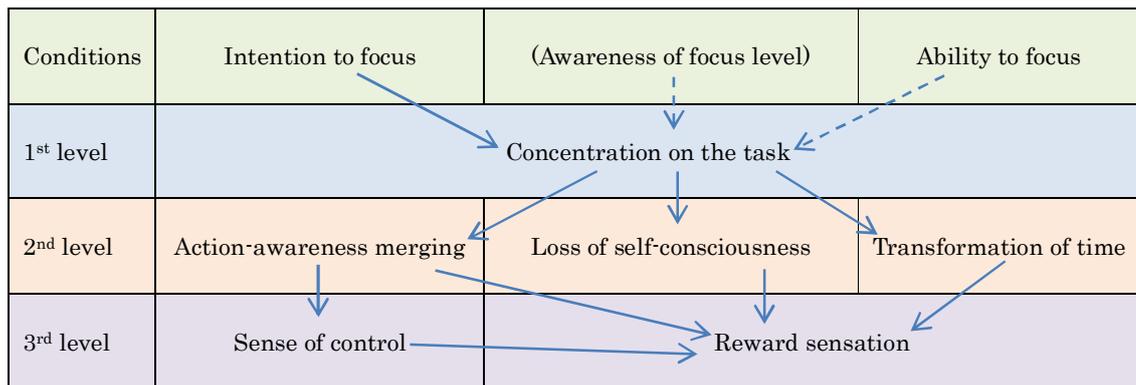


Figure 3. Causal effects and levels of Meditative Flow components.

Gathering from this discussion, a set of components for Meditative Flow (derived from the original nine components) can be defined as the following:

- a. Clear recognition of the task: maintaining focused attention
- b. Clear awareness of one's own level of attention
- c. Sense of capability in maintaining focus
- d. Sustaining of focused attention becomes effortless
- e. Feeling of "everything falling into place"
- f. Perception that movements are happening "automatically"
- g. Loss of self-consciousness (lack of concern towards others/judgements)
- h. Losing track of time
- i. Feeling that the activity is autotelic (fulfilling and rewarding)

I hypothesise that this componential definition of Meditative Flow is a suitable (i.e. agreeable to those who have experienced it) interpretation of an existing Flow-like experience, which occurs during (or is induced through) meditative or somatic movement approaches.

4.1.2. Definition for Meditation in Movement

The following section discusses how the movement approaches of interest could be defined through the idea of meditation in movement. As much of the literature discussing the

relationship between Flow and embodied experiences base their theories on a meditative process embedded in movement (Allen, 2015=Hahn, 2007=Kasai, 1999=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Sellers-Young, 1993), it can be hypothesised that Flow states can occur during movement episodes that involve a meditative approach. In order to determine what such an approach might entail, the following section will draw from existing ideas on the concept of meditation and propose how those elements could be identified in a given movement approach.

As was previously mentioned, Cardoso et al. (2004) presented a working definition of meditation, listing the following five components:

1. Utilisation of specific technique such as mantras, singular focus, breathing, etc.
2. Continuous focus on one anchoring aspect, such as a sensation or focal point
3. Avoidance of logical analysis, judgments, or expectations in the experience
4. Involvement of psychological or physical relaxation
5. Induced or initiated by the individual, independent of external pressure

These elements could be involved in various instances of contemporary dance and somatic practice. First, somatic practices are characterised by movement-led, deep sensory listening (Eddy, 2009=Eddy et al., 2015=Green, 2002), which could be considered as the utilisation of a specific attention technique (Cardoso et al. element 1). Second, this attentional approach involves continuous, diligent effort in sustaining an inner sensitivity (Sellers-Young, 1993=Taylor, 2006), which is consistent with the criteria of continuous focus (anchoring of Cardoso et al. element 2). The act of anchoring allows for the mind to release any analytical evaluations on the aesthetics of the movements themselves (Kasai, 1999=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014), which is reflective of Cardoso et al. third element=avoidance of analysis, judgement, or expectations. Fourth, the lack of critical self-evaluation enables one to move pre-reflectively and without unnecessary tension or force, whether the movements are choreographed (Sellers-Young, 1993), or improvised (Sweeney, 2009). This type of moving (i.e. relaxed, unforced) reflects the element

of psychological and physical relaxation (Cardoso et al. element 4). Finally, the process described so far is explicitly initiated through the individual's intention, as was mentioned in Chapter 2 (p.60). This prerequisite of the mover's active intention resonates with Cardoso et al.'s fifth element= self-induction.

With the above discussion in mind, the following set of components (derived from Cardoso et al. (2004) five criteria and reworded for dance and somatic practitioners) can be identified as the essence of meditative or somatic movement approaches:

- A. Intention to avoid distracting thoughts (Cardoso et al. elements 1 & 2)
- B. Continuous focus on one internal or sensory aspect (Cardoso et al. elements 1 & 2)
- C. Release of any conscious analysis, judgement or evaluation of one's movements (Cardoso et al. element 3)
- D. Lack of any external demands motivating or disrupting the process: self-induced (Cardoso et al. element 5)
- E. Lack of externally or internally forced movements (Cardoso et al. elements 4 & 5)

In the current study, this componential definition of meditation, specifically addressing somatic movement approaches/practices, are referred to as *Meditation in Movement*²⁷. Furthermore, I hypothesise that these components are shared among the meditative or somatic movement approaches in which Flow-like experiences are thought to occur. In other words, Meditative Flow may occur within practices which involve *Meditation in Movement*.

4.1.3. Various episodes of meditative moving

While the above elements may represent the commonalities shared between the movement

²⁷ The term *Meditation in Movement* is not to be confused with *Movement Meditation* of an original meditation technique developed by Gurdjieff & Bennett (Cohen, Laskowski, & Rambur, 2008) or *Contemplative Dance Practice* of another systematic practice developed by Barbara Dilley. Although both methods do contain some Buddhist influence which could be relevant to the current topic, the term *Meditation in Movement* is used here, not as a formalised practice (such as the above) but as an umbrella term for various movements methods and instances in movement.

episodes of interest, there remains an ambiguity as to whether this type of approach can also appear during dance training, performances or creative processes ó i.e. those which occur within contexts not explicitly labelled as òmeditative.ö Certain concepts deriving from somatic movement practices ó such as knowing through the òinner experiential bodyö (Green, 2002, p. 1), òbringing awareness to the process of breathing, sensing, connecting, and initiatingö (Brodie & Lobel, 2004, p. 1), and awakening òmeditative sensingö (Weber, 2009, p.243) ó are often integrated into contemporary dance classes and rehearsal processes in the U.S. and in Europe. In this sense, meditative elements could appear within a much wider range of dance and movement activities than those which strictly fall within the category of somatic or meditative practice.

Clinical researchers Nash & Newberg (2013) propose a useful model of meditation which addresses the variety of ways in which meditative practices can take form. The authors propose three categories of meditation òmethods,ö which are the following:

- a. Cognitive-Directed Method: involving a one-pointed focus or an intentionally mindful state of open awareness.
- b. Affective-Directed Method: allowing embodied emotional states or memories to arise.
- c. Null-Directed Method: letting (often repetitive) actions òemptyö the mind.

Considering Nash & Newberg's (2013) categories from a dance and movement perspective, one can identify a range of movement scenarios involving meditative elements but are not explicitly identified as meditative practice. For instance, the Cognitive-Directed Method may be involved in improvisational movement, the Affective Directed Method may be a part of a psychotherapeutic movement process, and the Null-Directed Method may appear in dance technique classes, rehearsals, and performances which involve repetitive movement.

Nash & Newberg (2013) frame the act of meditation as a linear model which reflects a spectrum of cognitive states identified in neuroscience research. According to their model, meditative activities begin with a ònormal waking state,ö followed by the òintention to begin,ö

the act of 'setting preliminaries,' then the implementation of the 'method' (as introduced above). Once the 'method' is enacted, the meditator is thought to experience an 'enhanced mental state' until s/he reaches the 'intention to finish' (Nash & Newberg, 2013, pp. 4-5)²⁸. In the current research context, the 'method' would entail elements of Meditation in Movement, and the 'enhanced mental state' would point to the experience of Meditative Flow. Although the 'method' or technique of meditation can largely vary depending on the tradition/practice, some examples of this stage can be identified in somatic practices, such as focusing on one's breathing, weight shifts, energy flow, tensions in the body, or tactile sensations, as well as scanning the body to find a focal point (Brodie & Lobel, 2004=Ginsburg, 1999=Green, 1999, 2002). In the context of formalised movement practices, such as Nihon-buyo (Hahn, 2007=Sellers-Young, 1993) or martial arts (Allen, 2015), (the intention and act of) executing set movement sequences can be considered as the 'method' stage, which can appear in a taught lesson or a performance. Nash & Newberg (2013) describe the stage of 'enhanced mental state' as a 'causal result of the successful application of the Method' (p.5) and give descriptive phrases such as 'altered consciousness' and 'meditative state' to supplement its definition. In the context of Meditative Flow, this state may involve elements such as the dancer's attention becoming present-centred, effortless and embodied.

The significance of Nash & Newberg's (2013) framework is that it is inclusive of the various instances in which meditative elements manifest, and that it does not limit the definition of meditation to practices and contexts which are explicitly labelled as such. The authors acknowledge the variety of characteristics which would define and distinguish each of the meditative processes, including the differences between 'static' versus 'kinetic,' different cognitive strategies, conceptual foci, required knowledge and/or beliefs, postural position,

²⁸ Whilst Nash & Newberg's (2013) linear model implies that altered states that are reached through such processes of meditation would be unbroken (or undisrupted) until one has the 'intention to finish,' there are in fact possibilities of unforeseen disruptions due to external or internal distractions; an example would be emotions of anxiety and fear in not knowing what happens next, or making a 'mistake,' as described by Taylor (2006).

breathing specifications, eyes open versus closed, and silent or auditory, all of which could vary within the practices and instances of inquiry.

Whilst Nash & Newberg's accounts widen the scope of meditation, their overall perspective on what meditation entails remains consistent with Cardoso et al. (2004) viewpoints on the components of meditation. For instance, Nash & Newberg's description of the 'intention to begin' supports Cardoso et al.'s criterion of 'self-induced,' and the 'method' execution stage represents the criterion of 'utilising a specific technique.' Moreover, the different types of 'methods' listed in Nash & Newberg's article reflect other criteria given by Cardoso et al., such as mantras, one-pointed focus, breathing, and anchoring. This idea, that Meditation in Movement can manifest in a variety of episodes unlimited to specific meditative, somatic, or dance practices, is proposed as another of the hypothesis of this study.

4.1.4. Summary of hypotheses

The above discussions have addressed the first objective of the chapter, which was to propose definitions, both for the phenomenon at hand (Meditative Flow) and the movement approach of interest (Meditation in Movement). Furthermore, I raise the following hypotheses regarding the proposed definitions:

- 1.) The componential definition of Meditative Flow is a suitable interpretation of existing Flow-like experiences which occur during meditative or somatic movement episodes.
- 2.) Components of Meditation in Movement are shared among the 'meditative or somatic movement approaches' that are mentioned in the first hypothesis.
- 3.) The components of Meditation in Movement are present in a variety of movement episodes, unlimited to specific meditative, somatic, or dance practices.

An exploratory online survey was conducted to explore the prevalence of Meditative Flow experiences during Meditation in Movement (as defined in this thesis) within the dance and

movement community. Through this survey, the study also aimed to test the applicability of the two definitions in the next practical study, and to develop an understanding of the range of movement episodes in which Meditative Flow might occur.

4.2. Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 140 participants who had dance and other movement experience. Participants were invited to participate in the survey via relevant emailing lists, social media platforms, and individual emails sent to several professional dance companies in Europe or the United States (Appendix 1 ó List of Recruitment Sources). Whilst the distribution of the survey may have reached those who live in areas outside of the United Kingdom (no data was collected on the region in which participants were based), the sample was limited to those who have basic reading and writing skills in English, as the survey was conducted only in English. The survey only asked participants to confirm that they were adults (i.e. ages 18 and above) who did not need guardian approval for their participation, and no other demographic information (e.g. age, educational background, nationality, ethnicity) was collected. This decision was made to streamline the data according to the purpose of the survey, which was to address the prevalence of certain experiences within a specific context, rather than to examine the influences of the participants's socio-demographic background. Prior to data collection, the study received ethical approval from the university's Research Ethics Committee²⁹.

Material

The material used was a multiple-question (closed and open-ended) online survey, originally developed for this study (www.flowsurvey.website/questions.html). The survey ran for six

²⁹ For further data, see Appendix 14 ó Data: óRaw survey dataö and óProcessed survey dataö

months, from 18th May 2016 to 16th Nov. 2016. An overview of the study (presented in the Information Sheet format provided by the university's Research Ethics Committee) was presented at the beginning of the survey, followed by a page which contained the consent form (i.e. the survey could not be taken unless the participant gave consent). The questions asked were separated into 4 sections:

Q1. Experience in Meditation in Movement

Q2. Dance or movement practices which involve Meditation in Movement

Q3. Experience in Meditative Flow during Meditation in Movement

Q4. Dance or movement practices (involving Meditation in Movement) in which the participant has experienced Meditative Flow

The survey page was set up so that each section became available only when the previous section had received a certain response (e.g. if the participant answered that they are familiar with any of the Meditation in Movement components [Q1], the survey asked which dance practice involved all of the components that they have selected [Q2])³⁰. The first and third sections which asked the participants' experience in Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow reflected the components of each concept listed in the previous sections of this chapter respectively. After conducting a pilot study asking thirteen dancers to check the comprehensibility of the survey wording and structure (see Appendix 2 of Survey Pilot Notes), the expression of each question and components were finalised as shown in Table 1.

As for Meditative Flow, participants were asked how frequently they experience each component of Q3, rather than whether or not they have ever had the experience, as in the pilot study (Appendix 2 of Survey Pilot Notes), participants expressed unease in responding to a clear yes/no choice due to the context-specific difference and fluctuation in their experience. In the

³⁰ This decision was made with regards to the main aim of the study, which was to determine whether movers experience Meditative Flow during Meditation in Movement. This means that those who do not practise Meditation in Movement were considered irrelevant to the study. Also, if the participant does not practise Meditation in Movement, or they do not experience Meditative Flow, the sub-questions (i.e. asking about types of movement episodes that involve this components) would also be irrelevant questions to ask.

survey, participants reported the frequency of their Meditative Flow experience through a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from "never" to "always." Q2 and Q4 were open-ended, free-input style questions, as the intention was to explore movement scenarios that involve elements of Meditation in Movement in an inductive way ó i.e. without limiting the participant's responses to my own expectations of which practices are relevant. Here, the participants were allowed to list more than one activity.

Table 1

Survey questions

Q1	Which of the following qualities sound familiar to you from any of your previous dance experience? (Please choose ALL that apply, even if you do not experience it all the time.) A. I have the intention to "quiet the mind" or "let go of distracting thoughts". B. I am continuously focused on one internal aspect (e.g. breath, energy, flow of consciousness, etc). C. I experience a release of any conscious analysis or judgement (e.g. self-monitoring or evaluation of my own movement). D. I am not rushed or pushed to attain an external goal such as winning a competition or hitting a target. E. I do not force my body to move in specific ways.
----	---

Q2 ó a	Are there any activities that involve ALL of the qualities that you have chosen in Q1 (e.g. the qualities are all present throughout a segment of the performance / session / lesson)? If yes, please list them in the boxes below. (Please type in words or phrases, like: ballet class, contact improvisation session, performing choreography on stage, self-directed movement exploration, etc.) You can make as many entries as you want. If you cannot recall any such activities, please leave this question blank.
--------	--

Q2 ó b	In which activities have you experienced ONE OR MORE of these qualities? Please list them below.
--------	--

Q3	How often do you experience the following feelings during or right after the response(s) given in Q2 ó a and Q2 ó b? Please answer on a scale of "Never" to "Always". a. It is clear to me that the task is to maintain a focused attention. b. I am aware of my level of attention. c. I feel that, at that point in time, my ability to maintain focus is sufficient for the task. d. I feel that I attain stable focused attention (it is effortless). e. Everything seems to naturally fall into place. f. Movements just seem to be happening automatically without my conscious decision. g. I am not concerned with what others may be thinking of me. h. I lose track of time. i. Later, I feel that the activity was truly fulfilling and rewarding.
----	--

Q4 ó a	Are there any activities that involve ALL of the following feelings? If yes, please select from the list of activities listed below. (list of response given in Q2 ó a and Q2 ó b)
--------	--

Q4 ó b	In which activities have you experienced ONE OR MORE of these feelings? Please select from the list of activities below. (list of responses given in Q2 ó a and Q2 ó b)
--------	---

Analysis

Once the survey was closed, the data was transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet showing each participant's responses to Q1 to Q4. Responses to Q1 were used to split the sample according to the number of Meditation in Movement components selected by each participant. The percentage of participants in each group was then calculated to determine how many participants selected the respective number (1 to 5) of Meditation in Movement components. The same analysis was conducted for Q3 responses, where the responses 'sometimes', 'frequently' and 'always' were treated equally as 'selected' (the participant has experienced this component) and the responses 'never' and 'seldom' were treated equally as 'unselected' (the participant has not experienced this component).³¹ The same set of responses (Q1, Q3) were also used to compare the percentages of participants who selected each of the components (A. to E. / a. to i.), in order to see whether any components were chosen more or less frequently compared to others. The participants' Q3 responses were also examined in relation to their Q1 responses, in order to determine whether Meditative Flow is experienced during Meditation in Movement. In this analysis, the group of participants who selected all five of the Meditation in Movement components were identified as sample n* and examined to see what percentage of that population experience all components of Meditative Flow during their respective Meditation in Movement activities. For this analysis, responses which did not give the same activity for Meditation in Movement experiences (Q2) and Meditative Flow experiences (Q4) were eliminated. These eliminations were made to ensure that the reported Meditative Flow experiences are those that occur specifically during the participant's Meditation in Movement activity, and not during other, unrelated activities.

As questions asking participants about specific activities (Q2 and Q4 in the survey) were

³¹ The original Flow scales (i.e. FSS, DFS) use a 5-point Likert Scale. Kawabata & Evans (2016) notes that 'the midrange score of a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 3 = *neither agree nor disagree* on the FSS-2) can be interpreted as the moderate score indicating some degree of endorsement of experience flow attributes' (p.268). As the current study only asks one question per component, the variable (response on Likert-scale, if converted to a point system of 1 = never to 5 = always) is ordinal. Therefore, the cut-off was set to the median, 3 = sometimes.

delivered in an open-ended, free-input format, the gathered responses were categorised inductively after all the data had been collected³². Initial categories were developed by grouping similar responses together. For example, 'C.I.', 'contact improv.' and 'Contact Improvisation' were all categorised as 'Contact Improvisation', and 'running', 'cycling', and 'walking' were all categorised as 'repetitive exercise'. Similarly, Western-derived somatic practices such as the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, and Skinner Releasing Technique were all categorised as 'somatic practice'.

Many of the responses stated specific names or categorical forms of dance which involve learning, practising, and performing a formalised technique or choreography (i.e. ballet, contemporary dance, jazz dance, modern dance, etc.). Whilst these responses included a wide variety of culturally and contextually defined dance forms, many of them are considered difficult to categorise, due to their widely varying definitions and historical lineages. As such, these responses were categorised, not by the dance forms to which they pertain, but by the processes involved in the mentioned dance form: learning, practising and performing. Unless the response specified the exact process, for example, 'ballet *class*' (in which case, the response would only be counted as 'dance technique'), each mention of a single dance form added a tally in three categories: 'dance technique', 'rehearsal', and 'performance' (i.e. each response was counted as one participant for each of the three categories).

The number of times that each activity was mentioned was calculated to determine the width of activities to which the Meditation in Movement components would apply, as well as to determine the type of movement episodes in which Meditative Flow occurs. Following the data collection and initial categorisation, the reliability of this categorisation system was tested by establishing agreements between and within raters. In the rating process, a sample of the

³² For full list of responses on types of movement activities, see Appendix 14 'Data: Survey activity list'.

responses to Q2 and Q4 was given to an external rater³³ along with a full set of categories, and the rater was asked to assign each response to the category(ies) to which it belongs. I underwent the same process six months after the initial categorisation was established. The percentage of agreements between and within raters were calculated by dividing the number of agreed categories (e.g. if one activity was originally assigned to three categories: 'dance technique', 'rehearsal' and 'performance', there would be three categories to which the rater must agree or disagree) by the total number of responses (i.e. agreements plus disagreements), which showed an inter-rater agreement of 93.33% for Q2 categories, and 100% for Q4 categories, and an intra-rater agreement of 96.88% for Q2 categories, and 100% for Q4 categories.

4.3. Results

Out of the sample population (n = 140), 27.86% (39 participants) chose all five of the Meditation in Movement components (see Figure 4), meaning that more than a quarter of the sample was familiar with elements of Meditation in Movement, as defined in this thesis. This was the largest group among all other possible response types (i.e. groups who chose less than five components of Meditation in Movement), showing that the full set of Meditation in Movement components is the most commonly practised combination within the sample population. Only 2.14% (3 participants) of the sample selected zero components (i.e. the participant does not practise any of the Meditation in Movement components), which indicated that almost all participants were familiar with at least one of the components of Meditation in Movement. More commonly chosen components were A., C., and D., ranging from 65% to 80%, followed by E. and B., ranging from 49% to 58% (see Table 2).

³³ The external rater was a researcher (Ph.D.) in the field of Dance, with extensive teaching experience in Dance programmes in U.K. higher education institutions.

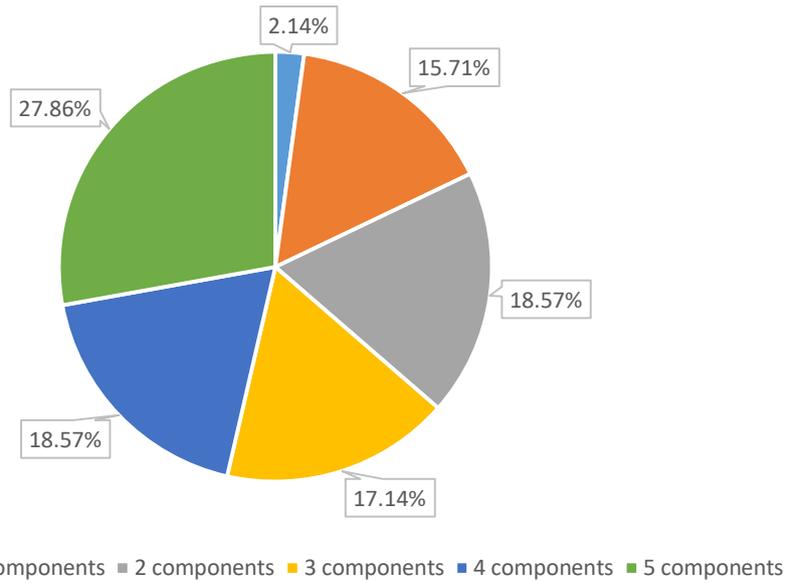


Figure 4. Percentage of participants based on number of Meditation in Movement components.

Table 2

Percentage of participants who selected each Meditation in Movement component

Meditation in Movement component	Percentage (n = 140)
A. I have the intention to "quiet the mind" or "let go of distracting thoughts."	80.00%
B. I am continuously focused on one internal aspect.	49.29%
C. I experience a release of any conscious analysis or judgement.	65.00%
D. I am not rushed or pushed to attain an external goal such as winning a competition or hitting a target.	66.43%
E. I do not force my body to move in specific ways.	57.14%

Seventy-one people (50.71% of the sample) answered that they experience all nine components of Meditative Flow at least sometimes or more (see Figure 5), indicating that half of the population were familiar with elements of Meditative Flow, as defined in this thesis. All components of Meditative Flow were experienced at least sometimes or more for the majority of the participants ($M = 88.02\%$, $SD = 5.56\%$), which demonstrated that all components are likely to be present in one episode of Meditative Flow (see Table 3).

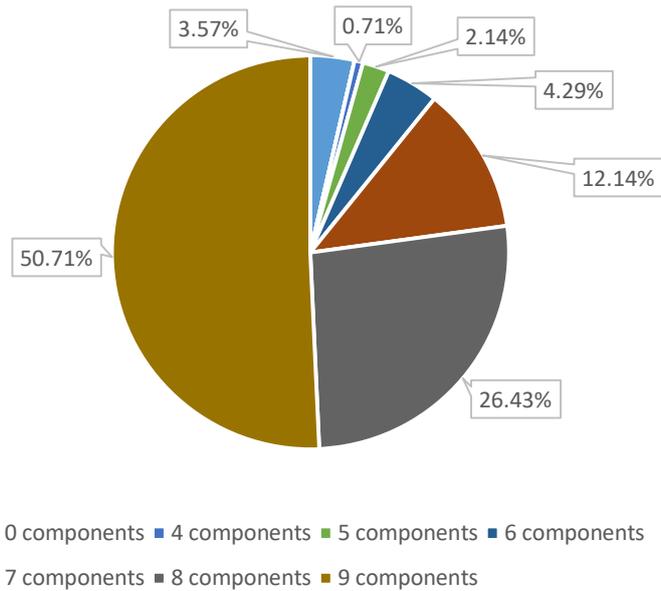


Figure 5. Percentage of participants based on number of Meditative Flow components.

Table 3

Percentage of participants who selected each Meditative Flow component

Meditative Flow component	Percentage (n = 140)
a. It is clear to me that the task is to maintain a focused attention.	87.86%
b. I am aware of my level of attention.	90.00%
c. I feel that, at that point in time, my ability to maintain focus is sufficient for the task.	95.71%
d. I feel that I attain stable focused attention (it is effortless).	85.71%
e. Everything seems to naturally fall into place.	88.57%
f. Movements just seem to be happening automatically without my conscious decision.	84.29%
g. I am not concerned with what others may be thinking of me.	77.86%
h. I lose track of time.	86.43%
i. Later, I feel that the activity was truly fulfilling and rewarding.	95.71%

Within those who were familiar with all of the Meditation in Movement components ($n^* = 29$ participants), 18 people (62.07% of sample n^*) reported that they experience all nine components of Meditative Flow (Q3: a. ó i.) during their Meditation in Movement activity (see Figure 6) (no participant selected 0 ó 6 components). That is, more than half of those who

engage in Meditation in Movement type activities experience Meditative Flow at least sometimes or more during that activity. Put another way, more than one-tenth of the whole sample population (12.85%) experience all elements of Meditative Flow at least sometimes when they are engaging in Meditation in Movement type activities.

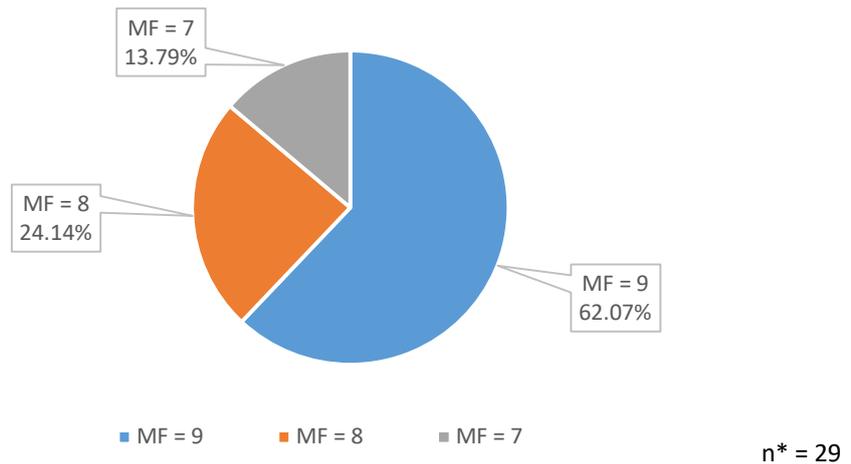


Figure 6. Percentage of participants based on number of Meditative Flow components.

The most commonly reported dance-related activity involving all five components of Meditation in Movement was independent improvisation, followed by a wide range of activities including repetitive exercise, recreational dancing, and movement conditioning, as listed in Table 4. This result supports the hypothesis that Meditation in Movement can be embedded in a wide range of movement episodes, unlimited to those which explicitly pertain to meditative, somatic, or dance-related contexts.

Table 4

Percentage of participants for each activity category within those who selected all five components of Meditation in Movement

Ranking	Activity	Number of participants	Percentage within MM = 5
1	Improvisation (solo)	22	56.41%
2	Dance performance	17	43.59%
3	Somatic practices	14	35.90%
4	Dance technique	9	23.08%
5	Dance rehearsal	6	15.38%
6	Contact Improvisation	5	12.82%
7	Yoga	3	7.69%
7	Repetitive exercise	3	7.69%
7	Meditation-based movement	3	7.69%
10	Community / recreational dancing	2	5.13%
10	Movement preparation / conditioning	2	5.13%
10	Martial arts	2	5.13%
13	Choreographing	1	2.56%

The results were similar in the list of Meditation in Movement activities given specifically by those who experience all nine components of Meditative Flow (see Table 5). However, some differences can be identified between the two lists. Contact Improvisation (ranked 6th in Table 4, 4th in Table 5) and choreographing (ranked 13th in Table 4, 6th in Table 5) were listed noticeably more frequently by those who selected all components of Meditative Flow, which suggests the possibility that Meditative Flow could occur in interactive (as opposed to independent) and creative movement episodes as well.

Table 5

Percentage of participants for each activity category within those who selected all nine components of Meditative Flow

Ranking	Activity	Number of participants	Percentage within MF = 9
1	Improvisation (solo)	26	36.62%
2	Dance performance	19	26.76%
3	Somatic practices	16	22.54%
4	Contact Improvisation	13	18.31%
5	Dance technique	10	14.08%
6	Yoga	6	8.45%
6	Choreographing	6	8.45%
6	Dance rehearsal	6	8.45%
9	Community / recreational dancing	5	7.04%
10	Movement preparation / conditioning	3	4.23%
11	Meditation-based movement	2	2.82%
11	Repetitive exercise	2	2.82%
13	Martial arts	1	1.41%
13	Technology-based interactive dancing	1	1.41%

4.4. Discussion

Definition and prevalence of Meditation in Movement

Results suggested that the five components of Meditation in Movement are a common and prevalent combination of movement approaches within the current dance and movement practice community. Considering that only a small percentage of the participants claimed that they have no experience of any of the Meditation in Movement components, the proposed definition of Meditation in Movement can be considered a familiar approach to many dance and movement practitioners. Although some practitioners have not encountered all five components

together, more than a quarter of the sample had been exposed to all components simultaneously at some point in their dance or movement experience. As the percentage of participants who selected all five components was higher than that of any other group (i.e. groups that selected less than five components), it could be inferred that movement episodes which contain all five components are more prevalent than those which contain any other combination. From this inference, the five-component definition of Meditation in Movement can be considered as a familiar and agreeable concept to dance and movement practitioners.

Commonly chosen components such as A.) 'I have the intention to 'quiet the mind' or 'let go of distracting thoughts' C.) 'I experience a release of any conscious analysis or judgement,' and D.) 'I am not rushed or pushed to attain an external goal such as winning a competition or hitting a target' could apply to various movement episodes including dance technique, rehearsal, and performance, especially for practices and contexts that involve a somatic approach (Brodie & Lobel, 2004=Weber, 2009). Indeed, there were participants who chose A., C., and D., and listed ballet, contemporary dance, and salsa dance – all of which are specific dance styles which involve technique lessons, rehearsals and performance – in Q2. On the other hand, the components chosen less frequently, such as E.) 'I do not force my body to move in specific ways' and B.) 'I am continuously focused on one internal aspect' could be specific to independent and explorative movement practices such as solo improvisation, specific types of somatic practice, and meditation-based movement, as these qualities point to the elements of a singular focal point (E.) and freedom of movement (B.). Participants who chose B. and E. (alongside A., D. and C., as there were no participants who chose only B. and E.) did, indeed, tend to list somatic practices (e.g. Authentic Movement, Body-Mind-Centering®, and Skinner Releasing Technique), independent improvisation sessions, and meditation-based movement. Whilst the combined elements of Meditation in Movement, as defined in this thesis, appear to be prevalent in the English-speaking dance and movement community, the individual

components could be examined further in relation to how (differently) they could manifest according to the specific movement episode. While some thoughts will be added to this discussion in a later section in the chapter (regarding meditative movement episodes), further investigation into this inquiry will require a more specific case-study.

Definition and prevalence of Meditative Flow

Overall, results suggest the presence and potential prevalence of Meditative Flow experiences during Meditation in Movement, as defined in this thesis, and indicate that each set of components are representative of experiences which could happen together in a single movement episode. Considering that almost half of the sample population had experienced Meditative Flow at least sometimes, the results encourage the notion that this is a common phenomenon amongst dance and movement practitioners. Moreover, seeing that nearly an additional quarter of the participants had experienced at least eight of the components of Meditative Flow at least sometimes or more, there is scope to hypothesise that the components of Meditative Flow tend to appear as an interconnected set of experiences, rather than as individual or isolated elements dependent of the occasion. There does not seem to be a difference in the commonality (or prevalence of experience) between each of the components either, as all components were experienced at least sometimes or more by the majority of the participants. This result may imply that there is a lack of hierarchical relationship between each of the Meditative Flow components in terms of their prevalence, although further investigation is required to support this claim. Overall, results suggest that Meditative Flow experiences are present and common among many dance and movement practitioners, and that the proposed componential definition is applicable to the current research context.

Episodes of Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow

Overall, the variety of movement activities listed by participants in Q2 ó a (i.e. activities that

involve all components of Meditation in Movement) supports the hypothesis that Meditation in Movement can arise in a wide range of dance and movement episodes. The list of movement activities included those that are done independently (e.g. improvisation ó solo) or as a group (e.g. Contact Improvisation), those that are formalised (e.g. Yoga) and non-formalised (e.g. improvisational dance), those which are performative (e.g. dance performance, dance rehearsal) and non-performative (e.g. somatic practices, recreational dancing), and even those which are not typically associated with dance (e.g. repetitive exercise, martial arts, movement preparation). Given these results, the componential definition of Meditation in Movement can be seen as a tool to define a range of movement episodes which involve a meditative process, without the concern of eliminating activities which are not explicitly associated with meditative, somatic, or dance-related contexts (either through its purpose or contextual background).

Compared to the list of activities involving Meditation in Movement (Table 4), the list of activities involving Meditative Flow (Table 5) places Contact Improvisation and choreographing at a higher rank. This result suggests that the current definition of Meditation in Movement, or at least the way in which it was framed in the survey (i.e. focusing on self-directed, contemplative movement activities) may be missing elements that characterise other, more interactive or creative movement processes ó such as the two raised above ó which can also be associated with Meditative Flow. This raises the question as to whether the components of Meditation in Movement could be further revised to include a wider range of interactive and creative movement activities. Nonetheless, in both Table 4 and 5, independent improvisation, dance performance, somatic practices, and dance technique were among the top five commonly listed movement activities. Whilst results have indicated that elements of Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow can be present within a wide variety of movement contexts, the study has identified four central types of movement episodes which hold particular relevance to the current research=improvisation, performance, somatic practice, and technique training.

4.5. Limitations

As the purpose of the current study was to explore the prevalence of Meditative Flow experiences during Meditation in Movement (thereby testing the two concepts' applicability) and to gather evidence on relevant movement episodes which involve these concepts, the discussions were based on descriptive statistics, which focused on the frequency in which participants gave certain responses. As was mentioned in Chapter 3, the two concepts and their componential definitions would require a more extensive process of construct validation in order to be applied in studies which examine distribution patterns or causal theories.

Another limitation of this study was that participants who do not practise any sort of Meditation in Movement could not give responses on their Meditative Flow experience. Therefore, no data was acquired on Meditative Flow experiences during non-meditative movement episodes (i.e. those which do not involve any Meditation in Movement components). Because of this limitation, the study did not provide evidence on whether non-meditative movement episodes could also involve Meditative Flow experiences. Future studies could alter the structure of the survey so that responses from both groups (meditative vs non-meditative) can be compared to explore the relationship (or the lack of) between Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow (e.g. are there as many participants who experience Meditative Flow during *non*-meditative movement activities as there are for Meditation in Movement activities?). Having acknowledged these limitations, the current findings raise a number of questions for further inquiry, such as whether there is a (causal) relationship between Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow, and, if so, whether there are any specific conditions of Meditation in Movement (e.g. number of components, combination of components, order in which each component arises, etc.) that determine the likelihood of Meditative Flow. Such inquiries ó given that the constructs are appropriately validated ó could be explored through

intervention studies which compare participants' Meditative Flow experiences between groups who engaged in (certain conditions of) Meditation in Movement, and those who did not.

As the research project was based in England, the definitions of Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow were developed in English and applied to an English survey. Thus, the survey was only accessible to English-speaking participants. While this parameter was sufficient to produce the required data for the current study (i.e. providing evidence on the presence of Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow and identifying participants for further research), the findings of this study could also hold some biases regarding the sample demographic. In order for the results to be representative of a wider community of dance and movement practitioners, the survey could be made more accessible by translating the questions into multiple languages. Such an unbiased sample could present different results from this current study, especially in the types of movement episodes presented, and the community's familiarity towards concepts such as meditation, both of which could be deeply rooted in the participants' cultural background (Brown & Leledaki, 2010; Christopher, Charoensuk, Gilbert, Neary, & Pearce, 2009; Fortin, 2002). Moreover, the current study did not gather any information regarding the participants' previous movement experience (e.g. duration and location of previous dance and movement experience). Such information would be a part of another larger area of research regarding the contextual conditions of Meditative Flow, such as the influences of longitudinal training and cultural engraving.

Finally, although the definitions (and wordings) used in this study drew from existing experiential accounts and were adjusted through practitioners' feedback, its results do not yield any substantial insight on the experiential or qualitative aspects of the phenomenon. The idea of creating and testing functional definitions is an inherently essentialist approach, which stands upon the notion that a single set of principles can define a concept, and thereby delimit a specific area of focus. Such a notion stands in contrast to the premise of phenomenological or

ethnographical accounts on embodied experience, which accepts that no single set of principles can fully encapsulate the depth, complexity, and diversity of the one's lived experience. The current study applied these definitions to a quantitative and deductive method of investigation (i.e. demographic survey), which further runs against the idea that embodied experiences are often too fluid and complex to reduce into systemic theories or quantitative measurements. Whilst the proposed definitions and survey results have fulfilled their purpose of delimiting the focus and demographic of this thesis, the findings of this study are insufficient for an in-depth analysis on embodied Flow states and meditative processes in movement. Instead, the current study shall be seen as a preliminary exploration for the next practical investigation, which takes a more qualitative and inductive approach in examining how Meditative Flow might be felt and described in a given movement episode.

4.6. Conclusion

The study tested the relevance and applicability of the two concepts, Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow, in terms of their componential definitions (including the specific language used) and explored the prevalence of such ideas in the current dance and movement practice community through an online survey. Through this process, the study attempted to lay the grounds for the main aim of this thesis, which is to examine paratelic Flow experiences, particularly in the context of dance. Results have shown that many (English-speaking) dance and movement practitioners experience Meditative Flow during Meditation in Movement (as defined in this thesis) and that there is a wide range of movement episodes that could involve elements of Meditation in Movement, such as improvisation, somatic practices, dance performances, and technique classes. Furthermore, the study has helped to develop a clear and concise guideline to gauge whether a dance/movement practitioner is familiar with these concepts, which would be useful in recruiting participants for further empirical research on the

same matter. The next chapter describes one of such cases, and utilises the definitions developed here for participant recruitment, as well as the process of explaining the scope of the research to the participants.

5. Study 2: the role of Meditative Flow during movement performance

5.1. Introduction

The previous survey study indicated that Meditative Flow is experienced by dancers and movement practitioners who engage with the components of Meditation in Movement (as defined in Chapter 4, p.114). This result supports the notion that Flow states can occur during meditative movement episodes, as suggested by practitioners' accounts that were mentioned in Chapter 2 (Hahn, 2007; Krein & Ilundáin, 2014; Taylor, 2006). These accounts, many of which derive from Zen Buddhist perspectives, also propose that Flow and similar states during movement entail heightened intuition and pre-reflective responsivity, which manifests as 'effortless' and 'masterful' movement performance. A number of cognitive theories have provided a possible psychophysiological explanation to these notions, suggesting that Flow and meditative states involve the deactivation of explicit systems in the brain (i.e. hypofrontality; Dietrich & Stoll, 2010), which, in turn, allows implicit systems to increase their involvement in one's actions (Austin, 2010). As the implicit system represents subconscious procedural knowledge that is engraved through physical enaction (i.e. 'doing'), enhanced activations in this system have been linked to increased efficiency in sensorimotor processing (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010). Furthermore, the deactivation of explicit systems has been associated with the absence of self-referential thoughts (i.e. selflessness; Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013), which has been repeatedly claimed to enhance athletic performance (Beilock & Carr, 2001; Dietrich, 2004; Harris et al., 2017; Jackson & Beilock, 2008; Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016).

Whilst the above accounts appear to be addressing a similar phenomenon, few studies have examined these perspectives together in a movement-based setting, with the intention of

bridging the gap between philosophy, psychology, and practice. The current chapter attempts to provide qualitative evidence on the experiential (i.e. *lived-in*, *felt* in the first-person perspective) and observed (i.e. seen, perceived from a third-person perspective) aspects of Flow during movement performance, with the aim of grounding and relating those findings back to a multidisciplinary pool of theory. Additionally, the chapter aims to deepen the understanding of Meditative Flow in terms of its temporal (or processual) nature, in response to the experiential (Tanaka, 2014=Taylor, 2006), psychological (Chavez, 2008=Swann, Keegan, Piggott, & Crust, 2012), and cognitive (Dietrich, 2004=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013) accounts that imply a fluctuational (or cyclical) structure within the experience (e.g. gradual entrance, occasional disruptions, restoration of level, etc.). The current study explores:

- How Meditative Flow states appear and change over time, and how movers experience and describe these shifts.
- Whether observers can recognise these fluctuations, and if so, how they perceive and describe that phenomenon in terms of movement performance.

These questions were explored through a multiple-case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008), wherein movers and observers were asked to report on their experiences of a short performance session through event-focused interviews (Swann, 2016).

This was an exploratory and expansive study examining a number of themes (e.g. temporal dynamics, subjective experience, and third-person perceptions of Meditative Flow) using original methods of data collection, inductive analyses, and descriptive presentation of qualitative data. A detailed account of the data collection and analysis procedures will be given in the Method section of this chapter in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study and its findings, as was mentioned in Chapter 3. Furthermore, the study generated valuable material whose implications extended beyond the scope of the current chapter and were, therefore, more suited for a general analytical discussion. This material will be further explored in Chapter 6,

which builds on the initial findings of the current study and relates them to previously explored literature on hypofrontality (Dietrich, 2004), meditative or somatic movement practices (Kasai, 1999=Schmalzl et al., 2014=Sweeney, 2009=Eddy et al., 2015), and pre-reflectivity as movement aesthetics (Kasai & Parsons, 2003=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014). As these reflections will serve the purpose of a 'discussion' section, the current chapter will only offer descriptive results from the study, leaving further interpretive discussions for Chapter 6.

5.2. My role and position as researcher

My background as a dancer includes various dance forms and movement practices (e.g. ballet, hip-hop, contemporary, improvisation, somatic practice) in which I was trained in the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The range of practices with which I have engaged has not only given me an understanding of dance-related language in general, but also a sensitivity towards the range of ways in which dancers can describe and conceptualise their kinesthetic experiences based on their culture and practice (Ravn & Hansen, 2013). Furthermore, my own experiences of (what I would define as) Flow states during dance have given me an embodied understanding of the phenomenon in relation to (or as a supplement to) the literature-based knowledge that I have covered in previous chapters. I utilised this 'embodied competence' (Ravn & Hansen, 2013, p.198) throughout this study to generate and interpret data. For instance, I drew from 'the [shared] language of contemporary dance' (Ehrenberg, 2012, p.198) to set up the session (e.g. 'prepare your mind and body'-'experience the movement as it is') and referred to my own dance experiences to elicit and contextualise (Ravn, 2010) the dancers' experiential accounts during data collection and analysis. Furthermore, my 'heightened awareness of possible qualities of movement' (Ravn & Hansen, 2013, p.205), not only in my own body but also in others', allowed me to interpret, or 'make sense of' (Ehrenberg, 2015) the observers' accounts in relation to my own observations and the performance footage.

Whilst the above approach is, in many ways, similar to those of existing studies in dance (Ehrenberg, 2015= Purser, 2018b=Ravn, 2010), one factor which distinguishes the current study was that I continuously consulted researchers from fields outside of dance (e.g. sociology, psychology, cognitive science) to hear their impressions and ideas on the study's design, the data, and my analyses. This process – what Smith & McGannon (2018) may call "critical friends" (p.13) – helped me to remain reflective and critical about my own biases and specialised (i.e. dancer) views. Whilst this was an emergent process rather than a predetermined strategy, the process allowed me to explore various avenues of data collection and analysis outside of what is common in dance studies, and to become aware of dance-specific terms and concepts that require clarification in writing.

Furthermore, whilst some studies on kinesthetic experience employ an ethnographic (Potter, 2008=Ravn & Hansen, 2013) or phenomenological (Ehrenberg, 2012, 2015=Ravn, 2010=Roche, 2016) approach to the generation and analysis of data, this study took a psychological case study format similar to Purser's (2018b) study on dance expertise and skill acquisition. In Purser's study, the researcher presented herself as "an interested outsider who was keen to hear their [i.e. dancers'] insider perspective on their practice" (p.322). This positioning sits in contrast to other researchers such as Ravn (2010) and Potter (2008), who engaged in the participants' practice and training as a part of the dancer group (i.e. "participant observation" – Platt, 1983). Although my decisions in the session design, use of language, and data interpretation were informed by my own experiences in dance, I did not necessarily have a lived or in-depth experience of the participants' individual practices. Therefore, I approached the interview accounts with an awareness and receptivity towards potentially new concepts with which I may not be familiar – in a way, as an "outsider" to the participants' individual practice. Additionally, while Purser's (2018b) study was informed by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy at the theoretical level, the empirical data (i.e. interview accounts) was analysed

through a ÷qualitative thematic approach . . . which attended to the themes emerging in the data itselfö rather than through a ÷rigid phenomenological methodological approach or by the attempt to rigidly apply Merleau-Ponty's theoretical frameworkö (p.322). Similarly, whilst my approach to the data was ÷sensitised by my engagementö (p.322) with phenomenological, psychological and cultural texts on Flow and similar experiences, my intention was to ÷remain sensitive to the expression and experiences articulated by the dancers in their own wordsö (p.322) so that those accounts can then later be contextualised within, or placed in dialogue with, previously explored literature (see Chapter 6 ó general discussion and reflective analysis).

5.3. Method

5.3.1. Participant recruitment and demographic

The recruitment process employed the approach of ÷purposive samplingö as defined by Guest, Bunce, & Johnson (2006), or ÷quota samplingö as defined by Robinson (2014), wherein participants are selected according to a set of relevant criteria for the study, rather than being chosen randomly. Both the movers and observers were approached via email, drawing from the pool of participants who participated in the previous online survey (Chapter 4). The final set of participants (1 mover and 4 observers for each of the 3 trials) was determined through a dialogical process (via email, phone, or face-to-face), ensuring that they suited the recruitment criteria listed below. Prior to data collection, all participants agreed to the conditions of the study and signed Consent Forms which were approved by the university's Research Ethics Committee (See additional documents regarding the recruitment process: Appendix 3 ó Recruitment Email=Appendix 4 ó Information Sheet=Appendix 5 ó Consent Form).

Criteria for mover recruitment:

1. Within their survey response, they have shown that they have experienced at least one movement-based practice (listed in Q2 AND Q4 of the online survey) which involves all components of Meditation in Movement (A. ó E. of Q1 in online survey).
2. They have experienced (or at least sometimes experience) all components of Meditative Flow (a. ó i. in Q3 of online survey).
3. They feel that they are able to execute said practice in the given study conditions, and possibly experience Meditative Flow in those conditions.
4. They feel that they can give verbal reports on their movement experience (in relation to Meditative Flow) across a twenty-minute segment, with assistance from recorded footage.

Criteria for observer recruitment³⁴:

1. They have their own understanding of Meditation in Movement practices and Meditative Flow experiences, as defined in this research.
2. They have experience in watching dance and movement performance.
3. They feel comfortable with speaking about the experience of watching dance and movement performance.

The final set of participants (ages 18+, 14 females and 1 male, all living in the U.K. at the time of the study) consisted of three movers and twelve observers. All movers held an average of eight years experience (ranging between 5 ó 15 years) in their respective Meditation in Movement practices, as either students or professional practitioners. All movers chose a form of improvisational movement for their performance format, which drew from their various training backgrounds (and regular practices) including: Yoga=Contact Improvisation=Gaga=practices

³⁴ The observer recruitment guidelines were set to accommodate the context of the literature (Krein & Ilundáin, 2014; Montero, 2012) which imply that some experience in the practice (e.g. Meditation in Movement), as well as in observing and articulating it, are normally required (or at least desirable) for the spectator to be able to identify particular phenomena (e.g. Meditative Flow) in another individual.

drawing from Dance Movement Psychotherapy—and other somatic practices influenced by artistic projects and/or educational programmes held in the U.K. (namely at the University of Chichester or Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance). The observers held an average of ten years' experience (ranging between 3 to 30 years) in watching dance/movement performances and articulating that experience in written and spoken form, as students, teachers, or professional critics. Similar to the movers, the observers all held experience in dance and movement practice (average of 9 years ± 8.87), with varied backgrounds including: Contact Improvisation—Gaga—Eastern movement practices such as Yoga, Tai chi, Feng Shui, and Butoh—other somatic practices such as Skinner Releasing Technique, The Feldenkrais Method, 5Rhythms, and Pilates to many of which the participants encountered within the context of U.K. dance education and research (including the institutions listed above).

5.3.2. Materials

All sessions were conducted in the same studio space (Academic Block 0.02, BOC campus, University of Chichester) across three separate days during May to June 2017³⁵. Each movement session/performance (20min.) was documented through Open Broadcast Software (OBS) Studio on an HP EliteBook 820 laptop and streamed via Twitch (an online streaming platform). The recorded footage was accessed through the Twitch website and played on tablets (Apple iPad Air 2, 64GB, model: MGKL2B/A), which were distributed to each participant.

During the performance, each observer operated a simple mouse device (see Figure 7) to track his/her real-time perception of the mover's fluctuation of Meditative Flow. The device consisted of a mouse (SQ ONE Mouse Optico, 1000DPI) on a straight 30cm rail, which transmits a recording of the mouse movement (detects a minimum motion of 0.025 mm every

³⁵ As the focus of the observation was on the performed *movements*, rather than other performance elements such as sound, costume, backdrop, or lighting, the consistency of such elements was maintained as much as possible across the three trials.

100 milliseconds) to MySQL³⁶, an online database. The observers were instructed to move the mouse up (away from self) or down (towards self) according to their perception of the mover's fluctuating Meditative Flow (up for higher level and down for lower level). After the performance, the movers used the same device as they watched a playback of their own performance to measure and record their first impression on their levels of Meditative Flow. The participants' mouse recordings were shown as a line graph on a designated webpage (linked to MySQL and Twitch) displayed underneath the performance footage (see Figure 7). The footage and line graph representations were used in the reflection and interview process as a reminder for the participants to recall their first impressions on the mover's (or one's own) Meditative Flow fluctuations.



Figure 7. Original mouse device and webpage layout. The mouse (left) was placed inside of a 30cm-long, 6cm-wide rail (stoppers on both ends to keep the mouse from going off the rail) made of plastic cable trunking tubes, fixed on a 40cm×32cm Perixx mouse pad with double-sided adhesive tape. The webpage (right) showed the performance footage on top and the mouse recordings on the bottom, covering the full iPad screen in landscape orientation. Participants were able to touch the vertical line on the mouse recordings section to scroll through the footage.

For each participant, a printed list of Meditation in Movement components and Meditative Flow

³⁶ MySQL is a free online database in which one can create (programme) automatic data uploading and storing systems. The format in which the stored data is displayed (on the designated webpage) can also be customised.

components (as they appeared in the online survey) was provided as a reminder of the research topic (Appendix 6 ó Component Sheet). All verbal responses given in the interviews (40-60min.) were recorded with a video camera (provided by the University of Chichester). The recordings were done on camera (as opposed to audio recording devices) to ensure that nonverbal cues such as gestures and postural shifts could also be reviewed later. During each interview, a drawn line graph showing the levels of Meditative Flow (y-axis: 0 ó 100%) throughout the duration of the performance (x-axis: 0 ó 20min.) was developed collaboratively between myself and each observer, using a template sheet (Appendix 7 ó Line Graph Template). While the overall shape of these drawn line graphs roughly followed the real-time digital measurements, some parts were changed according to the participants' direction.

5.3.3. Data collection procedure

Although the study design drew some elements from existing data collection methods, such as event-focused interviews (Swann, 2016), audience interviews (Reason & Reynolds, 2010), and the video-stimulated recall method (Douse, 2013=Rowe, 2009= ucznik, 2018), the overall method was novel and experimental. This design was developed through a series of pilot studies, which tested factors such as instructions on the mover's task and the format of the performance and interviews. The following section presents a list of methodological considerations that were made at the pilot stages, which were then integrated into the data collection procedure (see Appendix 9 ó Interview Pilot Notes for more detail).

Considerations for performance format

- Prior to the first pilot, some considerations were made regarding the mover's performance task. Based on the results obtained from the survey study (Chapter 4), components of Meditation in Movement are present in a wide variety of practices, and Meditative Flow may occur in any of those practices. The variety in relevant practices suggested that it

would be difficult to determine a set of movement tasks that would accurately represent all of the movers' regular practice routines. Moreover, without a certain level of familiarity with the movement task, the mover may become distracted from reaching Meditative Flow, as extra attention is used in getting accustomed to the rules of the task itself (De Kock, 2014=Sellers-Young, 1993). Thus, it was considered best to ask the movers to execute their own practice in a way that is as close to their regular routine as possible, rather than to follow specific movement sequences or 'scores' (e.g. imagery-based tasks).

- After pilots 2 and 3, it became apparent that the observers had difficulty maintaining their focus on the topic of the study (i.e. mover's Meditative Flow) throughout the session, as well as in recalling their real-time experience of the mover's Meditative Flow level. In order to guide the observers' attention, as well as to ensure that their real-time experiences were on record for future reflection, a device-led tracking method (see 5.2.2. 'Materials' ó mouse device) was implemented. The tracking process was meant to serve as a real-time task with which the observers engage throughout the session, allowing their focus to remain on the topic of 'perceiving' the mover's Meditative Flow state. The efficacy of this method was confirmed through pilot 4, wherein observers stated that they were able to maintain their focus on the mover's Meditative Flow level without being too distracted by the task itself. The mouse recordings also proved to be an effective guidance for the observers to reflect on their experience, and to give qualitative responses on their perception of the performance, especially in making specific references to certain points in time of the performance.

Considerations for interview format

- Pilot 2 implemented the event-focused interview method (Swann, 2016), wherein participants (both mover and observers) were interviewed soon after the performance session. However, in this type of reflective verbalisation, it is difficult for participants to

recall specific moments in time when each experience happened. As the study asked participants to reflect on the temporal progression of their experience throughout a relatively long duration, it was decided that the participants required some type of marker that would ensure temporal accuracy in their reflection. In order to fulfil this requirement, a video-stimulated recall method (Douse, 2013= Rowe, 2009=/ ucznik, 2018) was incorporated, wherein the moversøperformances were filmed and played back during the interviews.

- For both the moversøand observersøinterviews, the implications of using video footage for performance reflection was carefully considered. From the moversø perspective, the experience of watching a video-recording of their own performance can influence how they recall and perceive their past, current, or future kinesthetic experience (Ehrenberg, 2012= Purser, 2011). Whilst seeing footages of oneself may not necessarily entail a öpurely external perspectiveö (Ehrenberg, 2012, p.194), it does nonetheless involve an integration (or internalisation) of the other, övirtualøbody topography . . . into [oneø] kinaesthetic, lived, body topographyö (p.202-203). In fact, some movers claimed (during the pilots) that they could not find parts of the performance in the footage that they could otherwise remember öin their bodies.ö From the observersøperspective, many aspects of a real-life performance are lost in a video footage (Jola et al., 2012). This includes atmosphere, the presence of other viewers, the sense of a shared space, interactions between performer and spectator, the impermanence of the performance, and so on. There are also added elements (variables) in video footage, such as the angle, framing and colour balance of the camera, quality of the video, the distance between the camera and performer, and the ability to re-watch certain parts of the performance (Whatley, 2012). Many observers in pilots 2, 3, and 4 confirmed this notion by stating that watching the footage was a very different experience from watching the live performance. As the aim of the study was to investigate what is

experienced in a *live* performance, it was necessary to ensure that participants were not responding directly to the documented video in the interview, but to their recollections of the live performance. Therefore, interviews within the pilots (2, 3, 4), as well as in the actual study, placed significant emphasis (through verbal instruction) on the participants' reflections of the live performance and framed the footage only as an aid for reflection and articulation. While the influences of watching a video-recording on the participants' reflections are undeniable to a certain extent, the participants of pilots 2 and 3 confirmed verbally that the video playback served as a useful reminder and point of reference for the reflective process.

- For the observer interviews, pilot 2 employed a focus group format (i.e. group interview), as it may provide observers more freedom to discuss their impressions of the performance without the pressure of having to respond to a structured set of questions. However, the pilot study showed that this format can cause a wide divergence in the topic of the conversation, costing the time that is needed to gain useful information³⁷. In pilot 3, observer interviews were conducted in an extensive one-on-one format. This format proved to be more suitable for observer interviews, as I was able to give full attention to each participant's response and ask useful follow-up questions. Considering the range of directions to which the dialogue could lead, this format was crucial in keeping the topic of discussion well-contained.
- Pilot 2 showed that both the mover and observers can raise various avenues of thought within their interviews, which, similarly to the results of the focus group format, lie beyond the focus and scope of the study. Additionally, many participants only gave feedback on certain segments of the session, leaving durations wherein no comment was given. This

³⁷ Reason & Reynolds (2010) note the variety of ways in which an audience member of dance could express his/her experience of watching a performance, including interpretations of, and reflections on, the social or intellectual meanings and values of the piece. Such examples were also present in the pilot studies, which further evidenced the possibility that conversations may diverge from the main topic in post-performance interviews.

variety and inconsistency in feedback made it difficult to compare the participants' accounts in terms of the perceived presence/absence of Meditative Flow, as well as its temporal fluctuations. In an attempt to overcome this limitation, pilot 3 incorporated another step within the interview processes, wherein participants (both mover and observers) developed a visual representation of their experiences/perceptions of Meditative Flow (and its fluctuations) in a timeline format (Appendix 7 ó Line Graph Template). Pilot 3 confirmed the efficacy of this idea, in that it produced concise and continuous representations of the participants' temporal shifts in experience/perception. The unit representations (0-100%) were based on the outcomes of pilot 3, wherein participants naturally tended to express their perceived level changes in experience with percentages. The levels themselves were not defined as absolute values which entail specific experiential elements, and it was up to each participant to determine what each level meant subjectively and contextually. The aim was to obtain a visual idea of how each moment of the performance felt in relation to the last (i.e. higher or lower Meditative Flow level than before).

- In pilot 3, however, the mover expressed uncertainty in describing their movement experience on a linear graph, as explorative movement practices (such as her own) involve a complex cluster of sensory and cognitive experiences, which cannot be expressed in such a linear and two-dimensional way. While these reflections were appreciated and welcomed in the verbal interview process, it was nonetheless necessary (as discussed above) to develop a visual representation. In order to accustom the mover to the idea of a linear representation, as well as to guide them to a certain mode of self-reflection (i.e. video-stimulated recall), the following pilot incorporated an independent reflection/tracking process before the mover's interview. In this process, the mover was asked to watch their own performance footage while operating the same mouse device used by the observers,

so that they can later recall their first reflective impressions on Meditative Flow. This process proved to be effective in pilot 4, wherein the mover stated that the measuring process helped to accustom her to a linear, video-stimulated mode of reflection.

Based on these pilots, the final design was determined as the following: one mover performed for twenty minutes³⁸ while four observers watched, using the mouse device to track their perceptions. Afterwards, the mover viewed their video-recording while operating the mouse device and was interviewed using the video-stimulated recall method for forty minutes. Finally, the observers were interviewed for an hour each (i.e. one by one), also using the video-stimulated recall method. This was repeated for three trials.

As the aim of the study was to understand the nuances and details of the participants' perception and experience, the results were sensitive to, and heavily influenced by, how instructions were given to the participants at the time of data collection. For the purpose of ensuring the reproducibility of these methods and results, the following section will give detailed descriptions, not only on the mechanical procedures but also on the specific instructions that were given. Each session was structured in four main parts: Introduction, Performance & observation, Mover interview, Observer interview. The following section will describe each of these parts in sequential order (For a verbatim script of the instructions, see Appendix 8 ó Verbal Instructions).

Introduction to the session

All participants (i.e. 1 mover, 4 observers) were invited into the dance studio and given a brief introduction to the topic of the study, which included reminders on the definitions of Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow (as listed in the Information Sheet). After signing the

³⁸ The time limit for the performance was decided as twenty minutes, as participants of pilot 3 suggested that a longer duration may cause strain on both the mover's and observers' concentration. The freedom in duration was given to accommodate the nature of each mover's practice and Meditative Flow experience as much as possible.

Consent Forms, the participants were given a brief introduction to the devices that will be used in the study (i.e. mouse device & iPads).

Next, the mover received instructions on her³⁹ first task, which was to show a segment of her practice. The mover was told that the segment may last up to twenty minutes, but that she can finish the segment earlier if she wishes. The aims and procedures of the following interview process were explained briefly before the performance, as otherwise, the mover may feel unprepared and confused by the interview questions later, as was confirmed in pilot 3 (Appendix 9 ó Interview Pilot Notes). However, the mover was also told to ðexperience the movement as it isð during the actual performance so that she can avoid distractions such as the task of consciously ðtrackingð her own Meditative Flow levels ó which could disrupt the experience of Meditative Flow itself.

As the mover prepared for the performance, I checked that each observer was able to operate his/her mouse device from their seated position, then gave a brief explanation of their task. Their primary task was to watch the mover's performance while attending to their own internal responses to each unfolding moment. They were also told to ðtrackð the changes (if any) in their perception of the mover's Meditative Flow levels and to move their devices accordingly⁴⁰. At the beginning of the performance, observers were allowed to place the mouse wherever they felt was right on the rail. For instance, if they felt that the Meditative Flow level was already above zero and that it may dip below the current level at some point in the performance, they could place the mouse in the middle. On the other hand, if they felt that the level was currently zero, they could start from the bottom of the rail.

³⁹ As all movers in the interview study were female, all reflections henceforth will use the pronouns ðsheð and ðher.ð
⁴⁰ During this stage, some observers asked for clarification on what they were tracking through the device. Their confusions seemed to stem from the fact that they were asked to make assumptions on another individual's mental state, which some consider to be unobservable. Moreover, some observers questioned the distinction between others' and their own mental states, alluding to existing theories on intersubjectivity and (kinesthetic) empathy. In response to these discussions, I instructed the observers to ðinterpret the task in a way that makes most sense to you.ð

Performance & observation

With my instruction to "begin," the mover executed her performance as the observers watched in silence. All observers' mouse devices started to record their measurements as soon as the video started recording⁴¹. During the performance, the observers sat on the floor in a straight line against the wall (this was influenced by where I placed the mouse devices at the beginning of the session—they were placed in the same location across all three trials). During the last thirty seconds, I called out "please finish," and stopped the recording at the end of the twenty minutes (all movers across three trials used the full duration). After the session, I instructed all participants to take a brief break, then asked the observers to check if the footage and mouse recordings were viewable on their iPads.

Mover interview

The mover was first asked to review her performance footage while operating the mouse device, as a way of tracking her Meditative Flow levels through the performance. During this process, the mover was not allowed to pause or rewind the footage. This was to ensure that enough time was left for the interview afterwards. The mover was also told that, if she cannot recall any moments of Meditative Flow from the footage, she was not obligated to move the mouse at all.

After the mouse recording, the mover participated in a forty-minute verbal interview (length adjusted through pilots 2, 3 and 4: Appendix 9 ó Interview Pilot Notes) in which the drawn line graph was developed. The interview continuously referred to the footage and the mover's mouse recording, while asking pre-set questions and some follow-up questions on the mover's experience of Meditative Flow.

In the first step, the mover was asked to identify points in the performance where she felt that her level of Meditative Flow had shifted. During this step, I made notes below the

⁴¹ The mouse devices were set up so that a single prompt would initiate their recordings simultaneously. Meanwhile, the video recording was initiated through a separate prompt, and the synchronisation between the mouse and video was done manually (i.e. pressing start at the same time).

horizontal axis, at the points in time addressed by the mover (see Figure 8).

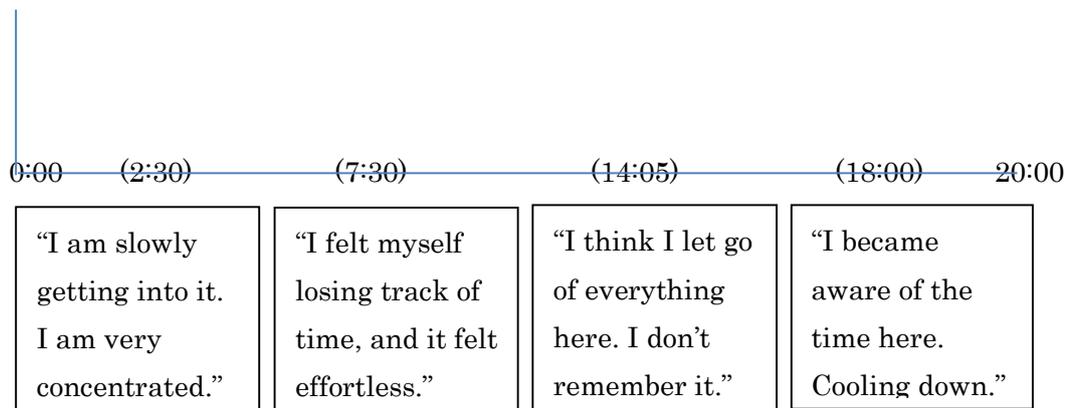


Figure 8. Example of notes taken in the first step of the interview.

In the second step, I explained how the level of Meditative Flow for each segment could be expressed on the graph—the vertical axis showing the maximum point as “100%” and the minimum point as “0%.” The mover was asked about her Meditative Flow level (vertical axis) for each time point identified on the horizontal axis (see Figure 9).

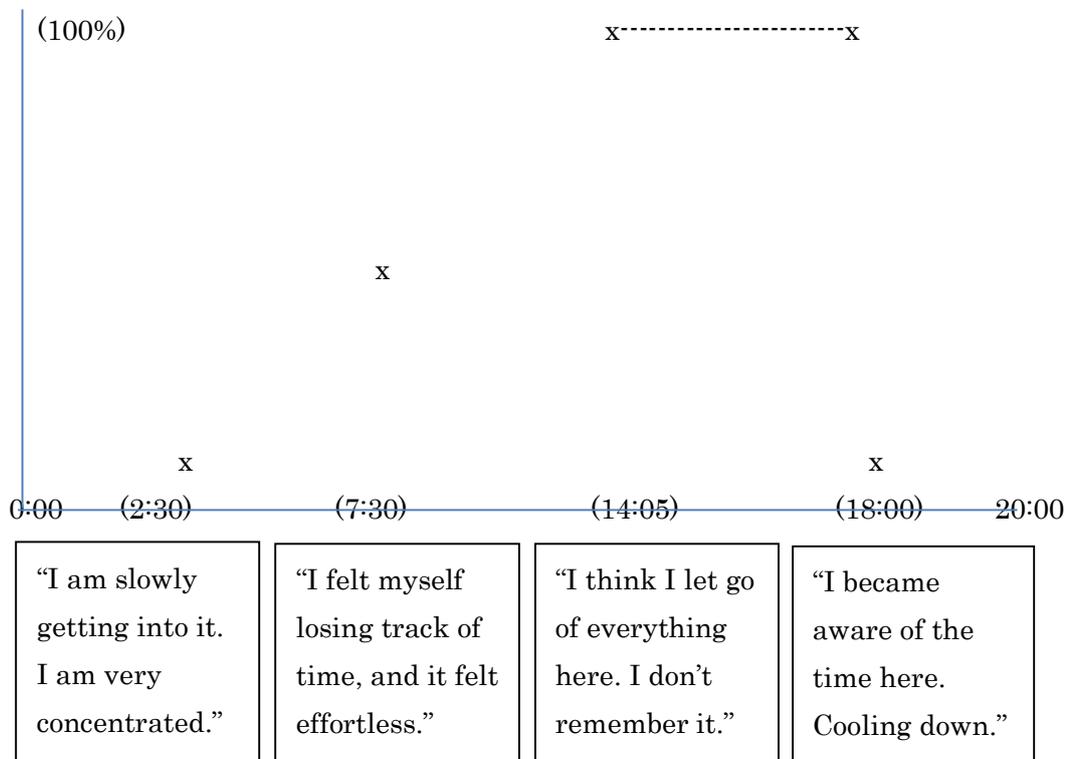


Figure 9. Example of levels noted in the second step of the interview.

In the final step, all the marks made in the graph were connected. In this process, the mover was asked whether the lines should be straight, and if not, what the curvature might look like. This step was taken to reflect the perceived nuances in level changes across time. Finally, I asked the mover if the line graph looked like an accurate representation of her experience. If not, changes were made accordingly until the mover agreed that it was accurate (see Figure 10).

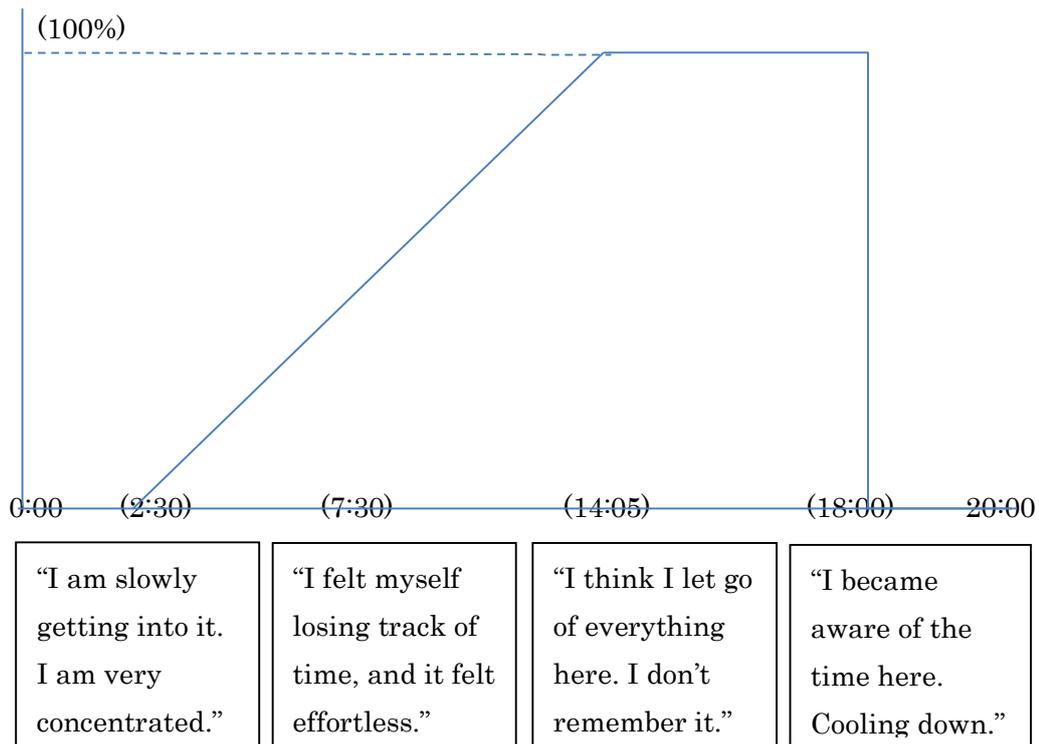


Figure 10. Example of final line graph created through the interview.

Once the graph was drawn, I asked additional questions in relation to the components of Meditative Flow, and whether or not there were any perceived patterns (such as a chronological order in which each component occurred) in the mover’s experience.

In all three steps of the procedure, the mouse recordings served as a reference for the mover to recall her live experience. However, the measurements were not treated as set values/structures which must be directly transferred onto the drawn graph. This was to ensure that the mover can alter her responses in the mouse recording if she felt that she had given false responses due to misinterpretation or uncertainty towards the task.

Observer interview

During the mover interview, the observers were asked to review the footage and their respective mouse recordings on an iPad. The observers were also given a copy of the line graph template, on which they were instructed to write down notes on their thoughts and impressions of the perceived Meditative Flow fluctuation, with direct references to points in time in the footage.

Once the mover interview was finished, each observer was invited to a one-hour semi-structured interview (length adjusted through pilots 2, 3 and 4: Appendix 9 ó Interview Pilot Notes), also in a video-stimulated recall format. As was with the mover interview, the observer interviews were conducted one-on-one, which meant that each study included four independent observer interviews⁴². In the observer interviews, the performance footage, mouse recording, and the observer's written comments were used as references. The line graphs were developed through the same procedure used in the mover interview. For the observers, the graphs represented their perceptions of the *mover's* experience of Meditative Flow. The observers provided verbal accounts explaining the shape of their own line graph, as well as explanations on why they perceived the mover's Meditative Flow to be at that level each moment.

From the three trials, the following data were collected:

- Mover's drawn line graphs ×3
- Mover's verbal responses (40min. interview footage) ×3
- Observer's drawn line graphs ×12
- Observer's verbal responses (1-hour interview footage) ×12
- 20min. performance footage ×3

⁴² The observer interviews were generally conducted back-to-back, but depending on the observer's schedule, some interviews were conducted on the day following the performance.

5.3.4. Analysis process

The analysis began by addressing a methodological issue regarding the second question of the study: can observers recognise the mover's level of Meditative Flow (and its fluctuations)? As the current study utilised a novel method (i.e. drawn line graph) to collect data on the participants' perceptions on the temporal shifts in Meditative Flow, there were no established methods to analyse this data. Once the data collection was complete, I noticed that there are visually identifiable similarities between the participants' line graphs, such as gradual increases in the beginning, timeframes in which peak levels appear, and significant drops in level. However, each line graph had a unique signature of level representation (e.g. multiple sharp inclines and declines creating box-shapes across the graph=curvilinear progressions making it difficult to determine exact shifting points=micro-shifts within a narrow range of levels across the graph, etc.). Consequently, it was difficult to compare the graphs directly against each other to determine a conclusive result on their overall similarity. Figure 11 shows example comparisons between the mover (left) and observer (right) of the three trials (see Appendix 14 ó Data for full line graph data from trials 1-3).

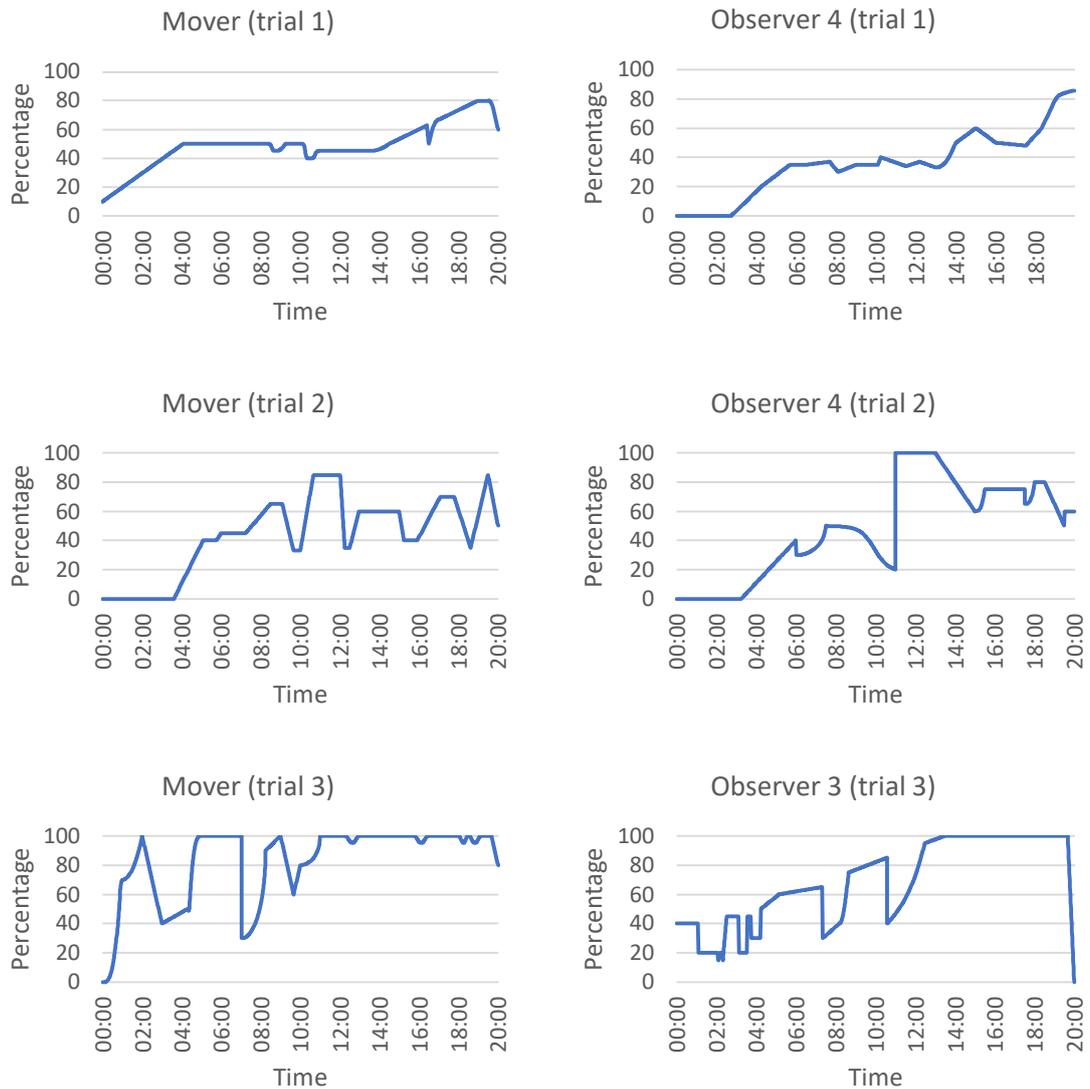


Figure 11. Samples of mover's and observer's line graphs from trial 1-3.

This challenge raised an alternative approach, which was to distinguish between phases of 'agreement' between the mover and observers, and those of 'non-agreement.' By identifying specific timeframes of agreement, further inferences may be made regarding the relationship between factors such as the level of Meditative Flow, the mover's experience, or the point in time during the performance, and the observer's ability to recognise the mover's mental state. Building on this idea, the following three questions were raised to guide the analysis process.

Question 1: Throughout the mover's Meditative Flow experience, when do the observer's

perceptions match the mover's experience (i.e. phases of agreement) and when do

they not (i.e. phases of non-agreement)? Is there a difference in the mover's Meditative Flow level between moments of agreement and non-agreement?

Question 2: What are the experiential qualities of Meditative Flow that occur during movement performance? How do movers describe it when reflecting on their experience? Are there fluctuations in level that occur during the duration of the experience, and if so, what do those fluctuations entail experientially?

Question 3: What is happening externally (i.e. in terms of movement performance, as perceived by observers) during moments of mover-observer agreement? How do observers identify and/or describe Meditative Flow (or its fluctuations)? Is it a visual quality of the performed movement? Is it a sensation or a feeling?

Whilst these questions were essentially extensions of those presented at the beginning of the chapter, they were redefined and refocused to suit the nature of the collected data.

The following sections will first describe the initial stages of analysis through two separate parts, one dealing with the visual timelines, and the other dealing with verbal responses. The section will then move on to explain further analyses conducted using both sets of data in a triangulation format (Creswell et al., 2003).

Visual data (timelines)

While some quantitative methods⁴³ of identifying areas of agreement and non-agreement between mover and observer were considered, it was decided that a visual/qualitative analysis, inspired by Winstein & Garfinkel's qualitative dynamics approach (1989), was most suitable for

⁴³ Quantitative methods used in the line graph analysis included: comparing local minimums and maximums, correlation analysis, calculating RMSE between the graphs (Willmott et al., 1985), rolling window correlation analysis (Dakos et al., 2012), and vector-coding analysis (Nanopoulos, Alcock, & Manolopoulos, 2001; Tepavac & Field-Fote, 2001). However, these methods tended to run into problems regarding either the context of the study or the nature of the data, deeming them unsuitable for this particular analysis (see Appendix 11 ó Quantitative Methods for details). Moreover, while other methods of time-series analysis exist within the field of data mining (Fu, 2011), integrating those methods would require specialised knowledge in computational statistics, a resource which was unavailable and outside of the scope of this study.

this particular study⁴⁴. This qualitative approach was considered especially relevant because the line graphs are not representations of objective numerical data, but of subjective perceptions of the participants, developed visually and qualitatively.

First, all participants' line graphs were digitalised in a quantifiable format (i.e. 1,200 data points [seconds] with values between 0 to 100 [Meditative Flow level %] for all 15 participants). Next, distinct 'phases' were identified in the mover's line graph, based on 1.) the mover's verbal accounts explaining the level changes, and 2.) visible changes or patterns in the line graph throughout the twenty minutes. These phases, in terms of windows of time, were then mapped onto the observers' line graphs. Figure 12 shows an example of the mover's graph (separated into eight phases), and the phases mapped onto an observer's graph (see Appendix 10 to Line Graph Mapping for full details).

⁴⁴ Winstein & Garfinkel's (1989) approach was developed in the field of sports science as a visualisation technique which enables qualitative analyses of human motor behaviour. The technique was used to compare multiple individuals' joint movements during walking and to identify distinct phases that are involved in that action (e.g. loading response, mid-to-terminal stance, pre-swing, early swing, and late swing). In the authors' 1989 study, the technique allowed for a clear visual contrast between the motor behaviours of normal and disabled individuals.

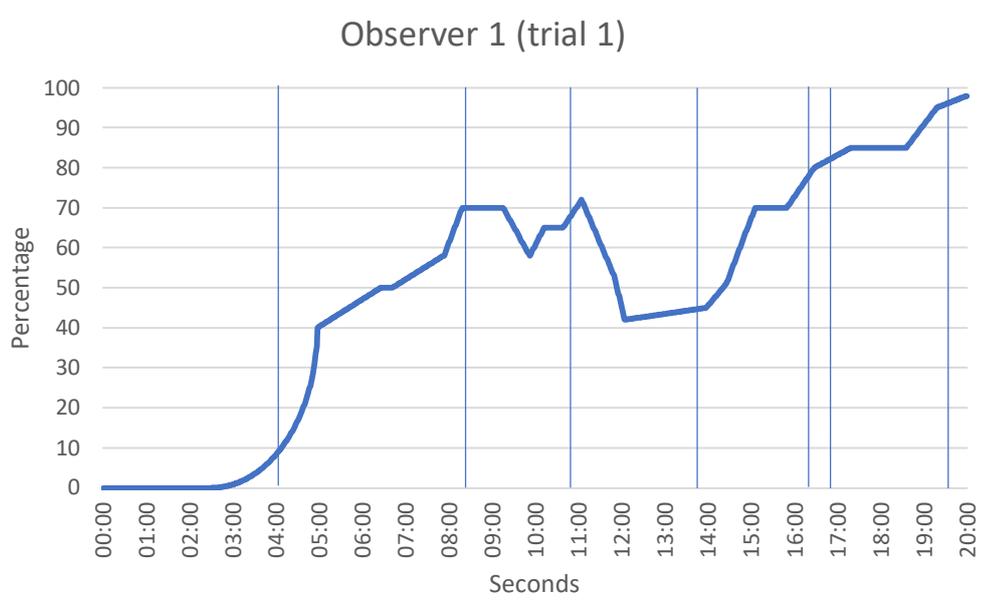
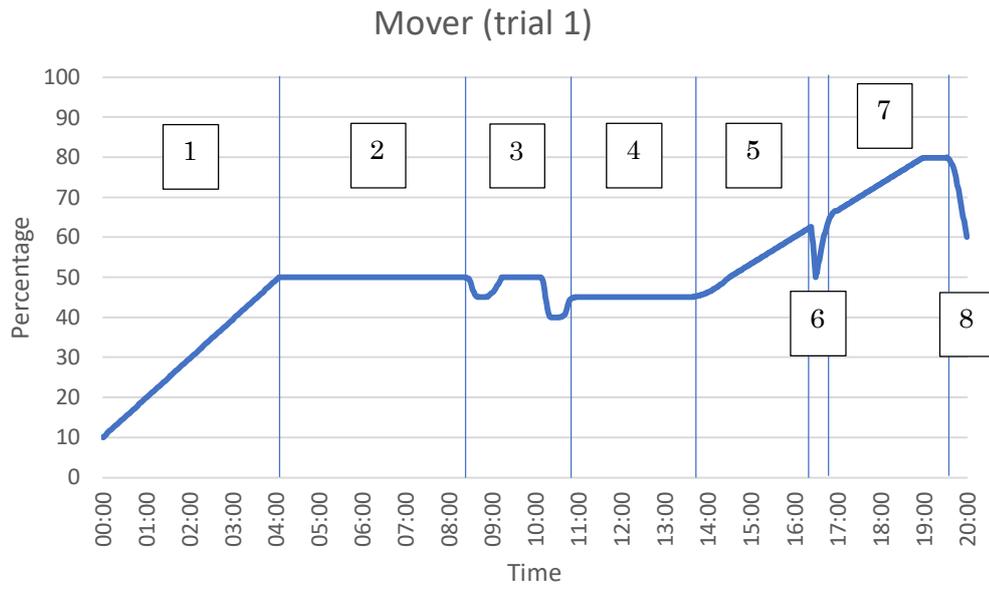


Figure 12. Mover's (top) and observer 1's (bottom) line graphs from trial 1.

Each observer's line graph was examined against the mover's to see 1.) whether a similar shape appears in the line during each phase between the mover and observer (e.g. a bump, dent, incline, decline, plateau), and 2.) whether the difference in overall level from one phase to the next is similar between mover and observer (e.g. higher or lower overall than the previous). The following criteria for this analysis were inspired by the idea of visual analysis in single-case

research designs (Barker et al., 2011; Lane & Gast, 2014), wherein the researcher identifies patterns within a series of data through visual inspection. In the current analysis, the observers' line graphs were treated as ratings of the original (mover's) graph, which, should they match the original, serves as external sources of confirmation to the pattern itself. This system follows the idea that external raters can assess (i.e. agree or disagree with) the pattern shown in the original result. As assessments via external rater usually allow around 20% disagreement (Graham, Milanowski, & Miller, 2012), the current criteria allowed one observer (rater) to disagree with the rest, in concluding that there was agreement among the participants:

- Shape: if a shape similar to the mover's line graph (incline, decline, bump, dent, plateau) was seen in three or more of the observers, the shape was considered agreed. As the distinction between agreement and non-agreement in shapes are made subjectively by myself, this was tested through inter/intra-rater agreement. For this test, each of the three external raters was given a Word file showing the mover's and observers' line graphs for one of the trials (five line graphs in total), and an Excel file to insert their responses (yes = similar / no = different) on the similarities between the mover and each observer, for each of the phases in the line graphs (four responses \times number of phases) (See Appendix 12: Inter-rater Agreement Material for detail). The responses were then compared to my initial ratings to see what percentage of the responses matched. The same procedure was taken by myself two months after the initial rating. Inter-rater test showed an average of 81.25% agreement by three raters (range 78.13 to 87.5%), and intra-rater test showed 93.75%.
- Level: if the average level from one window to the next increases or decreases for four or more participants including the mover, the change in level was considered agreed. While there were differences among participants in the magnitude of increase or decrease for each phase (e.g. Mover: +20%, Obs.1: +5%, Obs.2: +10%, etc.), these differences were not considered significant factors in distinguishing between agreement or non-agreement.

as each participant had a subjective view on the ranges and meanings of the changes that occur in Meditative Flow level. While the volume of change between one phase to the next may have significant meaning *within* each participant's graph (e.g. phase 1 to 2 had a larger increase than 2 to 3), these values are not directly comparable *between* participants (e.g. participant 1's $\pm 20\%$ may not mean the same as participant 2's $\pm 20\%$).

At this stage, the first and last phases identified in the movers' line graphs were eliminated from the comparison, as these phases do not represent the fluctuations of Meditative Flow, but rather the absence or presence of Meditative Flow, which is influenced by the conditions of the study. For example, all movers reported that their experiences of Meditative Flow started from a low level (ranging between 0-10%) and increased as they became more familiar with the set-up of the study (details of this familiarisation process are covered later in the results). While the majority (10 out of 12) of the observers' line graph matched this trend (the initial level being 0-12% and increasing within or after the first phase) this can be considered as an agreement on (or interpretation, rather than perception, of) the *lack* of Meditative Flow at the beginning, and its eventual appearance, rather than an astute estimation of the level in relation to what has happened prior to that phase. As for the final phase, all movers' line graphs showed a decline, which, according to the movers' verbal accounts, represents a shift of attention caused by my verbal instruction to finish the performance. This pattern indicates that, whether the observers' line graphs matched or mismatched that of the mover during this phase, it would be based on a change that has occurred due to my intervention rather than from other internal or environmental shifts/events. As such, the final phase was also excluded from the comparative analysis.

Verbal data (interview responses)

A thematic analysis was conducted for the participants' verbal responses, drawing on Braun &

Clarke's (2006) framework. For his analysis, I took a *contextualist* approach, which sits between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism . . . [and] acknowledge[s] the ways individuals make meaning of their experience . . . while retaining focus on the material and other limits of 'reality' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.9). In other words, the analysis treated the participants' accounts as representations of a mediated, intersubjective 'reality,' whilst also acknowledging the fact that those perceptions are shaped and informed by the individual's sociocultural background. Additionally, the participants' accounts were analysed at a *semantic* level (in line with the contextualist approach), meaning that 'themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.13). According to Braun & Clarke, thematic analyses at a semantic level 'involves a progression from *description*, where the data have simply been organised to show patterns in semantic content, and summarised, to *interpretation*, where there is an attempt to theorise the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications . . . often in relation to previous literature.' (p.13). The Results section of this chapter (p.173) will reflect the outcomes of this description stage, leaving the interpretations to be covered in the following discussion/reflection chapter. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I engaged in dialogue with researchers outside of the dance field throughout this process, which allowed me to become aware of my own biases and to critically reflect on my interpretations. Additionally, I consciously distanced myself from existing literature on Flow and similar phenomena during this process, so as to avoid imposing existing theories onto the data and to 'remain sensitive to the expression and experiences articulated by the dancers in their own words' (Purser, 2018b, p.322).

First, a verbatim transcription of the interview footage was created in a Word document. Once the initial transcription was complete, I listened through each interview once more, making corrections as needed. Next, comments were inserted next to segments which addressed

relevant topics (e.g. descriptions of why a change in Meditative Flow level occurred=what it felt like=what it looked like) in a similar manner to the coding process in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The comments included short phrases representing the topic (e.g. "relaxing into the performance"="self-questioning"="fluidity in movement") with a note on the duration of the performance being addressed (e.g. "3:00 - 4:00"="16:35"). For the observers' interviews, the phrases in the comments were placed under one of three categories (developed for the purpose of thematic organisation): 1.) observed movement quality ("OBS"), 2.) interpreted internal state of the mover ("INT"), and 3.) self-referential thoughts ("Self"). For segments which do not address specific points in the performance but are describing the general quality (either experiential or performative) of high or low Meditative Flow levels, the comment was headed with "High MF" or "Low MF." Other comments, such as emergent questions regarding the methodology and theoretical framework, or participants' thoughts on the performance as a whole, were also made where applicable (see Figure 13).

<p>25:05 A: Right...interesting...um, do you have, sort of in your notes, have you talked about...these, uh, descriptors of of the movement at any point?</p> <p>25:25 O: Um...y- yes...(checking notes) Uh, maybe...like, here...to twelve thirty to fourteen minutes, um, the highest point is at thirteen fifteen, and this was because like she looked at total ease and highly involved, like, that was like the peak of her engagement within that, like, moment in time Um...um, and this came from...um, and so, there was like, a resume of flow afterwards as well. Um, and then, there was a b- the peak down at at two- fourteen minutes, for that thirty seconds, um, because like it was a total change, um, in what she was doing. So for me, that...I perceived that as being like, slightly less engaged with what it was prior to that (Is) that what you mean?</p>	<p> Asuka Sakuta 13:15: [OBS] at total ease [INT] highly involved / peak of</p> <p> Asuka Sakuta 14:00: [OBS] clear change in moveme [INT] less engaged than before</p>
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Figure 13. Excerpt of observer's transcription with comments.

Once the coding was complete, the comments were transferred and organised into a "Comments List" with six columns: 1.) participant (mover 1-3=observer 1-4), 2.) trial date, 3.) time/duration ("ö" for unspecified), 4.) Meditative Flow levels (High, Low, Increase, Decrease, Neutral, and "ö" for unspecified), 5.) type of comment (for observers: Interpreted, Observed, and Self-reflective), and 6.) the comment itself (see Figure 14).

Observer	Date	Time	MF level	Type	Comment
1	31/05/17	0:00 - 4:25	L	I	just getting into it
1	31/05/17	0:00 - 8:19	L	I	not letting go (of self?)
1	31/05/17	0:00 - 8:19	L	S	I am watching her do this & that
1	31/05/17	0:00 - 8:19	L	S	I am questioning (the authenticity of movement)
1	31/05/17	04:58	N	O	short stillness
1	31/05/17	04:58	N	O	"stillness" rather than "pause"
1	31/05/17	04:58	H	I	mover has made a connection
1	31/05/17	04:58	H	I	notices something that fed into the next segment
1	31/05/17	04:58	H	I	"noticing" as a result of pause
1	31/05/17	04:58	H	I	finding where we are now
1	31/05/17	04:58	H	O	continuity, but also a significant moment of pause

Figure 14. Excerpt of Comment List Excel sheet.

Here, the categories for the fourth column (Meditative Flow levels) were created based on the patterns seen in the movers' line graphs. Simply by looking at the three graphs (see Figure 11), it was apparent that the level of Meditative Flow fluctuated multiple times (i.e. all movers' line graphs showed multiple fluctuations), with durations of sustained level in between the increases and decreases. This implied that there may be a cyclical pattern within the Meditative Flow experience, involving increases and decreases, with durations of sustained high, low, or neutral levels in between. As such, the comments made on the transcribed interview also noted whether the participant was describing a duration of increase, high, decrease, low, or neutral, where applicable. While the comments were made, the participants' respective line graphs were also consulted to confirm each classification of level.

The observers' verbal accounts (comments) were then mapped onto a separate Excel sheet as colour-codes (one sheet per trial). Each sheet contained four columns (one for each observer), with 1,200 rows representing each second of the twenty-minute performance. The seconds (cells) which were identified as durations of high or increasing Meditative Flow levels were coloured in yellow, those of low or decreasing levels in blue, and neutral levels in grey (see Figure 15). The time column was then colour-coded in the same way according to the movers' comments to see at which points the observers' perceptions seemed to match the movers', as well as when they diverged (either from the mover or amongst themselves) (See Appendix 14)

Data for colour-coded Excel sheets from trials 1-3).

Seconds	Obs. 1	Obs. 2	Obs. 3	Obs. 4
00:08:54				
00:08:55				
00:08:56				
00:08:57				
00:08:58				
00:08:59				
00:09:00				
00:09:01				
00:09:02				
00:09:03				
00:09:04				
00:09:05				
00:09:06				
00:09:07				
00:09:08				
00:09:09				
00:09:10	"I'm done"			
00:09:11				
00:09:12		Finishing on floor		
00:09:13				
00:09:14				
00:09:15				
00:09:16				
00:09:17				
00:09:18				
00:09:19				
00:09:20				
00:09:21				
00:09:22				
00:09:23				

Figure 15. Excerpt of Excel high/low colour-coding sheet.

Synthesising visual & verbal data

The next stage of the analysis was guided by the mixed-methods strategy described in Creswell et al. (2003) 'concurrent triangulation design'. Once the colour-coding was complete, the phases (i.e. timeframes) identified in the mover's line graph were examined one by one. This step involved identifying 'agreements' between the mover and observers in a similar way to the 'rating' system used in the previous analysis. If there was a duration (within the phase) in which three or more observers identify a 'high', 'low', or 'neutral' (or a transition from one to the other) and their perception matches the mover's, the phase was labelled as 'Agreement'. Otherwise (e.g. no comments made by the observers=only 1-2 observers identify 'high', 'low', or 'neutral'=observers disagree on 'high' or 'low', either among themselves or with the mover=

etc.), the phase was labelled as 'Non-agreement'. The results from this colour-code analysis were then examined alongside the results of the visual line graph analysis, in order to further confirm the categorisation between 'Agreement' and 'Non-agreement'. An additional category of 'Semi-agreement' was created at this stage, which included phases that do not fulfil the 'Agreement' criteria but are notable for other reasons such as the accuracy in which some observers estimated the timing of a decline in Meditative Flow.

- Agreement phase: shows 'Agreement' in at least one of the two line graph characteristics (shape or level) AND in the colour-coding.
- Semi-agreement phase: has one to two observer(s) agreeing with the mover in terms of level and/or shape of the line graph AND shows 'Agreement' in the colour-coding.
- Non-agreement phase: does not satisfy any of the above criteria.

Question 1 analysis

The 'Agreement', 'Semi-agreement', and 'Non-agreement' categories were examined to see whether there were any differences in ratio between 'high/increasing', 'low/decreasing', and 'neutral' phases (as reported by the mover) (see Appendix 14 ó Data: Agreement analysis).

Then, the movers' and observers' verbal accounts were consulted to further examine whether there were any patterns, either in the mover's experience or the performance characteristic, that seemed to determine how well the observers can identify the Meditative Flow level.

Question 2 analysis

Previously, the fluctuations within the mover's line graphs raised the idea that there may be a cyclical pattern within the Meditative Flow experience, involving increases and decreases, with durations of sustained high, low, or neutral levels in between. In order to further examine this idea, and to see whether there are any experiential characteristics for each stage within this cycle, a *theoretical* (as opposed to *inductive*) thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.12)

was conducted on the moversøverbal accounts. This meant that, in the process of drawing themes, an emphasis was placed on a specific aspect of the data—in this case, the relations between the moverø experience and the changes in Meditative Flow levels across time.

First, the moversøaccounts, at this point listed in the øComments Listö Excel sheet, were reorganised into separate categories based on their Meditative Flow level: High, Low, Increase, Decrease, and Neutral. Next, the comments in each category were examined to identify commonly mentioned phrases or ideas (i.e. themes), which were then listed on a separate document. Here, the category øNeutralö was eliminated, as much of its comments referred to experiences which did not seem to have direct influences on/from the Meditative Flow levels and could thus be considered as irrelevant to the idea of a Meditative Flow øcycle.ö Once this thematic extraction was complete, each category was examined against each other to eliminate overlaps and to identify relevant characteristics that would distinguish one category from another. Finally, these characteristics were labelled as øinitial themesö that define the stages of the Meditative Flow cycle and were later used as reference points to check whether all relevant themes were covered in the final report.

Next, in order to extract relevant examples of these østages,ö and to understand the processual aspect of how these fluctuations (increase → high → decrease → low) occur, the øphasesö identified in the moversøline graphs were examined alongside their verbal accounts. Here, the moversøcomments were extracted and summarised from the raw transcription and listed in the order that the phases appeared. The idea of the Meditative Flow cycle (increase → high → decrease → low) was then mapped onto these summaries so as to identify example cases of how these fluctuations occur, and what each stage entails in relation to its preceding stage. While some phases included inflexions in level (i.e. bumps and dents), which meant that one phase could involve multiple østagesö (e.g. bump: increase → high → decrease=dent: decrease → low → increase), the verbal descriptions helped to highlight the *relationships*

between each phase (e.g. how one enters an increase=how an increase reaches a sustained high=what happens when a high becomes a decrease=how one recovers from a low), thereby informing my understanding of the transitional segments of the cycle. This procedure led to a revision of the initial categorisation (i.e. Increase, High, Decrease, and Low) into the following stages: Entering (increase in the beginning), Opening (some themes in 'Increase' ó experiences which occur along the way to a 'High'), Riding (all themes in 'High'), Ebbing (all themes in 'Decrease' and 'Low'), and Resetting (some themes in 'Increase' ó particularly those which occur during the recovery from a 'Low'). Once the categorisation was complete, the 'initial themes' were revisited to see whether the characteristics of these stages have covered all the themes that were identified in the initial analysis.

Question 3 analysis

The 'Agreement phases' were examined in detail, with reference to the observers' verbal accounts (i.e. what, in terms of movement performance, led them to perceive that specific level of Meditative Flow) and to the video footage from the actual performance. This stage of the analysis can be seen as an extension of the aforementioned theoretical analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which integrated additional themes deriving from the observers' accounts. As was mentioned in Chapter 3, continuous revisiting of the participants' accounts, as well as cross-referencing between verbal accounts, visual recordings, and personal observations can support the integrity of a qualitative study, strengthening its credibility and trustworthiness. This stage of the analysis incorporated the above approaches, not only as a way to strengthen validity but also to develop an intersubjective view of the phenomenon ó between the mover's experience, the observers' perceptions, and my own observations and interpretations.

For this process, a catalogue containing descriptions of the Agreement phases was created. The document listed: 1.) the stage in the Meditative Flow cycle, 2.) a summary of the mover's accounts on their experience, 3.) a summary of the observers' accounts on the

movement, and 4.) my description of the performed movement. During the thematic analysis for Q2 (on the moversøexperience of Meditative Flow), the moversøaccounts were extracted and summarised for each phase. These summaries were carried over to the current analysis. As for the observers, their comments were extracted from the key words listed in the colour-coded Excel sheet and listed as summaries alongside that of the moversø Here, some phases were reduced into shorter durations, based on the specific timeframes mentioned by observers. For instance, in Figure 16, the mover identifies these phases as ðhighö (left: in yellow) or ðlowö (right: in blue). Both of these phases were categorised in the ðAgreement phases,ö which meant that observers generally agreed with the mover on whether the phase was ðhighö or ðlowö overall. However, not all observers saw the *whole* duration as that level, as can be seen in the uncoloured cells. In order to extract specific ðmomentsö of maximum observer agreement, each phase was reduced to a shorter duration in which all (or three) observers identified that level, as demonstrated by the red square.

Seconds	Obs. 1	Obs. 2	Obs. 3	Obs. 4	Seconds	Obs. 1	Obs. 2	Obs. 3	Obs. 4
00:08:18					00:14:58				
00:08:19					00:14:59				
00:08:20					00:15:00				
00:08:21					00:15:01		Beautiful; slow; led by arm; less committed		
00:08:22			Presentation of new angle (way of looking at previous movement) to Obs.;		00:15:02				
00:08:23					00:15:03				
00:08:24					00:15:04				
00:08:25					00:15:05				
00:08:26					00:15:06				
00:08:27	Emergence of new interest (highly interested) = sensations of body parts; clear articulation of body; growing, building quality	Quietly settling into each found position; not landing but not floating	fluid, mesmerising movement	Deeply engaged with something within (each/complete) stillness	00:15:07				
00:08:28					00:15:08				
00:08:29					00:15:09				
00:08:30					00:15:10				
00:08:31					00:15:11				
00:08:32					00:15:12				
00:08:33					00:15:13			Thinking about what to do next	
00:08:34					00:15:14				
00:08:35					00:15:15				
00:08:36					00:15:16				
00:08:37					00:15:17		Finishes movement on ground; taking rest on floor		
00:08:38					00:15:18				
00:08:39					00:15:19				
00:08:40					00:15:20				
00:08:41					00:15:21				
00:08:42					00:15:22				
00:08:43					00:15:23				
00:08:44					00:15:24				
00:08:45					00:15:25				
00:08:46					00:15:26				
00:08:47					00:15:27				

Figure 16. Examples of ðhighö (left) and ðlowö (right) Agreement phases in colour-coding.

Once the moversøand observersøaccounts were summarised for each phase, each moment (as described above) was examined in the recorded footage. The purpose of this process was to revisit and to familiarise myself with segments of the movement content, as well as to develop

an understanding of how those segments were collectively experienced by the mover and her observers. Whilst reviewing the footage, I created some observational notes which helped to form a correspondence between what I saw and what was described by the observers. This process consisted of 1.) watching the footage while writing down my own impressions, 2.) reviewing the observers' comments, 3.) watching the footage again with an awareness of how it was described, and 4.) expanding my notes with additional descriptions based on the second viewing (my final notes are shown in the text below under 'Movement description'). I see this process as a form of intersubjective triangulation, as the observers' accounts were placed in dialogue with my own perception of the performance, and, consequently, with an existing awareness of how the movers themselves described the experience. The following text is an excerpt from this catalogue, showing Mover 1 ó Phase 2 (see Appendix 13 ó Phase Catalogue to see full document).

Mover 1 – Phase 2 (Stage in cycle: Entering)

Mover comments: An unmanufactured question (an emergent something+) appears as a result of prior conscious decisions on direction of attention. Thereon after, there is a continuous feeling of finding things leading into another. As the mover follows each thought that emerges, there is a sense of building, but at the same time, drifting (or being taken) through (soaring, or riding a wave). There is also a heightened sense of going inward into the self. the mover feels present and internalized, not worried about the outside, and she is not doing it for others.

4:05 . 4:15

Observer comments: Shift in attention, interest & movement

Movement description: Swift transition from squatting to standing in a direct vertical motion, head releasing backwards. There is a shift in movement leading into quicker, crisper movements at higher levels, occasionally using weight and momentum (e.g. swinging arms, head) to shift from position to position.

5:00 . 6:30

Observer comments: Clarity in attention & movement direction; coherence & connection within the body; use of weight & momentum; continuity in movement

Movement description: Smooth slides across the floor, fluently using the body: pushing against floor with the torso (folding, twisting) or limbs, using kinetic energy from floor as momentum to travel. Occasionally tracing large, circular trajectories, with one body part, and extending it with another. Head is released more often, acting as the initiator of movement. Each end of movement (theme) kinetically giving rise to the start of another movement (theme): like a Rube Goldberg machine.

6:50 . 8:10

Observer comments: Less control in attention & movement; sense of falling into an abundance of information; natural, organic, fluid movements (head-tail connection, curvilinear patterns in the spine, quick switches between contrasting movement patterns); deepening curiosity

Movement description: Limbs becoming more durable, and able to sustain more weight and off-balance suspension. In-place (self-contained) looping trajectories on the floor, like a rope threading through its own loops. Tighter, quicker circular trajectories appear within body and kinesphere. One continuous stream of momentum at the end: large dynamic glides → knee-slide → hand-stand.

Once the cataloguing procedure was complete, each phase was reorganised into stages in the Meditative Flow cycle (Entering, Opening, Riding, Ebbing, and Resetting). Finally, each stage in the cycle was examined closely with reference to how the moments exemplify 1.) what the mover is experiencing, and 2.) how the observers are describing the performance during each stage. Themes regarding the relationship between the movers' experiences and observers' perceptions were derived for each stage and cross-checked to eliminate overlaps (similar to Q2 thematic analysis). During this process, I continuously referred back to the original interview transcript to confirm that the observers' comments (i.e. summaries, keywords) are not misrepresented or taken out of context.

5.4. Results

The following sections will present the results of this study, first responding to Question 1: is there a difference in the mover's Meditative Flow levels between moments of mover-observer agreement and that of non-agreement? This is followed by the qualitative results, which respond to Question 2: what are the experiential qualities of Meditative Flow that occur during movement performance? and Question 3: how do observers identify and/or describe Meditative Flow (and its fluctuations)? The latter part (i.e. qualitative findings) will present results on Questions 2 and 3 together to show how the movers' experiences and observers' perceptions shifted alongside each other throughout the Meditative Flow cycle. Some of these sections will also include brief discussions on the results, which will be further addressed and expanded in the next chapter: General discussion and reflective analysis.

5.4.1. A note on expressions deriving from participants' backgrounds

Much of the following sections draw on illustrative expressions used by the participants, which seemingly derive from their training and educational backgrounds. These include ideas such as

“releasing,” “abandoning,” “surrendering,” as well as “listening,” “noticing,” and encountering the “unknown,” all of which are expressions used in many somatic practices (Eddy, 2009). For instance, the idea of “releasing” often appears in the Skinner Releasing Technique, which is a somatic practice prevalently integrated into U.K. dance education, including universities from which the participants had received training (Emslie, 2009). Concepts such as “listening” and “noticing” through stillness, as well as approaching the “unknown” are all seen in the context of somatically inspired dance education (Batson & Schwartz, 2007=Enghauser, 2007=Wegner, 2009), with which many of the participants had previously engaged. Furthermore, many of the above concepts, along with additional ideas such as “freeing” the body, “opening up” possibilities, and allowing movement to “take over,” are also prominent ideas within non-Western movement practices such as Butoh, Gaga, and other Eastern martial arts (Erwin, 2014=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Taylor, 2006)=another pool of practices from which the participants’ backgrounds derive. Clearly, there is a rich connection between the participants’ training backgrounds and the way that they have described their experiences during this study. This connection will be further explored in the sixth chapter, which unpacks notions such as “releasing,” “listening,” and encountering the “unknown” through Zen-based perspectives on movement practice and their alignments with the participants’ backgrounds.

5.4.2. Question 1: Agreement VS Non-agreement phases

On average, Agreement phases covered 62.82% ($\pm 10.30\%$) and Semi-agreement phases covered 7.56% ($\pm 8.14\%$) of the whole duration (excluding first and last phases). Whilst observers were able to make astute inferences on the mover’s experienced Meditative Flow level (as described by the mover) for a large portion of the performance, there were some occasions (about 30% of the whole session) in which the levels appeared to be ambiguous for the observers.

As a result of organising the Agreement, Semi-agreement, and Non-agreement phases into three categories, High/Increasing, Low/Decreasing, and Neutral, 88.88% (8 out of 9) of the Non-agreement phases were durations in which the mover reported a decreased or neutral level of Meditative Flow, whereas only 20% (3 out of 15) of the Agreement and Semi-agreement phases addressed decreased levels. On the other hand, most Agreement phases (84.61%) were durations of high and increased Meditative Flow levels (see Table 6).

Table 6

Number of phases in each category (Agreement, Semi-agreement, Non-agreement)

	High/Increasing	Low/Decreasing	Neutral
Agreement	11	2	0
Semi-agreement	1	1	0
Non-agreement	1	4	4

This result indicates that much of the duration wherein the observers' perceptions matched the mover's experience involved instances of high or increasing Meditative Flow levels, while the durations in which the observers tended to disagree, either among themselves or with the mover, mostly involved low, decreasing, and (sustained) neutral levels in Meditative Flow.

While these results may initially imply that observers tend to identify increases in Meditative Flow levels more accurately than decreases or sustentions at a neutral level, the fact that certain instances of decrease were, in fact, astutely recognised by the observers cannot be ignored. This fact raises the question of whether there is a difference between clearly observable (or identifiable) decreases and externally ambiguous (or unidentifiable) decreases. According to the mover's verbal accounts, all instances of a decrease in Meditative Flow seemed to involve similar experiences: finishing a thread of movement idea, becoming physically stuck, self-referential thinking, and explicit cognition (see Ebbing section in 5.4.3. 'The Meditative Flow cycle' for detailed examples). On the other hand, the observers' comments during the two Low/Decreased Agreement phases identify a clear characteristic in the movement performance=

there is a noticeable pause in movement whilst lying on the floor. The observers interpreted these moments as a time in which the mover is *resting* and *thinking* about what to do. These accounts can be contrasted against those within the Non-agreement phases, wherein observer(s) (who *were* able to identify the decrease) explained that changes in the movement itself, such as repetitive or more effortfully produced sequences, were what signified the decrease (see Ebbing section in 5.4.3. *‘The Meditative Flow cycle’* for detailed examples). In other words, it can be inferred that, in order for observers to reliably (i.e. at least 3 out of 4) identify a decrease in Meditative Flow, there must be a clear pause in the movement.

To further support this hypothesis, in one phase during which all observers agreed that there was a decrease in level (Mover 2, phase 6: 12:01 – 15:00) – while the mover reported that it was neutral – three out of the four observers identified a decrease in movement, leading onto a pause on the floor.

Observer 2: *There was less going on for me to remark on . . . [The mover] was more tired. It was almost like she had said what she wanted to say – like she’d expressed something.*

Observer 3: *There was like a pause thing . . . there was a moment of like, let me just pause and reconnect and see what the body wants to do next, sort of thing. So I think it was just a pause, but... it’s like a non-action.*

Observer 4: *[She is in] need of a break. . . . she lays down and kind of rests on the floor for a while. It was like she almost finished her idea, or whatever she had been investigating up until that point.*

Whilst this phase was categorised as a Non-agreement phase due to the difference between the mover’s and observers’ perception of the Meditative Flow level (i.e. neutral vs decreased), the strong agreement among the observers further implies that a full pause on the floor can appear to the observer as a decrease, even when the mover is experiencing a neutral level. Whilst there

were other mentions of pauses during Agreement phases of high Meditative Flow, those pauses appeared to be qualitatively different from those which signify decreases, in that they were described as 'pregnant' and 'alive' rather than 'thinking' and 'resting,' and appear in shorter durations (see Riding section in 5.3.3. 'The Meditative Flow cycle' for more examples).

Furthermore, the one phase in which the observers were *unable* to identify an increase in Meditative Flow (Mover 2, phase 9) also raises an interesting question on the difference between clearly observable increases and externally ambiguous increases. According to the mover of this trial, this phase involved the experience of finding a physical position that is common in her regular practice, which led her to perform an already trained movement sequence. The mover explained:

I wasn't lying flat on my back – my feet were planted, and my hands were in a position where I could lift myself up. And that kind of positioning, for me, is quite familiar within Capoeira, which then influenced my movement to become more continuous, but in a style of Capoeira. . . . [the increase] was because it was familiar. And, I'd remembered the style, because of the positioning of my body. And then because of how familiar the movement is, I was able to then, just go ahead and move in that kind of way.

This internal experience stands out from other 'high' phases identified by her and the other movers, in that, while some mentioned encountering familiar *scores* (e.g. movement prompts or imagery that they have previously used), none of them mentioned encountering familiar *sets of movements*. Whilst the familiarity in movement itself may be experienced as increased Meditative Flow to the mover (and also perhaps during choreographed performances), this type of increase may have been perceived as ambiguous in terms of Meditative Flow level to the observers of this study. This discussion elicits two elements within the observers' perspectives: 1.) that observers were able to sense the mover's familiarity with the movements by seeing her perform them, and that 2.) the observers deemed that sense of familiarity as a quality which

does not necessarily signify increased Meditative Flow in an *improvised* movement context.

5.4.3. Questions 2 and 3: The Meditative Flow cycle

Thematic analysis revealed that Meditative Flow can be represented in a cyclical model consisting of five stages, Entering, Opening, Riding, Ebbing and Resetting (categories developed through inductive data analysis, see pp.162-169), which fluctuates throughout a single performance session (see Figure 17).

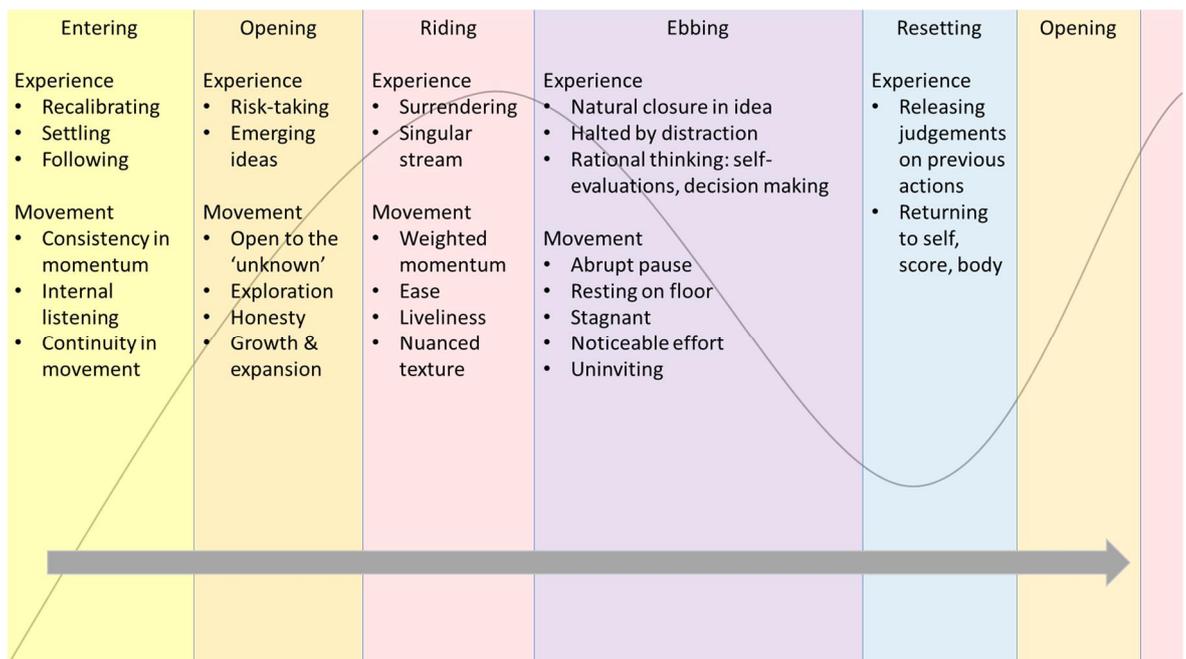


Figure 17. Cyclical model of Meditative Flow and themes within each stage.

While this model may appear similar to Nash & Newbergø (2013) linear model of meditative activities which identifies preparatory phases (i.e. 'intention to begin,' 'setting preliminaries'), mid-execution phases (i.e. 'execution of method,' 'enhanced mental state'), and a closing phase (i.e. 'intention to finish'), the model identified in this study focuses particularly on the experiential aspects of the mid-execution phases, and highlights the possibility that these phases could occur back-to-back without returning to the closing and preparatory phases. Additionally, the current model adds to existing research on the temporal dynamics of Flow (Ceja & Navarro,

2012=Mackenzie et al., 2013=ucznik, 2018), in that it addresses its behaviour during a single occurrence rather than its fluctuations or intensity throughout multiple days/occurrences. With these findings, the study may contribute to ongoing discussions on how Flow might fluctuate, be disrupted, or controlled (Chavez, 2008=Swann, Keegan, Piggott, & Crust, 2012) within a single occurrence. A detailed description of the stages will be given in the following sections, alongside the observers' accounts on their perception of the movement performance.

Pre-cycle: preparation

For all three trials, the first Meditative Flow cycle (or its first stage: Entering) appeared a few minutes into the session (e.g. Mover 1 = 4:05, Mover 2 = 3:36, Mover 3 = 4:20), following a duration in which the movers spent time on the floor or performing slow, minimal movements as they familiarised themselves with the context and environment. This pre-cycle stage can be seen as the equivalent of Nash & Newberg's preparatory phases (i.e. 'intention to begin,' 'setting preliminaries') (2013) wherein the meditator is still in the state of metacognition, thinking about what to think, and making explicit decisions accordingly. For the movers of this study, this process involved the act of determining their own score or adjusting their focus to a comfortable starting point. The movers also claimed that they were aware of the observers' presence, which influenced their thoughts and decisions in the form of distractions.

Mover 1	<i>When I started, I was like, right, okay, let's think about breath and let's try and follow the breath rhythm . . . At the beginning, I was quite aware. I'm trying to move away from doing this for these people [observers].</i>
Mover 2	<i>I still felt as if I was still quite distracted by the outside, and definitely was still thinking: "what should I think? Or what should I be doing?" I didn't really know how to feel or how to move, because I was obviously being watched, and that kind of blocked my movement.</i>
Mover 3	<i>. . . there were so many stimuli at that point of like... you know, the audience, and the technology, and the fact that this is a study, and it's your research, and, you know, me caring about that.</i>

Whilst this process can be considered as an essential gateway towards the entrance of Meditative Flow, it is, nonetheless, a pre-Flow process, and is thus excluded from the cyclical model of Meditative Flow.

Stages in the cycle: Entering, Opening, Riding, Ebbing, Resetting

1. Entering

The first stage in the cycle, Entering, is represented in the moversøline graphs as an overall increased or increasing level at the beginning two to three phases (Mover 1 = phase 2, Mover 2 = phases 2 & 3, Mover 3 = phase 3). While Mover 3 reported a sudden increase in phase 1 and a decrease in phase 2 ó a pattern that three observers also seemed to recognise ó the moverø verbal account clarified that this was caused by a spark of interest in a specific external stimulus (õ. . . one of the mouses made a funny click noise, and [an observers'] face just went [surprised facial expression] and that made me laugh.ö) rather than the gradual internal attunement that characterises this phase.

According to the moversøaccounts, this stage begins with a process of recalibrating attention, which involves actively guiding oneø attention away from the pressures of controlling or judging oneø decisions and actions. This process can also be thought of as the releasing of

self-consciousness, as it involves disengaging from others' perceptions of oneself. Given that this process entails an intention to avoid distraction and the releasing of conscious self-evaluation, the Entering stage can be seen as the first implementation of one of the elements of Meditation in Movement (see Chapter 4, p.114, components A. and C.).

Recalibrating	
Mover 1	<i>I was more internalised than I was worried about what was going on on the outside. . . . at the beginning I was quite aware [of what was going on on the outside] – I'm trying to move away from doing this for these people; then, I wasn't doing it for them.</i>
Mover 2	<i>I gradually began to stop thinking about what it was that I needed or had to be doing. . . . I kind of just started to accept that I was being watched, and it didn't really matter, because I wasn't being judged on what I was doing [and how it] looked in the space, or...I wasn't trying to achieve any kind of goal.</i>
Mover 3	<i>I faced the back, and that was a very conscious decision on my part . . . it enabled me to kind of abandon the stress of performing [for others].</i>

Following or appearing alongside this recalibration process is an attitude of settling (grounding) oneself into the body, which was described by the movers as *going inward* or *getting back to oneself*. In contrast to the pre-cycle stage, wherein movers described a conscious process of thinking about, and deciding on, what to do, the movers here appear to approach their body, movement, and thoughts, not as objects to be controlled, but as spaces to be felt and explored as can be seen in expressions such as *in the movement, with the body*. Such a process reflects another element of Meditation in Movement, which is a continuous focus on internal or sensory aspects of one's experience (component B.).

Settling	
Mover 1	<i>. . . it's just a heightened sense of going inward. . . I'm kind of sitting and listening for a moment . . . I'm definitely tipping over towards just being very "in the movement," with the body, connected to what's going on on the inside.</i>
Mover 2	<i>I need time and the space to be able to kind of realise what it is that I'm doing.</i>
Mover 3	<i>Turning around really enabled me to just kind of get back to myself a little bit, and like, fffaaah [closed eyes, hands loosely open, arms stretched outwards].</i>

The above steps (i.e. recalibrating and settling) appear to help the movers' attention become attuned to one's (internally set) task, allowing for a stream of new movement ideas to emerge. Such a process can be seen in how movers described a sense of "connection" and "continuation" within this stage, or an experience of thoughts, ideas, and movement, fluidly unfolding and linking to each other. The movers' accounts indicated that each emergence of a new movement direction is spontaneous, manifesting as a thought, sensory input, or an action, which creates the next pathway to follow. Further, the movers indicated that they were generally able to respond flexibly to these new directions with an attitude of genuine interest.

Following	
Mover 1	<i>I think that was the first time where . . . a question appears that I don't manufacture. . . in a sense I was following the thought as opposed to providing the thought to follow. . . This is a really continuous kind of moment where I just kept finding, okay that just leads here, that leads here . . . In that moment, I felt like [I'm] sort of drifting through – I was being taken through that process.</i>
Mover 2	<i>It's clear that I've found something to kind of work with that's allowing my movement to be continuous. . . my movement is kind of staying at the same pace, but it's quite continuous . . . and the movements are kind of connecting with each other, and then just falling into place.</i>
Mover 3	<i>You find yourself doing something that you didn't necessarily expect . . . it's like when my body follows through on something that I didn't have any control over, I didn't have any plan over, and . . . like somehow there is the energy that kinda just led me to here. . . luckily, I was in the space, in this particular improvisation, to: A. be in a position to allow that to happen, and then B. recognise it for what it was, and appreciate it.</i>

Three of the key features of movement identified by the observers during the Entering stage were: consistency in momentum, moments of internal listening, and continuity between movement ideas, which appear to reflect the movers' experience of recalibrating, settling, and following, respectively.

Firstly, observers recognised a decrease in the movers' conscious analysis and judgement (i.e. recalibrating), represented by the consistency in the momentum of movement. The observers interpreted that the lessening of conscious, analytical thoughts within the movers' awareness allowed the movement to follow through on its course of energy, building repetition and momentum along the way.

Recalibrating	
Obs. 5	<i>[The mover seemed] to move into that different level of awareness, so I wrote down: meditative flow and lessening of awareness.</i>
Obs. 7	<i>[Earlier, the mover] was kind of moving, but then not really following the movement through. And there was just that kind of indecision . . . like, “ok, where is it, where am I meant to be moving to?” . . . [Later] things really start to kick off when there’s a repetition involved, and when there’s a certain pace about things... like, when (there) is a little bit of a speed, and when things repeat... and then you can kind of feel that there’s not too much conscious effort – it’s just something... like a rhythm happening by itself.</i>
Obs. 8	<i>I felt a decrease in the self-analysis of the movement . . . I recognise there, a change in state of her body at that moment. . . . I found that there was an increase in flow of movement, so I suppose I would attribute that to a meditative state. . . . there was no sort of stopping, and waiting-ness, for movement to take hold.</i>
Obs. 9	<i>This was a longer duration of consistency from the performer, and, there was this feeling of opening and separating.</i>

*Observers 1 ó 4 participated in trial 1, 5 ó 8 in trial 2, and 9 ó 12 in trial 3.

Secondly, the observers sensed that the mover was tuning her presence and thinking through movement in a continuous internal dialogue (i.e. settling), which they identified in the way that the mover took moments to *ōlistenō* and settle into *ōeach found position.ō*

Settling	
Obs. 1	<i>[The mover] had made a connection, or I'd made a connection with her.</i>
Obs. 9	<i>The performer had a dialogue [that] continued throughout [the duration].</i>
Obs. 10	<i>What she was doing was kind of physicalising a preparation, or resetting, recalibrating... I found she was kind of recalibrating presence. . . . she was very much thinking through and finding movement. . . . it's not limbo at all, it was extremely active. . . . What I saw, in a way, was a quiet settling into each found position.</i>
Obs. 12	<i>[There is] a sense of listening to her [own] body and trying to understand the way that her body is moving.</i>

Finally, the observers identified an increased continuity in the direction of movement, as they observed more coherence and connection between each movement sequence. The observers explained that the mover had 'fallen into' an abundance of movement ideas, each idea quickly and fluidly connecting to the next, creating a continuous thread for the mover to follow (i.e. following).

Following	
Obs. 1	<i>I noticed the first sense of a continuity . . . there was more continuity. . . . The flow of motion did seem more connected.</i>
Obs. 2	<i>It seemed more that she was responding to ideas flowing from her body, rather than initiating her body to move . . . I had a sense of flow in terms of following a particular line of movement inquiry. Although there are moments where tension or ideas dip, in that long time, overall, there's a sense of continuity for me. . . . I feel, because the ideas keep coming and developing, that there is a flow about it. . . . something would happen, like a mistake, or something would happen as she'd move. She'd recognise it, and then she'd develop it as an idea. And there were several ideas. But it felt that she was kind of falling or, taking a ride in that sense of... there was an overabundance of... kind of information of flow, and she was just going with it.</i>
Obs. 4	<i>I became aware of continual movement that resonated throughout her whole body.</i>
Obs. 5	<i>. . . movement seemed to come out of itself.</i>
Obs. 7	<i>It's just things, one after another, happening and happening. Everything leads into the next thing.</i>
Obs. 8	<i>One movement, you know, led the other, and led the other, and there was a real sense of connection.</i>

2. Opening

The Opening stage recurred throughout the session, represented in the moversøline graphs as an increasing trajectory, either starting from a sustained neutral level, or along the way to a higher level after the mover recovers from a low point⁴⁵. The movers claimed to become more open to taking risks and accepting spontaneity during this stage, which implies that there is a sense of commitment to actively approach new, emerging possibilities. Further, the moversøaccounts indicated that this open attitude gave rise to new avenues of movement, which further evoked

⁴⁵ Within the Agreement and Semi-agreement phases, -Openingø refers to phase 5 for Mover 1, the beginnings of phases 8 and 5 for Mover 2, and phases 4 and 6 for Mover 3.

their interest and desire to explore. Whilst new ideas and happenings may fuel the mover's level of engagement, they do not appear to be actively created or planned, as can be seen in the mover's use of expressions such as *emerging* and *coming to mind*.

Mover 1	<i>Something interesting was emerging . . . I was taking a bit more risk in what I was doing. . . . I had a little moment of a little euphoria . . . I found this sort of surge, I guess. . . . I was like, okay, let's seek out some more of those – let's see if you can, without forcing it, come back to that in some way.</i>
Mover 2	<i>A certain image came to mind that I've worked with a lot in the past two weeks, in other rehearsals that involve a lot of improvising. And the particular image was – it's about the image of painting, and painting out a sentence, word by word, and the words just kind of come to me in the moment. I don't plan them – I don't plan that I was going to do that; it just kind of...got me up off the floor, and I started to move.</i>
Mover 3	<i>Sometimes, I'm just in my bedroom, and I'm like, let's put on some music that I really like, and let's just dance! [throws hands in the air] You know, like just let it all loose. And so I was like, well if that's part of my practice, can I bring that in somehow? So I sang some kind of tune in my head, and [began] grooving.</i>

The observers also identified an attitude of openness and invitation in the mover at this stage, particularly in the way the mover seemed to approach (or warm up to) the *unknown* or undiscovered movements with genuine curiosity and exploration. It can be inferred that the observers recognised the mover's subjective experience of becoming more open, taking risks, and accepting spontaneity. Some observers speculated that the level of fatigue is what geared the mover away from controlling or predetermining movements, and that it allowed for an unfiltered sense of *self* to emerge. The observers also noted that movements show stable development and growth (e.g. *building*, *expanding*, *gaining momentum*, *heightened energy*, *progression*), which further reflects the mover's subjective experience, namely in terms of strengthened engagement and commitment.

Obs. 1	<p><i>It felt like it was warming – warming up to sensation, building back to truth. . . . [it] was really, really honest, and unknown . . . She’s beginning to build upon . . . the learning and the discovery – it’s building, it’s building, it’s building, towards that next place of discovery. . . . she was in the place of less known, more vulnerable, more... what I would call ‘other’ movement . . . she’d got to another level of who she was, at that moment, and found something else.</i></p>
Obs. 2	<p><i>There’s a kind of real conceptual engagement with an idea . . . and she’s enjoying it, [it] feels like she’s enjoying the investigation . . . I felt like she was getting more tired, so she allowed more for a sense of self somehow. [There is] a bit more frustration in that . . . but that was kind of, again, higher in terms of energy. . . . [There are moments] of, yeah, surges of her interest, both kind of, emotionally and physically, like it feels like she’s sort of not putting on the controls – not putting on the reins, somehow.</i></p>
Obs. 3	<p><i>Because [the mover] got tired, it got to the point where she couldn’t actually think about what she was doing. I mean, she considered fulfilling the task and the score, but it wasn’t as concentrated as much . . . she really did start to release, and she does this kind of, like “release move” that carries her around the room, which I think, for me, was the first time where I felt she was fully immersed in the movement without questioning it . . . it starts very internal, and it is just naturally what the body wants to do, and then it gradually is expanding with what the body wants to do. . . . It’s just a development in her exploration of that movement.</i></p>
Obs. 9	<p><i>[I see] the development into the full embodiment of that particular moment, because there was definitely like a... maybe like, more subtle [at the start], and then became what it was. So, the growth. . . . that was like a start of a new experience, like a new interest. It felt like this was coming from sensations of body parts that she had.</i></p>
Obs. 10	<p><i>There was a sense that something new might emerge. . . . [there’s] just this sensation, or like kinesthetic... kind of empathy, perhaps, with the fact that her hands were open, which makes me think, maybe, that you’re inviting something new, or...you know, there’s a generosity in that move... there’s a physical generosity in that move.</i></p>

3. Riding

The Riding stage can be seen in the movers' line graphs as a sustained high level of all above 50% following an increasing trajectory, and occasionally prior to a decrease. Within the Agreement and Semi-agreement phases, this stage appeared in phase 7 for Mover 1, phases 5 and 8 for Mover 2, and phases 6, 8, and 10 for Mover 3, all of which were durations in the latter half of the session (i.e. happening after the 10min. mark). Whilst this stage can also recur throughout the session, the verbal accounts presented in the following description will be extracted particularly from phases which showed the highest Meditative Flow level for each mover.

Based on the movers' accounts, the main experiential component of this stage can be described as a mental and physical surrender into a singular, surging stream of movement. Whilst the idea of a continuous stream as well as the apparent passivity of the mover (e.g. following as opposed to leading) were also present in the Entering stage, the difference between that and the Riding stage lies in the perceived singularity of the stream. In describing the Entering stage, movers mentioned how one movement idea spontaneously led to another, then another, and how the resulting strands of movement connected with each other sequentially. In the Riding stage, however, the movers indicated a singular stream of idea that they were riding, or was allowing them to come *off the cuff*, with no stops or shifts in between. This singularity seems to create a more intensified and dramatic feeling of abandoning control, wherein the movers take the role of the *passenger* of the body.

Mover 1	<i>I think it's that sensation of being a bit of a passenger. Like, the mind being a bit more of a passenger in the body.</i>
Mover 2	<i>. . . that [painting with body parts] kind of happened for quite a while . . . I was really getting on with something. I was really focused . . . [I] feel like it stayed like that for a few moments because I was really working with the sentence that was coming up. . . . I didn't feel like I needed to stop it. And I didn't feel as if it was wrong in any kind of sense . . . it's just how I wanted to move at that point, I think.</i>
Mover 3	<i>[it's] when I started singing, which, for me, was a big moment of... kind of like breaking a dam, of "this is my experience, and this is what's happening" . . . I could feel it in my body, and then I could also see it when I'm watching it [on video], the freedom that comes from releasing that little thought nugget. . . . And... similarly, when I started talking . . . it just freed things up. And I caught myself in this kind of like stream-of-consciousness kind of talking, where there wasn't really a stop in my sentence structure – it was really kind of off the cuff, which felt nice. . . . And even before that, there's just a physical posture that, really, for me, seemed like an abandonment into this like, flow of whatever was happening. I was kneeling and my chest was up to the ceiling, and I was just like... in ecstasy. . . . [spoken] text [is] opening up possibility within the body, like kind of breaking down all those barriers to enable things to go through . . . I remember being like "oh, it's just happening" . . . I was present, and I felt present doing them . . . and that seemed really effortlessly genuine.</i>

In terms of movement performance, many observers identified a heavy, weighted sense of momentum (e.g. rhythmical quality=throwing=dropping=swinging=swivelling=free-flow⁴⁶ release-lunge), seemingly enabled by the lack of resistance or control (e.g. messy=fluid=free=natural=at ease=comfortable=simple=seamless=relaxed=surrendering=happening without calculation=carried by impetus). Whilst these accounts imply that the movements appeared, overall, free and released, other observers added that there was a nuanced texture to the

⁴⁶ The participant's comment may be referring to Laban's Effort component of flow, which can either be free or bound (Laban, 1988). In the current context, the phrase as a whole (free-flow release-lunge) was classified as a description of a weighted lunging motion with a released (or free) quality.

movement, and an energetic liveliness in the body (e.g. soft yet sharp=rippling=animalistic=clear articulation=alive=focus owned by the body=at one with the impetus=whole connected organism=everything coming together=fully involved), and that pauses in movement seemed *öpregnant,ö öpresent,ö* and energetically charged. As all observers gave relevant comments for Riding, the following extracts will be separated into three boxes, each describing the mover's performance in one of the three trials.

Mover 1	
Obs. 1	<i>[The movements were] messier, heavier, less, maybe less aesthetic, to her, in her mind. . . . So I felt like there was something else going on there, that she'd had enough time to sort of find that place... of freedom. . . . just... messy weight, throwing, less shaped . . . less careful, which, I think, was really interesting.</i>
Obs. 2	<i>[This] was a sort of final burst: of dropping limbs and body. . . . [There is] a kind of rhythmical quality, so some of it is about this kind of dropping [lightly bounces with whole torso on seat] that she did, some of it was about a rhythmical kind of arrival. . . . yeah, so there's more rhythmical, energetic... staccato or... weighted[ness].</i>
Obs. 3	<i>[Alongside continued "thumping"] there's a much larger swinging action going on . . . it takes more time and bodily organisation and commitment, and release of your body, to be able to add on the swinging and the layers. So I think, for me, it felt like she had released into what her body the wanted to do by adding on that swinging motion.</i>
Obs. 4	<i>I became very aware of the sense of impetus and weight within her body . . . she is gathering the weight and then letting it drop, and that gives her the time to really collect her breath and let it go.</i>

Mover 2	
Obs. 5	<p><i>[There was] a free flow release lunge . . . somehow the way she threw her head back felt as if she was releasing. . . . [The mover is letting] the flow swivel her around. Impetus is coming from her arm. And she lets the rest of the movement happen without calculating it. And then she's tracing one arm in space until the impetus carries her to sink to the ground. Elbow and upper body flow her into uprightness, and turning . . . there is a natural swing, easy flow to what she's doing. . . . I think, [this is] a big moment of surrender. . . . I think she's very much at one with the impetus in her body – she's letting her body take her.</i></p>
Obs. 6	<p><i>There's speed, there's using the whole body, using different levels, different directions. . . . There can be little pauses, but there are these, kind of pregnant pauses, of like [slow intense inhale, shoulders rising, hands expanding] where there's still so much presence in that. And then, momentum, and then [claps hands together] which pushes her to continue. . . . it's a whole connected organism. . . . I think this kind of [points to chest area] this like, aliveness is like the same as focus, but almost like a physical version of that word. . . . aliveness and focus that is owned by my body.</i></p>
Obs. 7	<p><i>í it was momentum; it was that whole momentum thing – the repetition, the speed. . . . there is fluidity, but it's not fluidity in a flexible sense, it's fluidity in a sense that you feel like there's no resistance; like her mind isn't resisting, her body isn't resisting . . . nothing is resisting...anything. . . . I recognise that it did take effort to move in certain ways. . . . but it's just the fact that the mind and the body isn't resisting that effort. . . . it's just going for it – it's just running, and it's just... happening. But there's not this, like, pushing of it – it's just flowing, energy is just flowing and flowing and flowing.</i></p>
Obs. 8	<p><i>. . . it's that moment where you don't know what you did . . . within the improvisation, you are so, sort of invested in it, and letting the body sort of take you through, that you become... lost; the analytical part of your brain is... I suppose, switched off . . . [there's] no sort of pre-judgement, or pre-thought behind what movement is coming out. . . . I'd probably describe it [i.e. movement quality] as quite a softness... and sort of like a bit grounded . . . I think I would attribute grounded-ness to . . . relaxing within the movement.</i></p>

Mover 3	
Obs. 9	<p><i>It all kind of came together . . . in the way that everything was fully involved, because it was all bouncing and working off of each other. . . . I wrote, entire bodily connection. . . . as there [was] clear articulation, and everything made sense. . . . She looked at total ease and highly involved, like, that was like the peak of her engagement within that moment in time. . . . there seems to be like, easy connections . . . it's happening naturally . . . it all is connected, kind of like an unfolding. Like, when you unfold something and it all drops down. It just seamlessly goes on – progresses.</i></p>
Obs. 10	<p><i>In the simplicity of it, and in the single events of it, I really felt that it was – the focus was just like... taking over her somehow. . . . there was something about the eye focus, or her sense of awareness being a kind of three-D awareness in that moment. . . . her eye focus was connected to how her body was engaging in the moment, as opposed to drawing attention to something in the room, or looking at one part of her body, or something. . . . it had the kind of a three-D-ness, cause it was all kind of captured, and not distracted.</i></p>
Obs. 11	<p><i>She just didn't have to think about what she was doing. So like, the voice just led what was next. . . . [she] didn't have any problems with being vulnerable. This [is] something that makes it really really interesting to watch: for a person to be comfortable in their skin, and many people [are] just watching what she's doing, but, just be[ing] themselves, just comfortable in her skin. . . . [there is] kind of [an] active energy that she's like, radiating through [the pauses].</i></p>
Obs. 12	<p><i>I feel [there] was quite like an animalistic quality to her movement . . . she passes movement around her body . . . there was often like, a ripple, or like a wave, that would go through her body, into different body parts. . . . there [were] quite sharp movements . . . like when she hits her arm, or when she lifts her leg up. But there was like, this subtlety of movement that went through her body. . . . it's like when a cat moves and ripples its back, or it's like about to go and jump on something, and it moves its shoulders – it had that same kind of like...sharpness but softness to it.</i></p>

4. Ebbing

The Ebbing stage is represented in the moversøline graphs as an often sudden decline in the level of Meditative Flow, following an either increasing or sustained high level. This stage appeared at least three times in all of the moversøline graphs from the current study. Within the Agreement and Semi-agreement phases, this stage appeared in phase 6 for Mover 1, and phases 4 and 7 for Mover 2. While observers of Mover 3ø trial generally did not identify moments of Ebbing (i.e. all moments of Ebbing fell in the Non-agreement phases), there were a few instances (phase 5, phase 7, phase 9, and the beginning of phase 4) wherein one or two observers identified a decrease. Some of these moments will also be listed in this section.

The movers identified two types of instances that can cause this stage to appear=one when the thread of movement/idea reaches its closure, and the other when the moverø thoughts and/or movements are brought to a halt by distractions (e.g. sudden awareness of oneø own state or othersøpresence) and/or physical challenges (e.g. getting stuck in a pose). The two instances may happen independently or sequentially (i.e. one as a result of the other). In either case, the movers described an analytical and pragmatic state of mind, wherein they were trying to *ømake a logical choice,ø øanswer questions rather than letting them lead,ø øweigh up the situation,ø* and *øwork out what to do,ø* while questioning and evaluating oneø own performance.

Mover 1	<p><i>I remember having my arm caught in, in here [gestures towards torso] so actually, there was something in... almost getting myself stuck again, or like coming to a point of where a crossroad where I needed to make a logical choice. . . . I was sort of more aware of answering my questions than letting the question lead. . . . [Because of] my proximity to where they [audience] were... I felt just a moment of [pauses and straightens back] okay, right, let's just reset this, let's go somewhere else – and I think, whenever you have those moments, they feel quite harsh to you . . . I'm really closed down to all the listening, or all the possibilities.</i></p>
Mover 2	<p><i>I'm on the floor now, and the floor is somewhere that I call kind of a safe place, and it allows for thinking time. . . . it feels like the right time to go to the floor, cause I've finished with what it was that I was working with. . . . I was thinking about what just happened with the connection to the audience for a while. And I was thinking, oh, I clocked eyes with [observer 4]. But then, I was also thinking, is it rude of me not to look at the others in the space? Or...is it okay that I just clocked eyes with [observer 4]? Are they [other observers] gonna feel offended that I didn't look at them?</i></p>
Mover 3	<p><i>I remember that I kind of... stopped myself, or like, I'd had enough. . . . [It felt] like an exhale or something, or like, I've been depleted now, of that... of that thing, which, I think I can recognise as a habit . . . a habit of allowing myself to deplete when maybe there's still more for me to go. . . . Like a premature depleting. . . . judgements started coming in. And physically, it manifested as like, kind of slowing down...pausing...trying to re-figure out what it is I'm doing. I think a common judgement for me is like, am I doing this right? – even if there's been no like 'right' that has been preordained. . . . It's that space in between . . . that's like, what am I gonna do? . . . it was like that kind of, weighing up of the situation.</i></p>

As was mentioned previously, only the observers of Mover 2 were consistently able to identify the decrease in Meditative Flow (i.e. both Agreement phases in the Low/Decreased category were from trial 2). These observers identified a clear characteristic in the performance, which was a noticeable pause (e.g. abrupt, or against the flow of movements) leading to a rest lying on

the floor, which appeared, to the observers' eyes, as a time for *resetting* and *thinking*. The quality of these pauses can be contrasted to those from the Riding stages, in that the body appeared (to the observers) to be turned off and stagnant, rather than *alive* and *pregnant*. However, some observers (1-2 at a time) of other trials were able to identify decreases in the mover's Meditative Flow level through characteristics other than full stops in movement, such as a noticeable effort behind movement or what the observers described as a lack of *opening* or *invitation* in the mover's actions.

Mover 2	Pause in movement
Obs. 6	<i>I think there's a sort of exhaustion. Or like, "I'm done with those twenty seconds." And then she was down there for about ten, fifteen seconds. . . . when she takes time to lie on the floor, I just... I feel like I can perceive... well, reduced focus on bodily movement.</i>
Obs. 7	<i>She came back to the floor quite a few times and just rested, and there was like a pause thing, so even if she wasn't thinking "what shall I do next?" at least, there was a moment of like, "let me just pause and reconnect and see what the body wants to do next," sort of thing. So I think it was just a pause, but...it's like a non-action.</i>
Obs. 8	<i>[The mover is in] need of a break . . . it was almost like...not that she'd lost her train of thought, but she's almost got to the end . . . whatever she had been investigating up until that point, was almost like, "fomp." . . . she was looking to her thoughts rather than her body. . . . although there is a lot that the body does in stillness, I think, sometimes, if you're too invested in thoughts, the body does kind of turn off. . . . It was more of a "stop" rather than a "pause."</i>

Mov. 1 & 3	Other movement qualities
Obs. 3	<i>[The decrease] is because of the headstand, which really felt like a moment of her [mover] mentally choosing: “this is what I’m gonna try to do right now, and I’m gonna make it work” instead of letting it happen. It felt like there’s much more effort behind it.</i>
Obs. 9	<i>[The movement] became very repetitive, so I felt like there was less opening and less invitation in what she was doing. . . . she was kind of like obstructing her experience. . . . [there is a] sense of becoming more private. And you wouldn’t say closing, but it’s... internal.</i>

5. Resetting

In the moversøline graphs, the Resetting stage refers to either 1.) the inflexion points between decreases and increases, or 2.) the transition between a sustained low level to an increase. While some instances of Resetting appeared during Agreement or Semi-agreement phases (either at the end of a ðlowö phase, or at the beginning of a ðhighö phase where there is an increase at the beginning), further examination of the observersøcomments (i.e. colour-coding analysis on observersøcomments) revealed that observers generally did not specify this transition per se in their comments about movement quality. Although some observers speculated (consistently with the moversøreports) that certain transitions between stillness to movement signified a transition from ðlowö to ðincreaseö in Meditative Flow, their descriptions mostly covered the observersø own interpretations of what the mover is experiencing internally (e.g. ðlistening,ö ðnoticingö), rather than specific characteristics of movement quality. For instance, Observer 1 from the first trial mentioned that ð[the mover] found a stillness, and then it kind of grew out again [...] [It’s] something about giving herself time to notice and listen.ö Furthermore, these astute speculations may have also been a mere counterpart of the recognition of Ebbing moments, as Ebbing (ðhighö to ðlowö) is thought to appear as a stopping of movement, and Resetting (ðlowö to ðhighö) seems to entail the opposite (i.e. initiation of movement). As such, this stage will mainly

be described through the mover's own experience, rather than as a combination of the mover's and observer's accounts.

As was mentioned previously, the mover's experience of the Resetting stage appeared to be similar to that of the Entering stage in most aspects. These include intentions to recalibrate attention by releasing mental control and judgements (e.g. *it's okay*, *it doesn't matter*, *ignore the thoughts*, *relax*, *let it go*), and to settle into the self (e.g. tuning into sensation, making an internal connection, turning to personal arsenal of ideas, etc.), both of which often follow a duration of stillness or minimal movement, as described in the pre-cycle and Ebbing stages. However, one crucial aspect which distinguishes this stage from the Entering stage is the mover's retrospective awareness towards the fact that a dip has occurred in Meditative Flow – whether it was caused by a depletion of ideas, or a sudden external distraction. Mover's descriptions of the Resetting stage are characterised by frequent mentions of this retrospective self-awareness as an obstructing presence, and the need to *let go* and *move on* from that awareness. In other words, the intention of recalibrating, for this stage, is to release self-judgements that have occurred as a result of this critical retrospection. Another factor that distinguishes between the Entering and Resetting stages is that the observers tended to recognise the Entering stage more consistently than the Resetting stage, which implies that the shift between pre-cycle to the start of the cycle manifests as a clearer shift (to the observer's eyes) than the shift between a decreased (or low) Meditative Flow level to the recovery process.

Mover 1	<p><i>I think stillness is a really lovely way to begin the question, for me. . . . [I] was like, okay, I need another question. . . . and so, I'm sort of coming back to this sort of folding sensation, and just trying to work out: "okay what happens if I do this, what happens if I do that..." . . . my keyword that I always use is 'okay'... "okay let's just come back" . . . I think of the word okay as just sort of acceptance. You know, you're not there, you can be, you've been there, it's okay... you know, it doesn't matter, it's not a big deal. I think, yeah, perhaps in these moments where it's less clear, it's about not holding onto what you've lost, what you've dropped. And not like trying to determine, "oh my god, I need to get back here. I must do these things, I must be better at this" . . . it's a bit like a net, really – that's the analogy: just let things pass through. If you lose it, let it go. If it's there, don't try and grab hold of it, otherwise you will lose it, and it will start becoming a presentation of what you think you're doing really well. Just let it come and go.</i></p>
Mover 2	<p><i>[In my training] we go back to the floor to be able to... I don't know the right word, reset? Yeah, reset, to... for example, if we were working with one imagery – one bit of imagery, and then we move on to something different, we'd always find the floor first, take a few moments to think about it, and then, when we felt right, we'd be able to start moving. So yeah, I feel like I've made that connection every time I've gone to the floor. . . . I'm going back to thinking about resetting, and practising, like, allowing my thoughts to be quiet again.</i></p>
Mover 3	<p><i>[I am] acknowledging what I need to do – like recognising if I'm stuck, and then relying on the tools that I have in my personal arsenal, to get me unstuck. . . . [I have] reminders, or acknowledgements that, ooh, if you're going down, this is what you need to do to get back up. . . . [I need to] relax, [and] not to care as much. Like, kind of divert caring, you know, cause we can care about many many different things, but it's like diverting attention. And for me, a lot of it is just like... let it go, move on... chill out.</i></p>

5.4.4. Additional themes: memory & time perception

Through the interview process, additional themes regarding memory and time perception were identified. The following section gives a brief overview of these two themes, alongside the participants' comments on their experiences.

Mover 1 mentioned in the interview that she had one clear memory of an Ebbing moment that occurred within the performance, which was at 8:20 when her arm became stuck between her torso and the floor. When asked whether there were any other memorable moments throughout the performance, the mover explained that the whole performance seemed to be a blur and that she was not able to recall other moments as clearly as how she remembered the particular (physical) situation at 8:20. The mover did, however, seem to recall sensory memories of certain scores, as well as a general (spatial) memory of the location of the observers.

Mover 1: *If I didn't watch this [footage], I don't remember anything that I do. I remember the feel of it, but I don't remember the action. So... and I can recall some of the questions [i.e. scores], and where they were kind of placed in the body, like I was wondering about how your pelvis can be like your legs . . . but I don't know what it looked like, I don't know what happened, I just know that it meant that I moved in a particular kind of way. . . . the only thing I recall very clearly is where the observers were. And that feeling.*

Whilst Mover 2 did not explicitly address the topic of accessibility (or inaccessibility) of memories, she did tend to give more detailed accounts on her experience during the Ebbing and Resetting stages (i.e. durations of low Meditative Flow level). Although Mover 3's accounts did not show any noticeable differences in the amount of recollection given between high or low levels of Meditative Flow, it can be inferred that, at least for Movers 1 and 2, durations of a decreased level of Meditative Flow seemed to leave clearer, more accessible memories than did

those of high or increasing levels of Meditative Flow.

Movers 2 and 3 gave accounts regarding their perceptions of time, which seemed to relate directly to one of the components of Meditative Flow: losing track of time. Mover 2 identified a relationship between her time perception and her own awareness of the observersøpresence, as can be seen in the following comment:

Mover 2: It didn't feel like twenty minutes for me, because normally, I'm quite conscious of time, and especially . . . when I'm more aware of people watching me . . . I become very aware of the time, and sometimes, if I'm not really focused on what I'm doing, I kind of think "Oh, I've been here for ages..." but it's not actually been ages . . . But, yeah, with this [session], it felt like it was over just like [snaps fingers] that. . . and I think, the fact that there was no goal to it . . . helped with the forgetting of the time.

Considering that the moverø awareness towards the observersøpresence appeared to be higher during low levels of Meditative Flow (e.g. pre-cycle, Ebbing), it could be inferred that the experience addressed here (i.e. being aware of the observers, feeling like *õt's been ages*ö) is referring to durations of lower Meditative Flow levels. Furthermore, the mover mentioned that the lack of explicit goals seemed to help facilitate a feeling of time passing by quickly.

Reflecting on the fact that these goals seem to be put aside during the recalibrating process in the Entering stage (e.g. Mover 2 mentions that *øl gradually began to stop thinking about what it was that I needed or had to be doing. . . . I wasn't trying to achieve any kind of goal.ö*), the moverø accounts, again, suggest that her perception of time is related to specific stages within the Meditative Flow cycle. Gathering from the above, it could be hypothesised that Mover 2 tended to lose track of time (i.e. time seems to pass by quicker) when the level of Meditative Flow increased.

Mover 3 described a similar experience in relation to the duration of the whole session, indicating that she lost track of time towards the end of the performance:

Mover 3: *[When the session ended] it was a little bit of a shock that twenty minutes have passed . . . [I] definitely was not aware of any sense of time whatsoever. Like, towards the beginning, you feel like you've been going on for forever, and then towards the end, you're like, "I've only just begun."*

Mover 3's line graph enters a high (95 to 100%) halfway through the session and maintains that general level until the 19:40 mark, at which point she was instructed to close the session.

Whereas, for the first half of the session, the mover's Meditative Flow level fluctuates heavily and frequently between 30% and 100%. Whilst Mover 3 did not give specific references to the relationship between the level of Meditative Flow and her perception of time, her accounts on the difference between the 'beginning' and 'end' may indicate that the *stability* of Meditative Flow level may have had some influence in her perception of time. It could be hypothesised that, as the level of Meditative Flow became stabilised at a high point, the mover began to lose track of time. Both Mover 2 and 3's accounts seem to support the idea that the experience of Meditative Flow involves a change in the perception of time—namely, that the mover loses track of time and feels that time has flown (Moneta, 2012=Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

5.5. Reflections on methodology

As was mentioned in Chapter 3, the study was conducted in a within-stage mixed-model design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), utilising a triangulation method (Creswell et al., 2003) for its analysis; both the verbal (i.e. interview responses) and visual (i.e. line graphs) data were analysed qualitatively (e.g. visual comparisons, thematic analysis) and quantitatively (e.g. counting agreements and non-agreements), making relevant cross-references along the way. While the participants' verbal accounts played a central role in the study's findings, the collection and analysis of the visual line graphs was an important element that guided the course of this study; in terms of both understanding the temporal progression of the movers' experience

and comparing the observers' experience against that of the mover. The triangulation of these two datasets – which involved both direct and converted (i.e. 'quantitised' quantitative data; 'quantitised' qualitative data; Johnson & Onwuegubuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) cross-references – led to what Morgan (2007) might call a process of *abductive reasoning*, in that 'the inductive results from a qualitative approach . . . serve[d] as inputs to the deductive goals of a quantitative approach, and vice versa' (Morgan, 2007, p.71). For instance, the idea of a cyclical model was first identified after looking at the line graphs (induction) and explored further by focusing on recurring themes within the verbal data that appear in parallel to the shifting levels (deduction). Similarly, the classification of high, low, increasing, and decreasing Meditative Flow levels – which later informed the organisation of stages and themes within the cycle (i.e. qualitative results) – was based on the quantitative shifts that appeared within the line graphs.

There were some limitations in the data collection procedure, including potential priming effects, implicit prompting through interview questions, and some incongruences between the participants' personal beliefs/practices and the premises/procedures of the study. For instance, the participants were made aware at the outset of the study (i.e. 'Introduction' stage) that its main purpose was to explore Meditative Flow experiences (as defined by myself), and that the observers' tasks were to focus on whether/how the mover was experiencing this state. Such instructions are uncommon in the context of dance rehearsals, classes, performances, or workshops and can, therefore, cause a diversion from how the participants would normally experience, perceive, and interpret a movement session – particularly in how those instructions may 'prime' (Moss & Lawrence, 1997) the participants to seek, notice, or identify Flow where they normally would not. Similarly, participants were asked to express their experiences/perceptions in a linear graph format, covering the whole twenty-minute session. Whilst this step helped to avoid gaps in the temporal data, such a format inevitably ignores the

possibility that perhaps there were segments that left little or no impression on the participant. Moreover, the fact that some movers expressed hesitation towards using these line graphs (see p.149 of this chapter) is telling of how, for some, a linear graph is simply too reductive or unrepresentative of such complex embodied experiences. The graphic representation also influenced how the qualitative follow-up questions were framed, for instance, in the way that participants were asked whether there were any patterns or experiential differences between segments of 'higher' and 'lower' Meditative Flow levels. While the line graphs proved to be beneficial for the study itself (as was explained earlier), it is worth acknowledging that this design may implicitly prompt the participant to see or describe their experience in a way that they would not otherwise. Finally, some observers expressed confusion about what they were tracking through the mouse device (e.g. 'the mover's mental state or my own?'; 'is the mover's mental state observable?'; 'are the two necessarily independent?'; etc.) as was mentioned earlier (see footnote on p.151). It was made clear from this outcome that participants can hold varying views on the (inter-)subjectivity, observability, and/or shareability of embodied Flow experiences. As much as these differences were 'limitations' for the purpose of giving identical tasks to multiple individuals, they can also bring about valuable insights for phenomenological or sociocultural discussions on the nature and/or concept of (inter-)subjectivity. Whilst the current study did not explore these ideas in depth for the sake of keeping to its main purpose, they will be briefly revisited in the next chapter as topics relating to mover-observer relationships.

To offset the potential effects of priming or prompting, as well as to account for any incongruences between the researcher's and participants' fundamental understanding of the phenomenon at hand, researchers can undertake what Smith & McGannon (2018) call *member reflections*, whereby a researcher and his/her participant(s) engage in dialogue (after data collection or analysis) to 'explore any gaps in the results or similarities they share concerning

interpretations of the findings (p.8). Whilst the current study asked participants whether they were satisfied with their verbal and visual responses at the end of the interview, there were no organised follow-up procedures such as member reflections to expose and explore potential contradictions and differences in knowing (Smith & McGannon, 2018, p.8) that may have been overridden by the format of the study. Undertaking such procedures, and including in the final report any additional insights that were gained through those procedures, may strengthen the rigour and trustworthiness of future similar studies.

5.6. Conclusion

The chapter has responded to the following two lines of inquiry that were raised at the outset of the study:

- How might Meditative Flow appear and change over time, and how might movers experience and describe these shifts?
- Can observers recognise these fluctuations, and if so, how do they perceive and describe that phenomenon in terms of movement performance?

These lines of inquiry were reiterated into the following three questions after data collection, which refined the focus of the analysis process in relation to the datasets that were obtained:

Question 1: When do the observers' perceptions match the mover's experience (i.e. 'Agreement phases') and when do they not (i.e. 'Non-agreement phases')?

Question 2: What are the experiential qualities of Meditative Flow that occur during movement performance?

Question 3: How do observers identify and/or describe Meditative Flow (or its fluctuation) in terms of movement performance?

First, the results of the comparison between Agreement, Semi-agreement, and Non-agreement phases provided insights on the relationship between a mover's Meditative Flow level and the

observers' ability to recognise that level. While it is evident that the observers' perceptions tended to match the mover's experience during high levels of Meditative Flow more so than during low levels, there are certain instances wherein the observers were able to identify a clear decrease in Meditative Flow level—harsh, abrupt pauses in movement, followed by rest. The qualitative findings of the study gave a description of the mover's experience and observers' perceptions of Meditative Flow. The cyclical model of Meditative Flow was proposed to describe the temporal dynamics of (paratelic) Flow during movement performance, involving five stages, Entering, Opening, Riding, Ebbing, and Resetting. Based on the verbal accounts given by the participants (both movers and observers), distinct experiential and performative qualities have been identified for each of the five stages. Additionally, some emergent themes regarding the mover's experience of memory and time were identified, which may relate to inherent cognitive mechanisms of Meditative Flow experiences.

6. General discussion and reflective analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents reflective and analytical discussions on how the results from Study 2 (as well as parts of Study 1) might relate to the core themes and literature explored in Chapters 1 and 2. As was explained in Chapter 5, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted on the participants' verbal responses. Descriptive results were then presented in the latter half of the chapter, leaving scope for further interpretive discussions on the study's findings. The current chapter will expand on the themes that were presented in Chapter 5, placing them in dialogue with literature on Flow, meditation, and Zen-influenced movement practices⁴⁷. Through these discussions, the chapter responds to the key questions that were asked at the outset of this thesis, which were:

- 1.) How might dancers and movement practitioners experience paratelic Flow during a single movement session?
- 2.) How might these states interact with the mover's physical performance?
- 3.) How might viewers perceive and describe the experience of witnessing a performer move in and out of such states?

Green & Stinson (1999) compare the interpretive researcher to an ethnographer, in that they might embed themselves in the participant group to collect data and to engage with the participants' experience from a second-person (Ravn & Hansen, 2013) perspective. In this sense, interpretive research is most helpful in allowing us to understand how participants in

⁴⁷ In qualitative (e.g. interpretive, ethnographic, phenomenological) studies, it is common to see its results (e.g. quotations from participants' verbal response) embedded in the discussion, wherein the researcher's interpretations are presented alongside relevant literature (Elliot & Timulak, 2005). Whereas most mono-method, quantitative studies present explicit descriptions of the method of analysis before its results and discussions, qualitative studies are designed to demonstrate its analysis process partially *through* its interpretive discussion – as the researcher's interpretation constitutes a large part of the analysis itself (Cruz & Tántia, 2017). In the current thesis, the results of the main study (Chapter 5) were presented separately from the method and discussion in order to establish concrete themes and findings upon which further interpretive discussion can draw. Meanwhile, the discussion will also contain participant quotations and personal observations to demonstrate certain points in my interpretation – similarly to other qualitative studies.

dance are making sense of their experiences, as [i]t can give a voice to the otherwise silent participants in dance (Green & Stinson, 1999, p.104). However, as was mentioned at the outset of Chapter 5 (pp.139-141), the current study is not an ethnography but a psychological case study, in that I positioned myself as an interested outsider (Purser, 2018b, p.322) who has not experienced the same practices, educational environments, or social contexts as the participants.

Moreover, whilst interpretive studies are often based in a postpositivist epistemology (e.g. interpretivism, constructivism, phenomenological; Green & Stinson, 1999; Scotland, 2012), the current thesis does not place itself in a single epistemological position, and instead draws on multiple theoretical views to respond to its research questions pragmatically. Therefore, whilst the discussions in this chapter are interpretive in the sense that they are guided by my own understanding of the data and its relations to existing research, they should not be taken as interpretivist or sociological accounts on dancers' experiences and their meanings. Rather as Purser (2018b) describes in her own study they are an attempt to bring my findings into conversation with existing literature and attending to [their] resonances (p.322) to open further cross-disciplinary dialogue. As Green & Stinson (1999) note, [t]he interpretation offered by the researcher can give readers an opportunity to reflect, to pay attention to what they might otherwise miss in their own [dance] settings (p.104). Similarly, the following discussions aim to illuminate (Purser, 2018b, p.322) aspects of Flow and meditative experiences in dance to which both practitioners and psychologists may have little access within their respective domains.

The chapter is divided into four parts. Part 1 and 2 will mainly engage with the first question, addressing the movers' experience towards and within Meditative Flow throughout their movement sessions. Part 3 responds to the second question regarding the relationships between Meditative Flow and movement performance, and Part 4 responds to the third question which addresses the audiences' perceptions of Meditative Flow.

6.1. PART 1 – Cognitive implications within the Meditative Flow cycle

As was explored in Chapter 1, Flow experiences can be defined as a state of hypofrontality (Dietrich, 2004), which involves the absence of explicit, higher-order cognition, and an enhancement in implicit processing, such as intuitive actions and sensorimotor integration (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010). Explicit cognition involves making decisions and taking actions based on goal-oriented (or rule-based) thinking, which necessitates a process of consciously monitoring and regulating one's own action. These explicit functions are thought to be released through a meditative process of somatic sensing, which roots one's attention to the present moment of experience and allows implicit systems to become the prominent force which drives one's actions. The current section explores how movers in Study 2 (Chapter 5) may have experienced this transition through time, and how those experiences may be read from the movers' verbal reflections. The section follows the progression of the cyclical model of Meditative Flow (i.e. Entering/Resetting → Opening → Riding → Ebbing) through two running themes, "releasing the explicit" and "engaging with the implicit," as a way of framing the current temporal model through a cognitive perspective.

6.1.1. Entering/Resetting: releasing self-consciousness and engaging with sensation

Participants described the initial stages of their Meditative Flow experience (Entering) as well as moments of re-entering the experience (Resetting) as a process of "abandoning" or "moving away from" thoughts about how they were seen by others in the room (see Chapter 5, p.181). These thoughts → how one might appear to others → arise within one's *reflective* self-consciousness in that they contain an "explicit, conceptual, and objectifying awareness" (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p.61) that is held by the mover towards herself. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, self-reflective thoughts are thought to be a product of the explicit system (Dietrich,

2004) which monitors and evaluates one's actions in relation to the social context (e.g. 'how might I be seen by others?' 'are my actions appropriate?') and builds judgements or decisions on one's next course of action. The Entering and Resetting stages, thus, appear to begin with a gradual release of explicit cognitive processes which govern the mover's reflective self-consciousness.

In addressing the entering process of Meditative Flow, however, Mover 1 mentions that 'the mind needs to have a voice to start with,' implying that some explicit mental processes are necessary to take the first step into her movement exploration. This account reflects how certain functions of the explicit system – such as selective attention and conflict monitoring – are required to drive the mover's attention towards initial focal points and movement directions (e.g. score, task, question, etc.). However, this type of explicit processing is distinct from those which constitute an objectifying self-awareness, as was discussed in Chapter 1 (p.22). Reflective self-consciousness can be thought of as an autobiographic and objective mode of self-processing (i.e. Narrative Self), whereas task-related decision-making (e.g. choosing a focal point or score) is representative of a more enactive or subjective mode of self-processing (i.e. Minimal Self) (Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013). For any form of activity involving an initial process of concentration – including meditative and somatic movement processes – this shift from the Narrative to the Minimal self is an inherent process that occurs when engaging with a task (Austin, 2010=Hamilton et al., 2011). As the movement progresses, however, Mover 1 asks whether it is possible for the 'mind' to gradually descend from being the 'driver' of movement decisions, to being the 'observer.' The mover's account points to a sort of cognitive suspension, which may relate to the deactivation of explicit systems, as described by Dietrich & Stoll (2010), or more specifically, the deactivation of systems which govern selective attention and conflict monitoring (Fox et al., 2005=Sprengh, 2012).

Whilst the Entering and Resetting stages involve the *release* of self-reflective thinking,

they also involve an *engagement* with somatic introspection (Kasai, 1999=Sweeney, 2009), which can be identified in participants' descriptions of *going inward* and *being with the body* (see Chapter 5, p.181) or what I described as the *settling* process. The settling process involves a process of listening (from a *subjective* stance) to one's cognitive and sensorimotor processes, rather than to an *objectively* conceived image of the *self*, which, again, points to the switch between Narrative and Minimal Self (Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013). In addressing this process, some participants identify a shift in attention from the *external* to an *internal* space. For instance, both Mover 1 and Mover 2 used the word *outside* to indicate distractions caused by the presence of the observers, and Mover 1 went on to explain the process of settling as connecting with *what is going on on the inside* (see Chapter 5, p.181). Whilst these accounts imply that the settling process involves a subjective feeling of engaging with the *inside*, the distinction between internal and external spaces is not so clear when considering one's *situatedness* (Anderson, 2003) in the world. Sensory experiences of moving (or simply *being* in the world) which can be considered internal experiences are, in reality, heavily reliant on the external space, as those experiences can only be conceived through inputs from (or interactions with) one's surrounding environment. Rather than a shift in attention from the *external* to an *internal* space, perhaps the movers experienced a shift in attitude, from critical thinking or an attitude of thinking which engages with external consequences (e.g. others' judgements on one's own performance) to non-judgmental introspection or an attitude of listening which engages with somatic sensations, thoughts, and emotions that arise from moment to moment. Such a non-judgmental attitude speaks to the idea of engaging with *implicit* somatosensory processes in meditation, as described by Bruya (2010a) in Chapter 1 (p.21).

As self-reflective thoughts (i.e. explicit processes) are released and the kinesthetic experience (i.e. implicit processes) is engaged, the experiential components of Meditative Flow

appear=stability in focused attention (component d.) and a feeling of movements simply falling into place (component e.). For instance, all movers described a sense of continuity in movement in the Entering stage, naturally unfolding and creating new pathways as the mover simply *“follows”* them with effortless attention (see Chapter 5, p.182). Such experiences reflect the reciprocal relationship between movement and somatic attention (as mentioned in Chapter 2, p.50), in that the kinesthetic sensations arising through movement provide constant reminders for one to attend to the present moment of sensory experience, thus allowing a continuous stream of present-centred awareness and intuitive (i.e. not strategic or pre-conceived) movement generation.

6.1.2. Opening: releasing control and engaging with the unknown

The Opening stage represents the increasing trajectories in the participants' line graphs, described as moments wherein new movement directions emerge as the mover begins to *“take more risk,” “let it all loose,”* and allow new ideas to enter their awareness (see Chapter 5, p.186). This open and inviting attitude appears to involve a release of fears and reservations on the consequences of one's actions (e.g. *“I felt a bit more removed from judgement” – “I don't plan what I am going to do”*), as well as an active engagement with, or exploration of, unknown territories (e.g. *“what happens if I do this, what happens if I do that?” – “It just comes to me in the moment” – “a movement happened by accident . . . it's spontaneous”*). The two elements (i.e. releasing fear, engaging with the unknown) appear alongside each other to create a committed yet open stance towards new possibilities. Whereas descriptions of the Entering and Resetting stages indicate a release of explicit, self-referential thinking, the Opening stage appears to involve the release of emotional reservations towards precarity (e.g. encountering the *“unknown”*) – similar to what is discussed in Taylor's (2006) writings on Butoh practice and Flow (see Chapter 2, p.55). However, considering Dietrich & Stoll's (2010) understanding of

the explicit system, these emotions may also be a part of explicit thought processes. According to Dietrich & Stoll, the explicit system works in a top-down way, monitoring the situation and controlling the individual's actions accordingly. On the other hand, the implicit system acts on a moment-to-moment basis, simply reacting to one's immediate circumstances without any forward planning. The situation of not knowing becomes problematic (thus causing a sense of precarity) only in the context of this explicit-level processing, wherein the goal is to stay in control of the situation and one's own actions. In this sense, the apparent release of emotional reservations in the Opening stage may represent another movement away from explicit processing. On the other hand, the mover's commitment towards encountering and exploring the unknown – as described above – may reflect their submission to a more implicit mode of cognitive processing.

The idea of an open attitude towards encountering the unexpected is mentioned in Kasai & Parsons's *Butoh literature* (2003) (see Chapter 2, p.54), as well as in Allen's book on *Eastern martial arts* (2015) (see Chapter 2, p.64). Both accounts frame this attitude as a desirable state in performance, in that the former sees it as an 'empty' mind-body state which is stripped of previous cultural engravements, and the latter sees it as a key to heightened responsivity in combat. Furthermore, Taylor's (2006) descriptions of Flow experiences during Butoh-inspired movement highlights the balance between a releasing and engaging attitude when opening to the unknown, in that a mover must '[let] go of expectations of the dance and [submit] to what is found' (i.e. 'releasing') while actively pursuing 'that mystery and holding on to the intention to stay with and follow what is found' (i.e. 'engaging') (p.3037). Taylor also uses the term 'opening' to refer to this attitude, noting that Flow experiences within improvisation exist at the intersection between surrendering to, and pursuing, new (or otherwise 'hidden') areas, whether it be emotional, physical, or mental. The above authors' views on Flow and similar pre-reflective experiences concur with the mover's accounts on their Meditative Flow, in that both

parties identify a sense of openness=releasing control and engaging with the unknown.

6.1.3. Riding: releasing effort and the engaged mind-body

Riding, which represents the peak state within the Meditative Flow cycle, is firstly characterised by what I see as an abandonment of effortful drive. Whereas the previously mentioned stages, Entering, Resetting, and Opening, appear to involve both a 'releasing' and 'engaging' attitude, the Riding stage seems to involve only an experience of pure 'release,' as can be inferred by the movers' frequent mentions of passive, relinquishing expressions such as 'being the passenger,' 'off the cuff,' 'abandonment,' and 'effortlessness' (see Chapter 5, p.189). Additionally, accounts on the perceived automaticity of movement (e.g. '[movement are] just happening') indicate a lack of explicit intentions and decisions behind movement generation, further contouring this feeling of release. Similar experiences are frequently mentioned as a characteristic of Flow-like states in a range of literature, as was covered in earlier chapters. For instance, the idea of 'automatic' movement as described by Sellers-Young (1993) and Kasai & Parsons (2003) points to experiences in which movements emerge without explicit intention. Similarly, the component of action-awareness merging in Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of Flow describes the perception that each action seems to happen simultaneously to, or even without, the explicit intention or decision to do so. The feeling of movements happening automatically is also concurrent with the disappearance (or fading) of one's sense of agency (i.e. selflessness=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013=Knoblich & Flach, 2003), as the 'self' is not experienced as an active agent who produces or controls one's actions through explicit intentions. These theories, which supplement the movers' accounts on their psychological 'release,' support Dietrich's (2004) idea of hypofrontality in that any explicit cognition, be it analysis, judgement, or task-oriented decision making, appears to be absent from the movers' awareness. What arises as a result of (or at least during) this state of hypofrontality is a sense of

automaticity in movement, which is experienced by the mover as a stream of unintentional (i.e. not consciously or voluntarily enacted) motions and gestures which appear alongside ó not after or based on ó one's explicit awareness.

Whilst the feeling of releasing effort and explicit intention may be a core experiential attribute of Meditative Flow, there may also be an engaging process at an implicit and embodied level. As was discussed in Chapter 1 through Austin's (2010), as well as Dietrich & Stoll's (2010) claims, Flow experiences are (theoretically) associated with an increased engagement of implicit sensorimotor systems, allowed by the absence of explicit, top-down processing. Although very little of the movers' accounts implied an 'engaging' attitude, the observers' accounts may provide an idea of how implicit processes may become engaged at this stage. Whilst many observers identified qualities of 'releasing' control, 'surrendering' to momentum, and 'freeing' the body ó all of which seem to reflect the movers' feeling of release ó there were also comments which describe a sense of liveliness and engaged presence. For instance, observers of Mover 3 explained that, during peak moments of Meditative Flow, the mover's body seemed 'engaged' and 'connected' within itself, fluently articulating intricate textures of 'softness and sharpness' within movement and radiating 'active energy' even during pauses (see Chapter 5, pp.190-192). An observer from Mover 2's session made similar comments, stating that the mover's deep immersion in Meditative Flow could be felt through the 'presence' of her body, which acted as a 'whole connected organism,' exerting the 'aliveness and focus that is owned by the body.' These accounts seem to indicate that there is indeed an element of bodily engagement involved in the Riding stage, but one which the mover does not experience as a conscious or effortful drive. Such a state speaks to Purser's (2018a) concept of 'inhabited transcendence' (as mentioned in Chapter 2, p.51), which reframes the idea of automaticity in movement as a pre-reflective experience of 'somatic grounded awareness' (Purser, 2018a, p.49). Rather than a complete absence of one's subjective bodily experience, or

an objectified awareness of the body, the state entails an implicit bodily awareness that is *inhabited* by the mover. The mover's description of effortless and automaticity may represent such a state wherein the body and its sensations are present in one's awareness, not as the object of intention, but as the frame and vehicle of the experience itself.

As was discussed in Chapter 1, continuously focusing one's attention on movement and bodily sensations is thought to allow for a transition from an explicit to an implicit mode of cognitive and sensorimotor processing (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010). As the explicit system that governs conscious processes of monitoring, reflecting on, and controlling one's actions decrease in activity, movers can become less aware of their intentions and effort to drive movement, and instead experience an intuitive awareness of movements as they happen. However, as Purser (2018a) suggests, the perceived absence of effort does not necessarily entail automaticity or that one is detached from his/her physicality. Rather, there is an *inhabited* awareness of an implicit, lived-in awareness of the body and its presence in the world. What Dietrich & Stoll (2010) refer to as implicit sensorimotor processing may relate to this state, in that the movers appear attuned with their bodies in performance (or as observers described: *engaged*, *connected*, and *alive*), despite their subjective lack of conscious effort or control. In this sense, what is engaged at this peak stage of Meditative Flow may be the mover's implicit sensorimotor processes, experienced by the movers as an absence of intentional effort.

6.1.4. Ebbing and the "self"

Participants (both movers and observers) seemed to agree on the ephemerality of Meditative Flow, in the sense that it is easy to *lose it* from a simple distraction or a slight change in one's attention. For instance, Mover 1 described the latter scenario by giving an example of how becoming aware that she is experiencing Meditative Flow could, in turn, cause disruption in the experience:

Mover 1: *If you notice too firmly that you're there . . . your sort of brain kind of goes [places both hands on either side of her head] "whoop" [quickly moves both hands to meet in front of her face] you're there. And so you're, in a way, then, you're not there anymore.*

A number of participants agreed with this claim, one of whom stated that a mover must be *interested, but not too interested* in order to sustain Meditative Flow. These accounts imply that Meditative Flow can only be maintained within a fine balance (or a specific mixture) of engagement and non-engagement, focus and non-focus, or awareness and non-awareness. This notion is concurrent with the fact that a balance seems to be struck between an *engaging* and *releasing* (or non-engaging) attitude during high or increasing levels of Meditative Flow (i.e. Entering, Opening, Riding, Resetting). The accounts also suggest that a mover must remain engaged with the present moment of experience, whilst trying not to become explicitly aware of whether s/he is experiencing Meditative Flow. Becoming aware of one's own psychological state is a metacognitive process, which, as was mentioned in previous sections, is gradually released throughout the Entering and Opening stages until it becomes virtually absent in the Riding stage. The Ebbing stage, which represents disruptions in Meditative Flow, demonstrates how metacognition is (unintentionally) re-engaged, as can be seen in the way all movers identified some form of self-reflection, including self-questioning (e.g. *Am I doing this right?*), self-critique (e.g. *bad move, bad action, bad choice*), and other thoughts on how the observers might see (and judge) their actions. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, disruptions in Flow have been examined by psychologists in the context of sports (Ceja & Navarro, 2012=Chavez, 2008=Jackson, 1992, 1995=Neal, 2012=Sugiyama & Inomata, 2005=Swann, Keegan, Piggott, Crust, & Smith, 2012=Weber et al., 2009), many of whom report that factors such as performance mistakes, negative thoughts, and the presence of others – all of which can lead to heightened self-consciousness – are associated with disruption. Movers in the current study also

explained that, during moments of disruption, they were *“thinking about what just happened,”* and *“re-figuring out what I’m doing,”* and *“making a logical choice”* (see Chapter 5, p.194), which reflect the restoration strategies reported by athletes in previous studies (see above), such as self-talk and task orientation. As was explored in the Entering and Resetting section (see pp.209-212 of this chapter), this type of thinking relates to a Narrative mode of self-processing – a prominent characteristic of explicit cognition. Neuroscientists (Christoff et al., 2009=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013=Sheline et al., 2009=Watkins & Teasdale, 2004) have made a connection between the Narrative mode of self-processing and the phenomenon of mind-wandering – a non-task-oriented, default state of cognition – suggesting that this mode of self-referential thinking could be indicative of a distracted, unfocused state of mind that is undesirable for, or even obstructive to, focus-driven tasks such as meditative practice (Hözel et al., 2011). The fact that movers in the current study tended to actively release self-referential thoughts at the beginning of the session, and that those thoughts returned as movers fell out of Meditative Flow, further supports the notion that objective self-processing can be a disruptive force within the experience of Flow and meditation (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013).

However, as neuroscientist Dahlia Zaidel (2013) points out, self-reflective thoughts are normally a relevant and useful aspect of one’s daily life, as they allow conscious, informed decisions on structuring and navigating one’s social life. This is also true in a dance context, as Sheets-Johnstone (1966) claims: *“For choreographers and dancers, reflection may afford insight into approaches to choreography . . . a growing ability to create dance, and to develop as dancers”* (p.7). Furthermore, cognitive scientist Jurgen Beckmann (1994) explains that the mind inherently has a tendency to latch onto *“postactional self-evaluation”* (e.g. *“did I do it right?”* – *“should I have done it differently?”*). Such a tendency may benefit one’s growth and learning in the long run, but it may also be why we find it difficult to release self-judgements even when there is a more pressing task at hand. This inherent cognitive tendency may explain the intense

focus that is required during the Resetting stage to move away from self-analysis, and into the present, felt body. Furthermore, the idea that self-referential thinking is a *default* state of cognition could explain why pre-reflective experiences such as Flow and no-mind are considered altered or non-ordinary states (Shacklock, 2006) and are difficult to sustain.

Self-referential thoughts that appear in the Ebbing stage can be placed in contrast to the lack of metacognition during the Riding stage, as, on one hand, the *õselfõ* is located at the centre of one's awareness as the object of reflection, whereas on the other hand, it is almost absent from one's awareness. Here, the gradual shift in the presence (or representation) of the self *ó* from being the central object of one's attention to becoming an implicit awareness *ó* resonates with Dor-Ziderman et al.'s (2013) claims on how one's self-representation might shift during meditation. As was explained in Chapter 1, the authors theorise that a meditator's awareness shifts through three levels of self-processing: the Narrative Self, Minimal Self, and selfless-ness, in that order as s/he travels deeper into a meditative state. Following this hypothesis, the shift between objective self-processing (Narrative Self) and the absence of the self-as-object (i.e. selfless-ness) would entail a midway point wherein the self is enacted through the first-person perspective and as the *subject* of the action (Minimal Self). This state should appear in between the pre-cycle or Ebbing stages and the Riding stage, which would point to the Entering, Opening, and Resetting stages. Indeed, there are aspects within these three stages that indicate an enactive attitude, such as the psychosomatic introspection in the Entering/Resetting stage and the engagement and commitment towards encountering the unknown in the Opening stage. These attitudes entail an active engagement and focus towards relevant tasks, which, according to Knoblich & Flach (2003), are what facilitates a sense of agency and subjective ownership of the experience (i.e. Minimal Self).

Here, from the releasing of self-referential thinking during the pre-cycle and Ebbing, to the heightened presence of the enactive self during Entering and Opening, and onto the peak

state wherein the self as an entity disappears, changes in the mover's self-representation seem to follow the same trajectory suggested by Dor-Ziderman et al. (2013). These distinct levels of self-processing (as proposed in the context of meditation) may add to our understanding of the temporal dynamics of Meditative Flow, particularly in relation to the experience of self-consciousness and its changes through time.

6.1.5. Retrospective and present-centred attention: memory & time

The mover's attention shifts continuously throughout the Meditative Flow cycle, transitioning between (and beyond) the objective self and the sensory experience of the subjective, enacted self. In particular, there is an attentional shift that occurs at the Ebbing stage, which involves moving from an awareness of the present moment to reflecting on what happened immediately prior, such as making a 'mistake' (e.g. getting stuck in a certain position – see Chapter 5, p.194). This shift reflects a phenomenon that Bonnie Eckard (2013) mentions in her writings about the performing consciousness, wherein a performer's awareness gets pulled 'back to the mistake and forward to imagined consequences, making it impossible to be present in the moment' (p.51). Eckard's account raises an interesting quality about this phenomenon, which is an oscillation in attention that occurs within the temporal dimension. One of the movers gave a similar account on the difference in attention between being present and being analytical, explaining that:

Mover 1: *If I give way to analysis in the moment, I don't know how I can be in the moment.*

*Cause I'm already... I can only analyse what **was** happening; I can't analyse it **as** it's happening. So then [I get] somewhere caught in the past of it all.*

Here, the mover poses the notion that (self-)analysis is related to retrospective attention. She implies that analysis can only be applied to events of the past and that being present 'in the moment' cannot happen in parallel to this retrospective attention. Neuroscientists (Esslen,

Metzler, Pascual-Marqui, & Jancke, 2008=Mishara, 2007) support this claim in distinguishing between the subjective (i.e. Minimal) and objective (i.e. Narrative) selves through the involvement of retrospective and prospective thinking. The objectified self is thought to be an inherently retrospective (or prospective representation), whereas the subjective self-in-action is often experienced in the present moment.

During moments of present-centred attention, the working memory is engaged alongside one's attention on the task (Engle, 2002). This means that clusters of sensory experience are temporarily registered in the short-term memory for future retrieval (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1971). In moments of retrospective attention, these memories are retrieved and used for explicit analysis and further decision making. During this time, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex – a region that was previously mentioned in relation to the explicit system (Dietrich, 2004=Klasen et al., 2011=Limb & Braun, 2008=Ulrich et al., 2014) – is thought to increase its activity (Crawford & Willhoff, 2013=Schmitz, Kawahara-Baccus, & Johnson, 2004=Tagini & Raffone, 2010). According to neuroscientists (Blumenfeld & Ranganath, 2006=Curtis & D'Esposito, 2003=Edin et al., 2009), this region is thought to promote the formation of long-term memory from those stored in the working memory. In other words, reflecting on one's own actions and experiences can help to solidify those memories, making them more available for the individual to retrieve in the future. The connection between retrospective thinking and long-term memory may explain why movers in the study tended to report clearer memories of being 'out of Meditative Flow (i.e. self-reflective states) than 'in Meditative Flow.

Another theme raised in the interview study was changes in time perception (see Chapter 5, pp.200-201). Movers reported that they tend to lose track of time when they are 'in Meditative Flow (i.e. perception of shortened time), whereas moments 'out of Meditative Flow seem to cause a prolonged time perception. Psychologist Marc Wittmann (2015) gives an overview of the psychological mechanism of changes in time perception in relation to

meditative and other altered states. Firstly, Wittmann outlines a general theory agreed among psychologists on how both boredom and cognitive overload can cause the perception of slowed time: 'time dilation may arise either from an understimulation where nothing interesting happens or an overstimulation where one is overcharged with complexity' (p.2). Wittmann states that shortened perceptions of time occur in between these two extremes, wherein an individual is entertained and highly motivated by rewarding activities. This argument falls in line with Csikszentmihalyi's model of challenge-skill balance (1997), wherein moments of Flow or losing track of time appear within a particular balance between under-stimulation (lack of challenge) and overstimulation (too challenging).

However, Wittmann highlights another prominent theme regarding altered time perception which occurs during meditation. Drawing from his own and others' research on mindfulness meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 2005=Sauer et al., 2012=Sucala & David, 2013), Wittmann observes that meditation can, in fact, cause the perception of *expansion* in time, due to the increased awareness towards one's own bodily senses. Wittmann explains that richer sensory experiences allow an 'enhanced retrieval of contextual changes in memory' (p.4), resulting in the retrospective expansion of perceived duration. However, the ability to retrieve such specific sensory memories runs against the aforementioned notion that short-term memories during moments of present-centred attention may fade without becoming solidified. In this light, Wittmann's interpretation of 'rich sensory experiences' may be equated to the effortful engagement towards psychosomatic introspection during the Entering or Resetting stages rather than the effortless attention that characterises the peak (i.e. Riding) of Meditative Flow. As for deeper, or 'peak' meditative states, Wittmann raises an alternative idea of 'timelessness' which is thought to occur alongside, and in a similar manner to, the phenomenon of 'selflessness.' The author describes this experience as 'the feeling that time stands still' a reported universal experience in mystical states where time is not experienced at all and the self

becomes one with the world (p.5). This phenomenon can be considered as a different type of expansion in time—one in which the present moment exists independent of its normally linear connections to past and future. Having experienced this state, a mover may reflect on the vivid sensory immersion which stands detached from any sense of time (i.e. losing track of time), reporting that time seemed to have flown by without her knowing it.

Overall, participants' accounts on their experience of time and memory reflect existing literature from psychology and cognitive science. Whilst these themes were not the central focus of the study, the above discussions bring about new avenues for understanding, describing, and defining the experience of (Meditative) Flow and its relations to certain aspects of perception. In particular, discussions on memory open up questions regarding Flow and recollection (e.g. are Flow experiences inherently difficult to recall?), and reflections on time perception provide a qualitative perspective on the element of 'losing track of time' as seen in the nine Flow components.

6.2. PART 2 – Somatic movement approaches towards Meditative Flow

Based on the idea that Flow states can be attained through a meditative process that is facilitated through (or is embedded in) movement (as discussed in Chapter 2), the fourth chapter proposed a set of components that define what these meditative approaches might encompass (i.e. Meditation in Movement). While the survey study (Chapter 4) showed that these meditative approaches can be embedded in a range of movement instances including performance, training, and rehearsals, the results identified particular movement episodes, such as improvisation and somatic practice, as those in which Meditative Flow experiences can most commonly occur.

These results were further confirmed by the choices made by the movers of Study 2. Having been asked to show a segment of their own practice in which they have experienced Meditative Flow, all movers chose to show improvised movement, inspired and informed by

various somatic practices⁴⁸. Whilst the factor of improvisation was shared across all movers' practices, each mover held a nuanced view on what their improvisational practice entailed. The movers' approaches to their improvised session reflected the ways in which somatic practices (and their principles) are often integrated into dance education (Enghauser, 2007), such as closing their eyes in the beginning and focusing on bodily sensations as cues to initiate movement exploration. The movers were told to choose the format of their movement based on practices during which they have experienced Meditative Flow. Therefore, it is fair to assume that these somatic and improvisational movement approaches may accommodate or perhaps even facilitate Meditative Flow.

The interest of this section is to uncover how meditative processes were embedded in the movers' approaches, and to understand how the movers framed and conceptualised these processes within their movement improvisation. The section discusses how participants of Study 2 described and reflected on their meditative movement journeys, drawing on verbal accounts that were not covered in Chapter 5. These accounts will be related to existing accounts on Zen-influenced movement practices that were explored in Chapter 2, as well as to some of the components of Meditation in Movement presented in Chapter 4. Here, it is worth emphasising that each mover held a unique background of a mixture of different practices, which, without doubt, shaped her engagement with, understanding of, and reflections on, the movement session. Therefore, it would be rash to assume that the three movers' accounts would collectively describe a single practice or approach. The aim of this section is not to collapse the movers' accounts in such a way, but to examine elements of their descriptions that may resonate with what I refer to as Meditation in Movement, or with previously explored literature on Flow, Zen, and movement practice.

⁴⁸ Considering the results of the survey, which indicated that Meditative Flow may also occur in non-improvisational movement contexts such as choreographed performances and technique training, it is valuable to explore how the results of Study 2 would apply to non-improvisational contexts. Whilst references to literature on non-improvised practices will be made throughout this chapter, this topic may be better covered in a separate project (and empirical study) wherein more in-depth inquiries can be made.

6.2.1. ‘Translating’ the not-yet-embodied

For Mover 1, the movement journey began with finding a ‘question’ with which to work:

Mover 1: *I begin with like a question, so, that question is normally about something in the body, but it might be like a metaphor, like what if the legs could float? . . . that [line of inquiry] has to grow gradually because . . . there’s no answer, is there? So it’s a search, it’s a kind of like, “well, what would that be like, and what does that feel like, and where do I start that?” . . . it’s not like, “do I get a tea or a coffee?” – and then, whichever one, I press the button. [Rather] it’s much more like trying to seek out the information.*

This ‘question,’ which opens up a thread of inquiry to facilitate movement, was expressed differently depending on the mover’s a score, idea, or thought and can be thought of as the initial point of focus. This step is reflective of the ‘anchoring’ process within meditation (Cardoso et al., 2004) as well as one of the conditions of Meditative Flow: setting a clear task on which to focus. In the case of Mover 1, it appears that the aim was to transfer the ‘question’ into to an embodied level of cognition, which is to move away from the conceptual (or disembodied) awareness of the question, to a kinesthetic awareness of the question as *enacted through* the body’s a process which is reminiscent of the shift from conscious problem-solving to mind-body integration (or ‘embodiment’), as explained in Sellers-Young’s (1993) accounts on the attainment process of no-mind (see Chapter 2, pp.48-49).

Mover 1: *The question starts as like a cognitive idea, and I’m trying to transfer it out of thinking – so just into feeling. . . . the more time I allow for that leading image or thought, to root itself down in the movement, the further I’m going up the scale [of Meditative Flow level].*

Mover 3 mentioned a similar intention, which was to translate ‘experience’ into ‘movement.’

Based on the mover's account, this process involves the act of capturing the current state of the self as a moment of experience, and translating that experience directly into movement:

Mover 3: *What is driving the movement task [of this session] was about acceptance of the experience, and how I was translating it. . . . [My practice is about] experiencing the experience, and letting it come through, and . . . moving from an act of self-perception, like trying to get rid of choreography in and of itself, and just to experience 'self,' and let that be the movement, or let that translate into movement.*

In both cases, the movers identify a process of translation from concept to sensation, or from experience to movement. These accounts imply that the movers attempted to open a direct connection between two experiential spaces: a non-tangible space housing temporally expansive clusters of emotions, thoughts, perceptions and memories, and a tangible space housing real-time sensations and bodily movements. This is not to be considered as a Cartesian divide between the mind and body, nor a postural divide between the passive state of receiving information and the active state of taking action—it is rather a *processual* divide between the not-yet-embodied and the embodied. In other words, the movers are attempting to embody the not-yet-embodied through this process of translation. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, Yuasa (1987) describes the process of embodiment as a transition from the 'surface consciousness' to a consciousness that 'penetrates into the body and deeply subjectivizes it' (p.105). Applying this notion to the current context, the idea of 'surface consciousness' can be understood as the conceptual awareness towards ideas that are not-yet-embodied, which then becomes embodied through enaction and kinesthetic experience. Whilst Yuasa's accounts (1987) describe a macroscopic process of embodiment (i.e. longitudinal training), the above context sheds light on how a similar process of embodiment could occur at a microscopic level (i.e. during a single performance). In other words, the mover's accounts suggest that one may 'tap into' an embodied realm through careful intentions and concentration.

6.2.2. A space of suspension: away from the habitual mind-body

In describing the transition (or translation) into embodiment, movers indicated that there is an intention to suspend (or to strip) culturally engrained meanings, habits, and routines. This process can be identified in what I refer to as the recalibrating stage of Meditative Flow (see Chapter 5, p.181), which involves an active effort to move away from explicit cognition. The movers' accounts imply that this suspension can be facilitated through one's conscious decisions and intentions, as can be seen in the way the movers used active language to describe the process: *‘I’m trying to move away’* or *‘[I made] a very conscious decision.’* However, some participants (both movers and observers of the study) noted that the suspension of explicit thinking is often not so straight forward and can be a challenging discipline in itself. In the case of Mover 1, the difficulty derives from the fact that she, and perhaps other dancers, have an inherent habit of processing one's own actions in a self-critical and goal-oriented loop:

Mover 1: *[Sometimes during movement] there’s a really quick firing, think-respond-analyse-think-respond-analyse going on. And I’m trying to, in a way, **let that go**, to be able to become just... just about the... the whole of me, about the thing, rather than think it, put it into your body, analyse whether you did it, think it . . . As dancers, I think [we are] always in that trap of think-do-analyse-think-do-analyse; “is it good enough, is it right, did they like it, is this correct, should I keep going with this...” and actually, what I’m wondering, I guess, in these moments [of movement exploration], is: can I just fall deeper into the moment of questioning, not the analysis of the answer? . . . Can [the mind] just **observe**? Can it **just be there**? Rather than in this chatter – this constant chatter?*

Similarly, Mover 3 mentioned the influences of technical dance training, which engrains a perfectionist attitude towards movement performance. For Mover 3, the significance of her

improvisational movement practice lies in its ability to allow the self-analysis, evaluation, and judgment that constitutes her perfectionism to simply be abandoned.

Mover 3: *I think, for me, I come from a background of like...very **classically trained**, and, you know, did a lot of technique classes in my youth, and...just naturally, [I'm a] very, like, **perfectionist** kind of person, and I like things to be... in rows, and very like...kind of in control of things. And . . . what really draws me to have improvisation as a practice, is that I get to **abandon** all of those things.*

This type of explicit, goal-oriented processing, which inevitably forces judgements on one's own movements and prescribes answers to otherwise open-ended questions, appears to be regarded by the movers as a habitual state of cognition ó similar to the idea of Default Mode processing (Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013) ó which must be consciously released at the outset of their movement processes.

The feeling of *ðridding choreographyö* as described by Mover 3 elicits a similar idea mentioned by Kasai (1999) in his description of Butoh (see Chapter 2, p.52). The practice values the idea of *ðstrippingö* the body-mind of its habitual engravings in order to open a gateway into an in-depth psychosomatic introspection. Kasai explains that the idea of psychosomatic introspection involves a process of finding one's *ðtrueö* nature hidden beneath the burdens of culturally and intellectually formulated self-images. This mentality relates to how Mover 3 described her practices as a process of *ðmoving from an act of self-perceptionö* and that she is *ðtrying to get rid of choreography . . . to experience 'self,' and let that be the movement.ö* Here, the *ðselfö* is not regathered and rationalised as a unified identity, but is translated directly into movement, as a suspended, unformulated cluster of sensations ó similar to the *ðemptiedö* body-mind in Butoh, or the no-mind state mentioned by Yuasa (1993). Mover 1 also mentioned an intention to suspend solution-seeking within her own movement approach, stating: *ðfor me, meditation is about suspending yourself in the openness of it – not trying to ask for an answer.ö*

Based on this account, the mover's approach seems to involve not only a translation between the conceptual to the sensory (i.e. embodiment) but also a space of suspension that accompanies that process of embodiment. The idea of suspending (or stripping) habitual and intellectual processes is one of the essences of Meditation in Movement, as can be seen in the previously defined components (i.e. component C: release of conscious analysis, judgement, or evaluation of one's movements—and component D: lack of external demands motivating or disrupting the process – see Chapter 4).

6.2.3. Magnifying automatic processes of embodiment

The mover's accounts imply that this process of translation does not occur automatically and that it requires a directed intentionality – which paradoxically aims towards cognitive suspension – to facilitate. However, as Douse (2013) notes in her thesis, it is a prominent belief that there is an inherent and automatic process of embodiment that occurs during any moment of consciousness—the body is naturally expressive of (and in constant interaction with) one's internal experiences (e.g. attitudes, intentions, psychological states) through its form, postures, and movement (Merleau-Ponty, 1962—Thompson & Varela, 2001—Williamson, 2016). This notion raises a question as to whether the process of translation (i.e. embodying the conceptual and allowing it to manifest as movement) truly requires focused attention and conscious effort, as it may well be a fundamental nature of the body.

This issue may be addressed, first, by distinguishing between the mover's explicit awareness of their experience (and their reflective accounts on it) and the implicit processes which lie beneath those experiences. Firstly, a mover may become explicitly aware of the not-yet-embodied (e.g. concepts of the "self"—a question or score, etc.) when those ideas become his/her object of reflection. However, there are in fact many emotions, thoughts, perceptions and memories within the not-yet-embodied realm that do not readily reach the mover's explicit

awareness (Dietrich, 2004) or in other words, those which only exist in his/her pre-reflective awareness. Secondly, whilst movers of this study may have experienced their respective practices as an *intentional* transition between the not-yet-embodied to the embodied, there may also have been other *unintentional* translations that were happening underneath their consciousness, such as unintentional physical manifestations of one's emotional states (Douse, 2013=Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). As such, perhaps the movers' approaches can be defined as an *intentional* translation of *conscious* conceptual musings into embodied sensory experiences. This is to say that much of what the movers experienced consciously, and were able to reflect on and articulate, may have been limited to the mental and bodily processes to which their explicit awareness had access. In other words, the movers' descriptions of their translation process may not have included subconscious mental processes or any automatically occurring processes of embodiment.

However, and returning to the idea of cognitive suspension, one can identify an overall drive or within the movers' articulated intentions or to move *away* from explicit cognitive processing, and into a hidden, unprocessed sensory space. In this light, the above distinction between intentional or explicit translation and implicitly occurring embodiment may be too simplistic to define what the movers see as the not-yet-embodied. Then, what roles do *implicit* processes play within the movers' meditative processes?

First, one must examine the idea of 'expressive' movement, as described by Kasai & Parsons (2003) (see Chapter 2, p.71). In their discussion on the difference between 'expression' and 'perception,' Kasai & Parsons note that expressionistic dance (raising Mary Wigman's works as an example) often treats movement 'as a tool for revealing externally what one experiences internally' (p.258). In the sense that the word 'tool' implies an orientation towards a task or goal, such a process suits the definition of an *intentional* translation from *conscious* conceptual ideas to bodily movement. By contrast, the authors describe Butoh as a 'perceptive'

form of dance in which a dancer engages in a kind of watching and noticing of the mind-body for a purpose that is not externally directed (p.256). As can be inferred from comments such as *“moving away from doing this for others”* (Mover 1), the movers of the study approached their session in a similar attitude to those in Butoh, wherein they are not aiming to portray his/her perceived mind-body, but simply to experience it and allow it to arouse motion (Kasai & Parsons, 2003, p.257). It would, therefore, be misleading to say that the movers aimed to express (i.e. intentionally translate) their conscious conceptual musings.

Moreover, an important element of Meditation in Movement is with which all movers identified their respective practices is the fact that it is self-led, or that it should not be guided by external demands (e.g. conveying meaning, portraying images, etc.). For the movers, the purpose of translating between concept and movement is not to express but to perceive raw experiences of the self (as explained by Mover 3), which, seemingly, can only arise within a suspended space of not knowing (or searching for) an answer (as mentioned by Mover 1). In this sense, the movers are not looking to capture known concepts which already exist within their explicit awareness, but rather, they aim to discover hidden (or unknown) information which lies beneath it. Furthermore, they are not trying to translate those concepts into crafted, expressive movements but are searching for ways to allow those concepts to naturally *become* their bodily forms or the forms in which they have already, and automatically, begun to take shape. Considering the above, it can be inferred that the movers' intentions are directed towards connecting with the implicit, yet already existing relationship between the not-yet-embodied and the embodied, and *magnifying* this stream of translation. Such a conceptual frame may be useful to further understand how meditative processes whereby one may access Meditative Flow can be facilitated through (or are embedded in) somatic and improvisational movement practices.

6.3. PART 3 – Meditative Flow and movement performance

As was discussed in Part 1 of this chapter, the cyclical model of Meditative Flow involves different stages (Entering/Resetting, Opening, Riding) in which explicit cognitive functions are released and implicit sensorimotor processes are engaged. Scientists who study Flow (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010) and meditation (Austin, 2010) have hypothesised that this explicit-implicit switch within Flow experiences may allow for an enhancement in one's sensorimotor processing/abilities, thus allowing for more 'spontaneous, effortless, fluid, flexible, and efficient' (Austin, 2010, p.400) actions (see Chapter 1). The current section explores this idea in depth, focusing on qualitative descriptions given by the observers of the study, and relating them to scientific theories on implicit motor control and movement efficiency (Ambegaonkar, Rickman, & Cortes, 2012; Krasnow, 2012; Tuller, Turvey, & Fitch, 1982; Wilson & Kwon, 2008), as well as to philosophical perspectives on Eastern movement performance (Cordner, 2003; Hahn, 2007; Sellers-Young, 1993; Sweeney, 2012; Yuasa, 1993).

Evidence from Study 2 will be drawn primarily from the observers' verbal accounts, supplemented by my own observational notes on segments of the movers' performance. The observational notes were created upon reviewing the performance footage during the analysis process, as was explained in Chapter 5. Whilst the primary purpose of these notes was to familiarise myself with the movement content and to examine the performance from an intersubjective perspective (see Chapter 5, p.71), extracts of those notes are used here to illustrate and describe the movements themselves, as well as to explore how the observers' accounts may reflect those segments. I consider this format as an intersubjective ethnography, wherein 'thick descriptions' (Ponterotto, 2006) are created not only through my own observations, but also in relation to, and based on, the participant-observers' perceptions, understandings, and descriptions. According to Joseph Ponterotto (2006), thick descriptions

offer the reader an opportunity to cognitively and emotively place themselves within the research context (p.543). Ethnographers, for instance, interpret the participants' intentions by contextualising their behaviour within the given social situation, thereby emerg[ing] the participants' lived experiences with the researcher's interpretations of these experiences (p.547). Here, rather than relying solely on my own interpretations to describe the situation, the following passages reflect other observers' perspectives in interpreting and describing the mover's behaviour. Whilst these descriptions are undeniably influenced and shaped by my own knowledge, experience, and intentions as both a dancer and a researcher I see them as a synthesised representation of my own and the observers' perspectives.

The section will begin with an overview of the performative qualities exhibited at each stage of the Meditative Flow cycle, so as to examine the progression of the mover's performances as they enter deeper into Meditative Flow, and to see how this progression relates to other practitioners' accounts on how Flow appears in/as the moving body (as introduced in Chapter 2). Following this overview, the section will explore theories on implicit motor control and Eastern aesthetics, so as to provide scientific and artistic frameworks on how Meditative Flow can play a role in dance and movement performance.

6.3.1. Performative qualities within the Meditative Flow cycle

Entering

During the Entering stage, the observers identified a sense of continuity and consistency in the mover's performance—a quality described by one observer as *ideas flowing from her body*. The following passage (extract from observational notes) describes the Entering stage in Mover 2's performance, which shows a gradual process of the mover achieving this continuity:

At 3:30, the mover appears to be testing balance by rocking repetitively in a stiff sitting position, continuing until the feet become planted on the ground. The rocking eventually

transfers into a swinging of the arms, knees, and pelvis, as the momentum gradually brings the mover to a standing position. At 4:30, the swinging arm motions eventually become extended into a circular pathway, which, by contrast to the movement up to this point (i.e. rocking, swinging), has no points of inflexion, and is continuous. At the end of the segment, the whole body is led by the circular pathways of the arm, smoothly changing directions (swivels) and levels (swinging torso).

The rocking motions at the beginning emit a thoughtful tone, as the mover advances and retreats in what appears to be a process of gentle exploration and careful evaluation. As the rocking transitions to swinging, then to circular motions guided by the limbs, one can identify a gradual process of momentum taking over, allowing moments of suspension and evaluation (seen in the initial rocking) to slowly fade away. Based on the mover's accounts (see Chapter 5, pp.180-182) and the particular segments to which they refer, the rocking motions appear as she is *öthinking aboutö* what she needs to do while trying to release concerns about *öhow it looks.ö* Then, the transition from rocking to swinging coincides with the mover connecting with an emergent idea and allowing it to guide her movements. By the end of the segment, the mover feels that her movements are *öcontinuous,ö* naturally *öconnecting with each otherö* and *öfalling into place.ö*

This progression reflects the previously discussed notion of mind-body integration (see Chapter 2, pp.48-49), wherein movements appear reserved and tentative at the stage of conscious evaluation, but gradually become smooth and resolved once the mover's awareness becomes more attuned with her implicit sensorimotor processes. The above instance could be understood as a microscopic appearance (i.e. within a single session, rather than through longitudinal training) of this process, wherein the mover's explicit thoughts (e.g. self-monitoring, self-evaluation) are released, allowing for implicit functions (e.g. intuitive reactions to, and receptions of, kinetic energy) to take over the movement process.

Opening

Movements exhibited in the Opening stage are described as inviting and growing, often showing a stronger sense of the mover's "self." These qualities appear to reflect the mover's open attitude towards uncovering "hidden" areas of the self, as well as their commitment towards pursuing emergent themes in movement. The following passage describing Mover 1's performance shows an example of the expanding and responsive qualities that appear in the Opening stage:

At 15:30, subtle motions emerge in the core, expands in energy and space, and takes the mover from laying to sitting, then standing in a short, fluid sequence. The energy moves into arms and hands, lifting the pelvis and legs by pushing the floor away. Chunks of dynamic movement with shifts in direction and level appear, all initiated from an energy in the core, extending to limbs, then brought back into the core as momentum. Later, energy starts to travel back and forth via the spine, causing the mover to travel smoothly (like a fluid) across the floor. Finally, the energy heightens, the speed quickens, and limbs become released, as the mover enters quick twists and small circular jumps travelling across the floor. Throughout the segment, the core is playing a significant role in generating and expanding movement and momentum.

The spontaneous emergence of movement at the beginning (described by one observer as a short but clear, fluid sequence which "has a sense of itself"), seems to form a pool of energy that is held within the body throughout the segment, travelling and expanding its reach progressively. The energy, housing itself at the core intermittently, appears to drive the fluid shifts in momentum and trajectory, while simultaneously marking a sense of stable and continuous presence. The growth, expansion, and variety that appear within the movement further strengthen the impression of stability and spontaneity, exposing the grounded, yet effortlessly responsive state of the mover's mind-body.

A similar state is mentioned in Sweeney (2009) accounts on Butoh practice, referred to as the 'available' mind-body—an available and hyper aware movement state which enables the body to move in any direction at any given time' (p.63) (see Chapter 2, p.54). According to Sweeney, only in this open and pliable state can one truly discover, follow, and respond to hidden impulses and the ever-shifting environment. As was discussed in Chapter 2, a similar sense of spontaneity and responsivity is identified in martial arts as one of the indicators of *wuxin*, another mental state comparable to Flow (Allen, 2015). The role of the core as a location for energy and movement generation is also indicated in Allen (2015), as well as other literature on Eastern movement practices (Hahn, 2007=Salz, 2007=Sweeney, 2009) ó these accounts will be covered later in a section (p.239) which focuses on the relationship between movement aesthetics and the use of kinetic energy.

Riding

As was mentioned in Chapter 5 (pp.189-192) as well as in Part 1 of this chapter (pp.214-215), movement qualities of the Riding stage involve both 'released' and 'engaged' elements, which the observers described as 'natural,' 'at ease,' and 'seamless,' yet 'alive,' 'present,' and 'fully involved.' Whilst the movers seem to experience a complete sense of release and automation, the observers' accounts highlight a distinct sense of presence and engagement that appears within this stage. This engaging quality can be identified, for instance, in how Mover 3 exhibits richly textured, yet finely focused performances during her Riding stage:

At 16:50, the mover is in an open stance with legs wide apart and arms extended towards the ceiling. The head is gently released backwards as the arms descend, and as the head recovers, a slight shift in weight causes the right leg to naturally float up towards the side. After a soft, small plie with the leg still held up, the mover enters a slow clock-wise half-promenade, then releases the leg to fall quickly, tipping and swivelling the mover into neutral standing. Slow, circular movements emerge in the arms while knees remain

mobile and soft, legs and feet continuously shifting into different positions. Weight is cradled within the pelvis for a brief second before the mover shifts weight onto the right foot, then onto the left to swivel into another direction of facing. A gentle stream of movement travels up her spine to lift her whole body, then descends and expands the mover's body laterally. Soon, the mover enters a sequence of balancing poses, each with one leg lifted, torso and arms swaying dynamically, and the supporting leg interfacing responsively with the ground. On the third pose, the lifted leg (towards the back) swings frontwards and upwards, creating an ascending momentum which travels from the supporting foot, ripples through the spine, and releases from the head.

Whilst the mover describes this segment as a liberating moment of surrendering oneself to movement, the movements themselves appear well-controlled and densely packed with intricate texture. Moments of dynamic motion are accented by gentle streams of kinetic energy travelling throughout the body and are interposed by brief moments of quiet presence wherein the next course of movement seems to await its cue to emerge. Thus, it is understandable that the observers would recognise an active energy residing within the body, which engages responsively with the constantly shifting dynamics of movement within and around itself. Gathering from the above, and in line with Purser's (2018a) idea of 'inhabited transcendence', as was mentioned previously, the physicality of peak Meditative Flow (i.e. Riding) may be described as a released, yet effortlessly attuned and articulate state that emits radiant energy. Such a state might be understood as an 'optimal' mode in dance performance, as described in Fraleigh's (1987) literature on pre-reflective states in dance – 'freedom', 'presence' and 'grace' – or as mentioned in Hahn's (2007) writings on Flow – 'effortless ease' in motion, and a 'vibrance of energy, or presence' (p.165).

6.3.2. Movement efficiency: kinetic chain, *ki* energy, and core

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the concept of hypofrontality (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010) during Flow has been associated with an enhancement in implicit sensorimotor processes and efficiency in movement (Austin, 2010=Dietrich & Stoll, 2010). Looking at the observers' comments during high levels of Meditative Flow, there are indeed descriptions that imply an enhanced efficiency in movement allowed by refined, yet implicit, bodily awareness. For instance, one of the observers explained:

Observer 6: *[When] there's a muscle tone . . . that's where I see more engagement, more flow, more focus. . . . such tension, I feel, is a focus that has to go through the whole body – you're not wasting energy.*

The connection between bodily awareness and improved movement coordination is made not only in practices with which the participants have engaged (such as the Feldenkrais Method and Skinner Releasing Technique) but also in Eastern movement practices like Nihon-buyo. Sellers-Young (1993) reflects on her own experience of learning Nihon-buyo, mentioning that the teacher had taught her to be strong, not in terms of gaining muscular force, but of increased muscular efficiency. Sellers-Young explains that what she gained was not "the brute strength of weight lifting" (p.46), but an "ability to organize [her] muscles with subtle sustained precision." According to the author, this ability entails a particular level of somatic awareness, which can be accessed through a "concentrated focus on the individual moment of movement." (p.46)

While the passage refers to a longitudinal process of refining one's awareness of the subtleties of one's muscular organisation (i.e. macroscopic effects), a similar process can be identified within the twenty-minute movement session in Study 2 (i.e. microscopic level). The mover's body transitions from an effortful and stagnant state to a focused and articulate state (and sometimes back into stagnation during Ebbing moments) through the stages of Meditative

Flow. In particular, the Riding stage is characterised by effective, yet seamless uses of weight and momentum (see Chapter 5, p.189), which indicate the body's ability to contain and transfer kinetic energy throughout its muscular structures and in response to its surroundings.

In the idea of the kinetic chain (Langendorfer et al., 2011), all motions on earth are initiated by the units' (e.g. mover) interactions with gravity. For example, running is initiated by one foot pushing into the ground at an angle, which, in other words, is the ground pushing into the foot in the opposite vector. That vector of force then extends its energy to other (rigid) masses which are attached to the foot (the leg, pelvis, torso, head etc.), and moves the whole body forward (Kibler, Press, & Sciascia, 2006). The extent of this energy transmission is often determined by the individual's (either conscious or subconscious) tension in his/her joints. For example, if the individual loosened the knee muscle as his/her foot hits the ground, the chain of energy would release some of its force at that joint and create a cushion for all of the bodily structures beyond that point. In a solo performance, a mover must first interact flexibly with the floor (or the gravitational force from the earth) which determines both the limits of the mover's range of movement and the source for each motion—energy, resistance, force, friction, and so on. The efficiency of this dynamic interaction with gravity is partially what allows for effective uses of weight and momentum as exhibited in the Riding stage.

At the same time, movers must utilise kinetic chains of energy that shift through the muscular structures *within* the body. In dance, an embodied understanding of the kinetic interactions between the body's extremities and its core is considered paramount to successful performance, as the core acts as a hinge for effective transmissions of energy throughout the body (Krasnow, 2012=Krasnow & Chatfield, 2009=Wilson & Kwon, 2008). In describing the relationship between kinetic awareness and masterful movement in Nihon-buyo, Hahn (2007) presents the term *ki*, the idea of an energetic force which is gathered at the core of the body (otherwise referred to as the *hara*: the area of the lower abdomen, or the core area of the torso).

In *Nihon-buyo*, students learn to become aware of the *hara* as an important focal point for all energy to gather and pass through. This awareness foregrounds a common imagery in Zen-influenced movement practices, that all body motions are energy projections from this central portal point (Salz, 2007). It is believed that this *hara*-centred movement imagery enables the performer to utilise the force of *ki*, and effectively communicate the emotions and meaning embedded in the choreography. Hahn (2007) states:

In *nihon-buyo*, movement must originate from the *hara* center and ripple up the torso, out the arms, legs, head, and even the gaze of the eyes. In fact, the choreography demands that movement must flow from the *hara* and project outward. Transmission practices reinforce the *hara* as the central source of energy, an area that is trained repeatedly to project movement, character, awareness, and resilience. (p.164)

The idea of core-initiated movement as a source of emotional expression relates to how an observer described a *ōsense of selfō* and *ōa bit more frustrationō* in the mover during the Opening stage (see Chapter 5, p.187). The mover appeared to generate from, extend, and bring movements back into her core throughout the segment (see previous section, p.235). Using Hahn's terms, the mover's use of *ki* energy and the core as a hinge point seemed to provoke a sense of emotional resonance with the observers.

The concept of *ki* is addressed similarly in the context of Eastern martial arts, although sometimes written in the Chinese pronunciation: *qi*. Allen (2015) explains that the efficiency of combative motions increases by cultivating the awareness of *qi* energy—[t]he optimal flow of the *qi* through the moving body comes with correct skeletal alignment and a coordinated use of the muscular system, thereby generating maximum force with minimum expenditure (p.29). This paradoxical combination of minimum effort and maximum force resonates with the coappearance of ease and energetic tension in the Riding stage (see Chapter 5, pp.189-190). Whilst the mover's bodies appeared to be released and free, there was also a sense of liveliness

and bubbling energy residing within their bodies, allowing large, dynamic movements with seemingly little effort.

The role of kinetic chains in masterful movement is acknowledged within wider areas of research including human motor behaviour (Tuller et al., 1982), which relates the idea of kinetic energy transference to whole-body coordination. For instance, Tuller et al. (1982) write that the skilled marksman has more control over the oscillation of his whole body because they are able to compensate for minute oscillations in one joint by adjusting another, in such a way that all joints in the body are connected as a coordinated unit. The authors state that skilfulness could be defined as this ability to control one's body as a single coordinated structure⁴⁹. Such abilities of fluid and harmonious muscular activations are often implicit processes that appear through continuous training. However, this thesis speculates that these implicit processes could also manifest as a consequence of the hypofrontal (i.e. absence of explicit cognition) state of the brain. Tuller et al. (1982) accounts on whole-body coordination may help to understand some of the observers' comments that were made in the Riding stage: *“more bodily organisation,“* *“entire bodily connection,“* and moving as a *“whole connected organism“* (see Chapter 5, pp.190-192). As the Riding stage represents “peak” moments of Meditative Flow, wherein the movers have released explicit and self-referential thoughts, the observers' comments appear to support the notion that movers in peak Meditative Flow exhibit skilful movement, as defined by the authors above. More specifically, these comments could be interpreted as a recognition towards the mover's implicit ability to utilise kinetic energy in achieving a harmonious whole-body coordination.

These implicit motor processes of fluid and effective uses of kinetic energy, gravitational force, core, and coordinative muscular structures of can be traced back to Sellers-Young (1993)

⁴⁹ In a more recent interpretation, Tuller et al. (1982) idea of a “coordinative structure” has been associated with Nicolai Bernstein's idea of “synergy” within the *Levels of Construction of Movements* (Latash & Turvey, 1996), which also includes other levels such as tonus, space, and action (Profeta & Turvey, 2018). In their article on Bernstein's levels of movement construction, Profeta & Turvey (2018) propose that “tonus is a material basis for movement, space and action set informational constraints, and synergies are abstract relations connecting them” (p.128).

account on movement efficiency, made possible not only by longitudinal muscular training but also by attentional and sensory attunement. Drawing on Dietrich & Stollø (2010) hypofrontality theory and non-egocentric modes of information processing (Austin, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013), the lack of explicit cognition during Meditative Flow may contribute to the enhancement of implicit motor control. Such an explanation of how implicit sensorimotor processes could manifest in movement performance may be useful to guide future studies on how (Meditative) Flow experiences might affect an individual's movement performance.

6.3.3. The aesthetics of movement in Meditative Flow

The previous section has explored the idea of movement efficiency as it relates to the notion of implicit motor economy during non-egocentric information processing. However, movement efficiency on its own does not provide sufficient explanations on the aesthetic characteristics (e.g. ease, organicity, fluidity, subtlety) that were observed during the Opening and Riding stages of Meditative Flow. The following paragraphs will closely examine these descriptions in relation to literature on Zen and movement aesthetics (introduced briefly in Chapter 2), in order to explore how Meditative Flow can bring about aesthetically striking performances.

Many observers in Study 2 described a sense of ease and comfort within the mover's performance as qualities which characterise the Riding stage. For instance, observers of trial 3 mentioned that the mover appeared to be *at total ease* and *comfortable in her skin*, making seamless, easy connections as the movements simply take her through (see Chapter 5, p.192). The observer's comments bring to mind the idea of *grace* in movement, as described by Cordner (2003) (mentioned in Chapter 2). Cordner acknowledges that gracefulness in movement is often ascribed to its functionality or efficiency. However, the author proposes that *graceful movement* is not a matter just of the internal economy of the bodily elements of the movement. It pertains to the (apparent) *relation* of the mover to the context or element in which

she movesö (p.138). For Cordner, the graceful mover holds an ðeasy presence . . . a harmonious relatedness to one's contextö (p.139), which may manifest as a sense of effortless ease in motion. This apparent comfort and ease in one's state of being ó what Cordner describes as ðbeing at home in the worldö (p.141) ó is proposed as an element of the aesthetic quality of grace. Hahn (2007) mentions a similar idea through the perspective of Zeami's philosophy on performing arts, claiming that the sense of ease and effortless ease in movement can be perceived as an elegant simplicity ó a quality that is regarded as the essence of ðgraceö in many Zen-influenced art forms. The idea of simplicity as an aesthetic value is rooted in the Japanese philosophy of *wabi* (侘) (Juniper, 2011), in which witnessing the natural, emergent state of an object (or in this instance, movement) is thought to arouse a particular aesthetic experience.

Appearances of ðnatural,ö un-crafted movements are also mentioned by observers during the Riding stage, wherein movements were described as ðmessy,ö ðfluid,ö ðorganic,ö and ðfreeö (see Chapter 5, pp.190-192). The idea of natural emergence (and nature itself) is represented in Zen aesthetics as a sense of irregularity, as objects in nature such as plants and stones often do not show perfect symmetry in the ways that man-made artefacts do (Hahn, 2007). The observers seemed to identify this messy and imperfect organicity within the movers's performances during the Riding stage, marking it as a sign of a released mind-body state. The apparent lack of control and artificiality was also expressed by the observers as a sense of ðsurrendering,ö ðhappening without calculation,ö and ðbeing carried by impetusö (see Chapter 5, pp.190-192), which relates to Zeami's drive towards the absence of explicit or goal-oriented intentions in performance—it is thought that performers can only blossom through the ðstrippingö of egoistic or self-fulfilling intentions (Yuasa, 1993). This context also parallels the philosophical foundations of Butoh, which states that ðemptyingö habitual thinking (e.g. self-monitoring, rationalising) is necessary for allowing the rich, yet otherwise hidden faces of the performer to surface through movement (Sweeney, 2012).

Another element identified during the Riding stage is the appearance of *ōpregnant pauses* (see Chapter 5, p.191), which seemed to contain and nurture infinite possibilities of how the movement might progress. The aesthetic of rich suspensions is also related to natural emergence in Zen philosophy (Hahn, 2007), as emergence can create random negative spaces between objects, motions, sounds and so on, providing segments of emptiness in which all occurrences are undetermined and there is infinite possibility for what is to come. In Nihon-buyo, this instability of possibilities and openness to emergence is represented by brief pauses in the performer's movements (called *ma* (Sellers-Young, 1993), giving the audience the excitement of witnessing the unknown. The significance of these pauses perhaps lies in the fact that the movers themselves do not know what is going to happen next—both the mover and the observers are suspended in a space of not knowing.

The aesthetics of uncertainty, or spaces of suspension between concrete states, is also present in the Opening stage, with which both movers and observers associated the idea of encountering the unknown (see Chapter 5, pp.185-187 / Part 1 of this chapter, pp.212-213). One observer explained that the mover appeared to be *ōsoftening* away from her *ōknown* (i.e. habitual, familiar) body, into a quieter, subtler (i.e. hidden, unexplored) mind-body state. This sensibility relates to the idea of *yugen* (幽玄) in Zeami's text: a hazy, dim, or subtle presence on stage (Tsubaki, 1971). The value of *yugen* stems from an inherent appreciation towards indirect communication, wherein subtle implication is considered more aesthetically pleasing than clear, direct conveyance (Pilgrim, 1986). Sellers-Young (1993) also comments on the notion of *yugen* as an important aesthetic goal in Zen-influenced movement artforms, as it is thought to tap the viewer's awareness into the inherent impermanence of all existences. The concept of impermanence is deeply grounded in Eastern philosophy (Barnhill, 1986=Juniper, 2011), which indoctrinates the evanescent, fleeting nature of life through various art forms. The strong awareness of impermanence illuminates the beauty of momentary existence, which is reflected

in Zeami's use of the word *hana* (花) of the flower which blossoms for only a finite amount of time, then soon wilts away from its lively peak (Salz, 2007). In this sense, Zeami's philosophy encases a paradox wherein the performer's presence becomes stronger and more illuminated as their existence on stage becomes ungraspable (*yugen*) and fleeting, as viewers become aware of the ephemerality of that moment.

In the context of Butoh performance, Sweeney (2012) describes a similar sense of fleeting presence through the idea of fluid transitions between one state to another. According to Sweeney, this is "a process of transformation, engaged with continuous emerging and emergent shapes through a constant disappearance and reappearance of the human form into other living matter" (p.73). This relates to a particular comment given by an observer during the Riding stage, who described the mover as "animalistic, like a cat *rippling its back*" in preparation of a jump (see Chapter 5, p.192). The nuanced combination of opposing movement textures (e.g. *softness* and *sharpness* – see Part 1 of this chapter, p.215) captures the observer's attention, drawing her into the subtle, yet intricate tensions within the mover's body. Sweeney defines the aesthetic value of this form-shifting moment through the audience's perceptual experience – witnessing a performer "slip between animal, mineral and human forms" – causes "a constant re-framing of the body's image surfaces, shifting any negotiation of identity on the part of the viewer towards equally fluid or transformative states" (p.74). Sweeney claims that such performances demand the audience to constantly shift their gestalt understanding of the dancer's body, evoking an intense attention towards the performer. This sensibility is another extension of Zen philosophy, as can be seen in Yuasa's (1993) accounts on the aesthetics of fluidity and liminality. Yuasa notes that performers in no-mind embody a state of liminality within and across such moments of form-shifting – a state which is enabled by the aforementioned "absence of intentionality." The absence of intentionality, combined with a sharp somatic attunement (i.e. elements of no-mind), allows the mover to respond fluidly to the

subtle energies which appear and disappear through each passing moment (Yuasa, 1993).

In summary, the observers' descriptions of the mover's performance during high levels of Meditative Flow resonate with a distinctly Eastern aesthetic sensibility. One interpretation of this result is that the Eastern mentalities which foregrounded Western somatic practices have extended their influences into the context of dance performance, cultivating non-Western somatic sensibilities, not only in the performer but also in those who spectate the performance. On the other hand, it can be argued that these originally 'Eastern' aesthetic sensibilities have become somewhat unbound to specific cultural traditions, due to the vast and continuous cultural exchanges that have occurred (and are still occurring) within the performing arts field in general. In either case, the observer's accounts have provided valuable hints as to how Meditative Flow may manifest as aesthetically striking movement performance.

6.4. PART 4 – Observer–mover relationships: audience experience

Throughout the chapter, observers' accounts have been utilised to illustrate how qualitative changes in the mover's performance could have been perceived from an external eye. However, some of the observers' verbal reflections (those not covered in Chapter 5) identified a deeper dimension that is involved in watching movement, which extends beyond mere visual observations of the moving body. For instance, many observers identified changes in the way they perceive the movement, their relationship with the mover, and their own somatic experience throughout the viewing experience.

In a study investigating the range of cognitive, emotional and sensory responses involved in watching dance, Reason & Reynolds (2010) identified a similar variety in which audience members can experience a performance. This variety highlights the fact that movement performances such as those in the current thesis are not just artefacts that can be observed and analysed from an objective eye, but also an interactive experience formed by the ever-shifting

relationships between the mover and observers. As Ors et al. (2016) explain, any "performance" involves an active receiver (i.e. audience, spectator, observer) of the information that is transmitted by the mover. This transmission happens both ways, as the mover also receives information, simply from the presence of the viewers of his/her movements. In this way, the "performance" of movement, such as that in Study 2, inherently involves a continuous relationality between the mover and observers. With this perspective in mind, the following section shifts focus to the observers' experiences, examining how changes in the movers' Meditative Flow experiences may have influenced, and interacted with, how the mover and observer sense and relate to each other.

Here, it is worth noting that the ways in which observers might relate to the performance/performer, or how those attitudes change across time, is not uniform among all observers in any given performance. As Reason & Reynolds (2010) note, "[w]hat spectators feel and why is highly individual and is linked with their wider social, cultural, and lived experience" (p.72). Thus, there is undoubtedly much to be said about the connections between each observer's viewing experience and his/her sociocultural background. However, as the current thesis focuses particularly on the role of Flow in movement performance and its influences (if any) on audience experience, these discussions are better left for another study wherein its main interest is the sociocultural influence on audience experience. The following sections will, instead, focus particularly on the ways in which observers related to visually, kinesthetically, and cognitively to the mover and her performance.

6.4.1. Meditative resonance through kinesthetic empathy

As was mentioned in Chapter 5 (pp.174-175), observers of Study 2 tended to recognise increased (or increasing) levels of Meditative Flow more accurately than decreased or neutral levels. This result suggests that increases in Meditative Flow are somehow related to a shift in

the observers' awareness—one in which the observers move closer to the performer's felt experiences, in a way that transcends the boundaries between 'self' (subjective) and 'other' (objective), or 'internal' (psychological) and 'external' (physical). In other words, the observers appeared to not only recognise physical movement qualities, but also shifts in the mover's subjective experiences. This context elicits the idea of intersubjectivity (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008=Merleau-Ponty, 1962), which was introduced in Chapter 2 as the phenomenon of accessing another individual's emotions, intentions, and perspectives through embodied interactions. Although it is understandable that the observers' attention was particularly focused on interpreting the mover's internal states ó as they were explicitly told to estimate the mover's Meditative Flow level (and its fluctuations) throughout the performance ó it is nonetheless valuable to explore how this information (i.e. the mover's subjective experience) might have been transmitted in an embodied way.

In Chapter 2, the idea of intersubjectivity was introduced in conjunction with Reason & Reynolds's (2010) notions of kinesthetic empathy (or 'inner mimicry'), which can be described as a phenomenon in which the viewers of movement experience a sensation in their own bodies as if they were moving *with* (or *as*) the spectated. Observers of Study 2 reported a similar phenomenon, wherein they felt more 'connected' to the mover, and that there was an effortless resonance or a kinesthetic empathy between themselves and the mover during high (or increasing) levels of Meditative Flow. During these moments, observers claimed to 'feel' movements, stillness, and tactile sensations as they appear to arise within the mover's body:

Observer 12: *[The mover] pats the floor, and . . . I could, like, feel that pat . . . she finds*

*stillness, and **I feel that stillness** . . . she does this sway thing forward with her legs, and I could kind of **feel that motion** as she was doing it.*

Observer 10: *[The mover] was testing balance, she was swinging, she kind of seemed to be*

reaching softly, with different parts of her body, and I felt like I could follow and

feel that swing.

Kinesthetic empathy is an idea often explored in the study of audience perception, especially within projects which incorporate perspectives from cognitive neuroscience (Bläsing et al., 2012=Cross & Ticini, 2012=Jola et al., 2012=Reynolds & Reason, 2012). A number of studies have examined participant's neural activities during observation of dance performance and have consistently suggested that a mental simulation of the observed actions occurs in the participant's brain, affecting their judgements on the perceived performance (Calvo-Merino, Grèzes, Passingham, & Haggard, 2005=Cross, Hamilton, Kraemer, Kelley, & Grafton, 2009=Jola, Abedian-Amiri, Kuppuswamy, Pollick, Grosbas, 2012). The theory of kinesthetic empathy and interpersonal movement simulation could provide the grounds for further interpretation on why observers of the current study claimed to "feel" the mover's actions, and how those felt experiences informed their perceptions of the mover's internal state.

One observer mentioned that, during the session, she saw the mover (and movements) as "present, poised, prepared, voluminous, and gorgeous." She then explained that "gorgeous" is not only an expression describing how she saw the mover, but also how she felt herself. In other words, the observer seemed to sense an aesthetic appreciation not only for the mover (and her movements) but also for the kinesthetic sensations that that experience elicited within her own body. Barbara Montero (2006), a philosopher of dance and aesthetics, connects the notion of kinesthetic empathy to the topic of aesthetics, suggesting that proprioception itself could be the object of aesthetic evaluation. Montero claims that, just as one can feel that a painting is beautiful, a mover can sense beauty in the feeling of a movement. Relating this claim to the idea of kinesthetic empathy, Montero argues that viewers of movement can "proprioceive" and experience that movement in their own bodies, much like how the aforementioned observer described her experience. The author does recognise that *shared* proprioception, unlike the proprioception of one's own body motions, relies on the visual input of the other's movement.

However, Montero argues that this factor does not invalidate the role of proprioception in the perceived aesthetics of movement, as "the visual and the proprioceptive work hand-in-hand" (p.236). Thus, an audience member might sense both the visual beauty of the movement and the *sensation* (either desirable or otherwise) of it.

In this vein, the aforementioned observer may have recognised or, *felt* the mover's kinesthetic sensation of performing "voluminous" and "gorgeous" movements, perceiving that segment to be an aesthetically striking moment. This line of thinking further supports the idea of dance as a "somesesthetic" artform (Kasai, 2009), wherein the aesthetics of a performance does not lie solely within the visually perceived elements of the movement, but in the felt, kinesthetic sensations of it. Such a perspective is valuable in considering Flow experiences as an aesthetic component in movement performance, in that it reframes the dancer's subjective experience (i.e. Meditative Flow) as a shared (or sharable) experience that can influence how the performance is received, aesthetically. For instance, if a mover is enjoying a careful somatic introspection through soft, gentle motions (e.g. Entering/Resetting), the observers might join that exploration and similarly enjoy it through embodied simulations. If the mover experiences effortless ease in her movement (e.g. Riding), the observers may also *feel* that ease and comfort as a kinesthetically pleasing sensation. Such a phenomenon may, to a certain extent, depend on whether the mover and observers share a similar movement background, as knowing the practice may help observers to interpret the mover's intentions and to envision his/her bodily sensations more astutely (Cross, Hamilton, & Grafton, 2006; Jola, Abedian-Amiri, et al., 2012; Kirsch, Drommelschmidt, & Cross, 2013). As the current study recruited participants who all have experience in some form of somatic practice, the sharing of kinesthetic experience, as described above, may only apply to such cases wherein the participants have overlapping backgrounds. Nonetheless, the idea of shared kinesthetic aesthetics may open discussions on how dancers' embodied experiences may interact with the perceived aesthetics of the

performance.

Alongside the visual (and perhaps kinesthetically felt) movement qualities that observers identified during moments of high Meditative Flow, there were also accounts on a sense of ease in *processing* those movements, which supposedly allowed the observers' minds to *relax* into the experience. For instance, one observer expressed that there was no need to explicitly concentrate on attending to the movements, as they were simply *easy to watch*. She states: *'You aren't really having to look. It's all being run out for you. . . . [It's] easy to watch . . . cause you're not having to pick out things. It's just going along.'* Ivar Hagendoorn's (2004) idea of subconscious movement anticipation or the idea that humans have an inherent tendency to predict another individual's next movement may provide an explanation to the observer's notion of ease. Hagendoorn uses the example of a tennis match, explaining that an experienced player can predict the trajectory of the ball and start running to receive the hit *before* the ball has even reached the opponent's racket. Such an ability (or inherent tendency) to predict and anticipate movement is not unique to expert athletes and is true for most individuals. As such, some researchers (Bläsing et al., 2012; Cross & Ticini, 2012; Hagendoorn, 2004; Orgs, Hagura, & Haggard, 2013) theorise that this tendency may relate to the aesthetic pleasure that dance spectators experience. According to Hagendoorn (2004), spectators tend to experience a sense of satisfaction when the performed movement matches their expectation. The author explains that a fundamental way in which we sense beauty is when we *discover* a harmonious order in art or in nature that appeals to our mind's own drive towards creating order (p.2), such as witnessing perfect symmetry in architectural design or recognising an elegant pattern in musical composition. In terms of human movement, Hagendoorn explains that the brain has an *implicit* knowledge of the movements that the body is capable of making (p.4), and that, movements

which satisfy this inherent knowledge are naturally comforting to see⁵⁰. Perhaps, as the mover becomes increasingly attuned to her body and its kinetic energy, her movements begin to unfold in a way that matches the observers' subconscious anticipations.

The observers explained that this ease in processing the movements allowed them to release their conscious efforts of 'watching' a progression which echoes the mover's release of their efforts in monitoring their own actions. Yet, the observers' attention towards the performance does not seem to break nor become diluted – rather, observers indicated that their connection to the mover grew stronger and more resilient and that their awareness is immersed in the felt experience of each moment. Some observers used terms such as 'relaxed', 'seduced', 'hypnotised', and 'sedated' to describe this surreal state, one of whom claimed that she lost track of other pressing tasks such as moving the mouse.

Observer 11: *It just progressed my engagement. I was like... I'm not thinking about anything,*

I'm just listening to what you [the mover] are doing. . . . I'm just not processing absolutely anything in my mind right now. . . . it was like, I'm just looking [at] what you're doing, I'm not even thinking about anything.

Observer 7: *I felt really relaxed, like, I felt in a sedated state, almost. . . . very low heart rate,*

relaxed breathing, all of those kinds of things you feel when you're like sedated . . . like, sleepy, as well . . . like that whole meditation state, where you're like, "am I falling asleep or not?" but...aware.

Observer 10: *[There is] something satisfying, isn't there? . . . There's some kind of*

like...seduced, or...you know, kind of relinquishing, some kind of surrender. I think there's some kind of surrender there.

Based on these accounts, one could say that there is not only a physical (e.g. kinesthetic, tactile)

⁵⁰ This mechanism can be explained through ideas in evolutionary psychology. It is thought that, as an evolutionary trait, humans (as animals) have the ability to 'fill in the gaps' (top-down theory of visual perception), in which we subconsciously create an expected image when we perceive only a portion of a biological unit (Blake & Shiffrar, 2007; Hagendoorn, 2010; Jola et al., 2012; Ramachandran & Anstis, 1986; Spillmann, 1999). When our expectations are matched with the actual vision, it creates a sense of satisfaction.

empathy but also a cognitive resonance as well, in the sense that the observers seemed to experience a meditative state alongside the mover – a quiet mind, singular focus, and overall relaxation. This interpretation relates to Kasai's (2009) idea of "body-mind echoing," wherein the audience members' consciousness is thought to shift in relation to (and in unison with) the dancer's as a result of watching them move in that state. As a result, a resonance appears between the mover's and observers' consciousness, creating a collective state of meditative or "hypnotic" (Kasai, 2009, p.23) state.

During the interview, an observer mentioned the complexity of defining (or distinguishing between) "performance" and "meditation," especially when the two appear simultaneously. She asked, *"How do you know the difference between a meditative state, or twenty minutes of it, and a performance?"* The question arises perhaps because meditative activities are often self-led, or at least initiated at one's own volition, even within a shared space (i.e. component D of Meditation in Movement: self-induced). On the other hand, performances (as defined in this thesis) are inherently relational and communicative. The discussions presented above provides a new perspective to this question, wherein the act of performing and watching movement can both be meditative in itself, as long as the mover's and observers' awareness are attuned to, and resonating within, the quiet, undisturbed place of pre-reflectivity. This phenomenon highlights the notion that, perhaps in the context of this study, there is no clear distinction between "performance" and "meditation."

6.4.2. Disconnections during Ebbing

Whereas moments of high Meditative Flow levels saw observers connecting to, and resonating with, the mover and the felt sensations of her movements (as can be interpreted from the accounts above), moments of low or no Meditative Flow seemed to cause observers to lose this connection. As was mentioned, one sign of the mover falling out of Meditative Flow is an

abrupt pause in movement (see Chapter 5, p.176, 195). Whilst observers tended to relate their sense of disconnection to a break in flow as described by one observer to mainly to this harsh feeling of halting, they also claimed to recognise the analytical and self-reflective state of the mover, which caused observers to become more aware of their own sense of self as an independent entity from the mover. One observer explained this self-defining awareness in contrast to the non-self-centric, resonant state that she experienced during continuous movement:

Observer 12: *When she stops, and is looking at things more externally, I'm more aware of myself in that space as well. Whereas, when she's moving more continuously, I feel more... wrapped up with the movement that she's doing. And more, like, in a flow with the movement that she's doing.*

It seems as though the mover's sudden awareness of the contours between herself and the space was somehow transmitted to the observer as a signal of separation. The blurred lines between self, other, and space seem to become starkly defined, making the observer aware of her own physical independence and autonomy.

This idea of separation (i.e. mover and observer as separate entities) arises not only in moments of stillness but also in moments of movement during low Meditative Flow. During these moments, some observers reported that they saw movement as performances which are prescribed to them, as if the mover was following a list of outcomes to be achieved. One observer explained that the mover seemed to enter a close-ended performance mode, wherein movements seem pre-determined and predictable like a figure skater completing one complex technique after another, showing the judges what they can do.

Observer 10: *There was a predictability in the patterning that took me out of the experience . . . and put me at the end of her movements each time. Like, "when is she going to finish that move, when is she going to finish the next one, when is she going to*

finish the next one...?” . . . It becomes like a list. [I see] that, and then that, and then that, and then that . . . prescribed, in some ways. . . . So it’s more like it’s given to you. So I feel like she’s giving me this move, and giving me this one, and giving me this one, as opposed to feeling like I’m tracking the performer on a journey, or I’m ebbing and flowing with the performer.

The observer explains that this *ōprescriptiveö* quality creates an *ōobjectifiedö* relationship with the mover, wherein the mover and movements are treated as products to be seen rather than processes to be experienced.

Observer 10: *I am not as interested in what the performer is going through, and instead, I’m looking at what shape they’re in, or...what way they’re facing – not how that happened, but like seeing the ends of it – seeing the ends of the movements. . . . I’m less engaged in their journey to get there. . . . [it] becomes more of an objectified relationship to that performer, in a sense, so you’re seeing what the performer is doing, not how the performer is doing it.*

One could compare this performer-spectator relationship to that between a statue in a museum and an observer of the artefact, in that there is a clear distinction between the perceiver and the perceived, wherein one (the spectator) is an active onlooker or a critic, and the other (performer) is the passive work of art being evaluated. In the context of Study 2, wherein movers intended to engage in a non-judgmental and introspective (as opposed to performative) way of moving (as was discussed in Part 2 of this chapter), this type of relationship elicits a misalignment between the attitudes of the observers and the intention of the mover.

However, observers in the current study did tend to justify that they appreciated the virtuosity of the mover, even if the mover appeared to be in a non-meditative state. For instance, Observer 5 mentioned that the mover *ōdid a terrific, terrific piece . . . I thought she was seriously good,ö* before addressing her questions on whether the mover was *ōmeditatingö* or

“performing.” Reason & Reynolds (2010) distinguish between these directly observable (or even obvious) manifestations of the dancer’s virtuosity and the hidden (or implicit) intentions behind the performance. In the current context, the former points to the performative outcome of each movement (or technique), much like what some observers claimed to see during moments of low Meditative Flow. The latter points to the performer’s decisions and mental states, such as the explorative attitudes and meditative states with which observers claimed to resonate during higher levels of Meditative Flow. In other words, during moments of low Meditative Flow (i.e. Ebbing), observers seemed to fall into the former mode of objective admiration, rather than the latter mode of deep resonance with, or an understanding towards, the mover’s intentions.

In summary, an objectifying attitude towards the performance (i.e. mover as object= movements as product), as well as an increased awareness of oneself, characterised the moments of low or no Meditative Flow (i.e. Ebbing stages) for the observers. Such a relationship can be placed in contrast to the meditative resonance (between mover and observer) that appears to arise in deeper stages of Meditative Flow, as, during higher levels of Meditative Flow, observers seemed to relate to the mover kinesthetically, simply experiencing the feeling of travelling, shifting, and pausing with (or even *as*) the mover. It can be interpreted that, during such instances, movements and stillness function as vehicles of resonance which takes the mover and observers on a journey together. On the other hand, during moments of Ebbing, movements and stillness become “products” existing outside of the observers’ body, presented by/through the mover as independent artefacts.

Such a contrast is particularly interesting when compared against the *movers’* perspectives on how their relationships with the observers changed throughout the Meditative Flow cycle. The mover’s awareness towards the observers \acute{o} which manifests as self-consciousness \acute{o} is released during the Entering stage and does not reappear throughout the Opening and Riding stages (increasing and high levels of Meditative Flow) until the next

instance of Ebbing (decrease in level) occurs. Once at a low level, the movers become self-conscious (e.g. they worry about how they are being seen), which implies a reignited awareness towards the observers' presence. The combination of the movers' and observers' accounts raises an interesting dynamic regarding the interaction between the mover's self-consciousness and the observer's relationship with the mover: the shift in observers' awareness, from resonance to separation (e.g. mover as independent entity; movements as 'objects' and 'products'), appears to happen just as the mover becomes more self-consciousness. On the other hand, the mover's *loss* of self-consciousness during increased levels of Meditative Flow, and the consequential release of concerns in being seen, somehow 'paradoxically' seem to *invite* the observers to become one with the mover. Kasai & Parsons (2013) remarks on the nature of Butoh performance offers a similar perspective on this paradoxical phenomenon: 'The one who more deeply embodies Butoh is not focused on how s/he looks. Yet, perhaps ironically, s/he is the dancer that Kasai claims will be more 'persuasive' to the audience' (p.259). Such an interpretation of performer-audience relationships provides intriguing avenues for future research on mover-observer relationships that appear within meditative movement performance episodes.

Summary

This chapter has responded to the following research questions through reflective and interpretive discussions incorporating findings from the two empirical studies, alongside previously introduced (Chapter 1 & 2) and other relevant literature.

- 1.) How might dancers and movement practitioners experience paratelic Flow during a single movement session?
- 2.) How might these states interact with the mover's physical performance?
- 3.) How might viewers perceive and describe the experience of witnessing a performer move

in and out of such states?

Part 1 of the chapter responded to the first question from a cognitive perspective, mapping existing accounts on Flow, movement practice, and cognitive processes onto the findings of Study 2. Within this process, the cyclical model of Meditative Flow was examined in detail, describing how the first four stages of the cycle (i.e. Entering/Resetting, Opening, Riding) involve a process of òreleasing the explicitö and òengaging with the implicitö ó a conceptual frame which was drawn from Dietrichø (2004) theory of hypofrontality during Flow. This discussion also identified connections between the participantsøaccounts and the neurophenomenological switches in self-processing that are thought to occur in meditative activities. Some additional themes on attention, memory, and time-perceptions were also explored, utilising cognitive and psychological literature to raise hypotheses on 1.) why movers may find moments of high Meditative Flow harder to recall, and 2.) how changes in time perception may occur during Meditative Flow.

Part 2 focused on how the movers of Study 2 approached their somatic/meditative movement session, building upon the notion that Flow experiences may be facilitated through somatic attention techniques that are embedded in movement. The section examined participantsø(i.e. movers from Study 2) accounts on how they conceptualised their movement practices and processes, exploring how those approaches might relate to the idea of Meditation in Movement, as well as to Eastern movement approaches such as Butoh. Through this process, the section aimed to take a closer look at what sorts of intentions and psychological processes are at play when movers approach and experience the state of Meditative Flow in the context of somatic and improvisational movement practices. The section found that, at least for the participants of Study 2, such a process might involve themes such as: 1.) òtranslatingö the not-yet-embodied to the embodied, 2.) òsuspendingö the habitual mind-body, and 3.) òmagnifyingö automatic processes of embodiment.

Part 3 of the chapter shifted focus to the third question of the thesis, exploring what happens to the body and its movements during states of Meditative Flow. The section reflected on the observers' accounts from Study 2, as well as on my own observational notes, exploring how the performative qualities exhibited throughout the Meditative Flow cycle could be related back to existing accounts on Flow and movement practice (i.e. Chapter 2). Following this discussion, segments of the observers' accounts were related to the idea of implicit motor control and movement efficiency, as described in biomechanical perspectives and within literature on Eastern movement practices. Through this discussion, elements such as effective uses of kinetic energy and whole-body coordination were raised as possible markers of movement efficiency during Meditative Flow. Lastly, the observers' accounts were examined alongside literature on Zen and movement aesthetics, ultimately identifying a pool of descriptors (e.g. grace, simplicity, organicity, suspension, fluidity) that may help to capture the aesthetic quality of pre-reflectively performed movement.

Finally, Part 4 responded to the last question of the research, which asks about the *observers'* psychosomatic experiences of witnessing a mover in (or out) of Meditative Flow. This section first addressed the previously mentioned concepts of intersubjectivity and kinesthetic empathy, relating these ideas to how observers of Study 2 described an internally simulated sensation of the mover's actions, especially during moments of high Meditative Flow. The section then identified a contrast between moments of high Meditative Flow and those of low Meditative Flow. In the former, there appears to be a sense of meditative resonance (or *body-mind echoing* (Kasai, 2009) between the mover and observers, whereas, in the latter, there is a sense of disconnection (i.e. mover as a separate entity from observers) and (self-)objectification among the two parties. This discussion was related back to Kasai & Parsons (2003) remarks on *somesthetic* and *perceptive* movement practice, which claim that, when the performer's attention is present-centred and non-self-reflective, the performer can

better capture the audience's attention, inviting them into a collective and embodied process of meditation.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Aims of the research

The thesis aimed to examine Flow states that occur during non-competitive, explorative, and open-ended movement contexts, in response to the newly proposed concept of paratelic Flow (Swann et al., 2018) and the paucity of research that places explicit focus on this concept. Focusing on the context of dance and somatic practice as representative cases in which this type of Flow may occur, the thesis aimed to develop a temporal model of Flow in terms of experience and performance, and to examine the observers' experience of watching a mover in Flow. The thesis drew from a number of related perspectives to examine Flow, particularly in its paratelic form, including pre-reflective consciousness in dance (Fraleigh, 1987=Lefebvre Sell, 2013=Shacklock, 2006), the state of no-mind as conceptualised within Zen-influenced practices (Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Sellers-Young, 1993=Yuasa, 1993), and some cognitive theories including ideas such as hypofrontality (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010) and 'selfless' states in meditation (Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013). Whilst psychologists (Engeser, 2012=Swann et al., 2018) and cognitive scientists (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010) have proposed various theories on how Flow may be achieved, how it behaves across time, and how it might influence one's behaviour, few studies have attempted to bring these theories into the context of dance and somatic practices to explore how they might relate to the dancer's consciousness, or how Flow might be experienced and perceived in the context of dance performance. Given this background, the thesis took an interdisciplinary mixed-methods approach to explore the following research questions:

- 1.) How might dancers and movement practitioners experience paratelic Flow during a single movement session?
- 2.) How might these states interact with the mover's physical performance?

3.) How might viewers perceive and describe the experience of witnessing a performer move in and out of such states?

Through this research, the thesis aimed to provide a qualitative account on how Flow experiences may occur and play a role during movement performance, thereby making the concept more accessible to both practitioners and scholars of relevant disciplines.

7.2. Methodological reflections

As was discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, the thesis took a pragmatic approach in establishing its theoretical foundation, meaning that theories are viewed instrumentally i.e. in terms of its relevance and applicability and that it endorses [the] eclecticism and plurality (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.18) of epistemologies. The thesis began by relating the idea of Flow a predominantly positivist concept to ideas deriving from postpositivist research areas such as pre-reflective consciousness (Fraleigh, 1987= Purser, 2018a= Shacklock, 2006) and no-mind (Hahn, 2007= Sellers-Young, 1993= Sweeney, 2009= Yuasa, 1993) (Chapter 1) and built upon these connections further by exploring various philosophical, practice-based and psychological perspectives alongside one another (Chapter 2). The pragmatic stance was reflected in how both the natural or physical world (e.g. evidence-based, neurocognitive theories) and the emergent social and psychological world (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.18) (e.g. experiential or cultural conceptualisations) were recognised as valid ontological concepts which might, together, lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand. Building upon this foundation, the thesis utilised a mixed-methods approach in its empirical investigations, incorporating quantitative and/or qualitative methods based on the context and purpose of each study.

The survey study aimed to test the applicability of two original concepts of Meditative Flow and Meditation in Movement for the current research context, and to explore what types

of movement scenarios might involve elements of meditation. Data from the study was presented in the form of descriptive statistics, focusing on the frequency in which participants gave certain responses. The role of this study within the general research structure was described in Chapter 3 as an exploratory step to refine and clarify the boundaries within which the key concepts lie—what are the working definitions of Meditative Flow and Meditation in Movement, and are these definitions applicable to the context of this thesis? Aspects that were mentioned as the study's limitations in Chapter 4 (see pp.133-135), such as the format of the survey (e.g. the latter half of the survey being available only to those who responded a certain way in the former half), its language (i.e. available only to English-speakers), and the lack of participant demographics (e.g. previous experience, age, gender, etc.), did indeed limit the range of information that I was able to obtain and examine. Furthermore, arguments can be made against online (as opposed to paper-based, hand-written) surveys as a whole, in that they do not provide "soft" data such as "comments scribbled onto survey forms" (Feilzer, 2010, p.11), which can potentially reveal incongruences between the researcher's and participants' understanding of a phenomenon, or additional information about the participants' attitudes towards the survey itself. However, the study was consciously designed to streamline the process in a way that fulfils, but does not exceed or derail, the purpose of the study — i.e. to refine and clarify the boundaries of the research topic. As was alluded to at the end of the chapter, the proposed constructs and the findings of the study open a number of avenues for future research—for instance, exploring the relationship between meditative movement practices and the occurrence of Flow. These avenues may be worth exploring in a separate study (or studies) with specific focus on, and appropriate means for studying, the proposed topic.

The second method used in the thesis was a series of event-focused interviews, which drew from Swan's (2016) recommendation of using qualitative methods to study the experiential nuances of Flow during movement activities. One of the main goals of the study

was to examine the *őfeltő* (i.e. first-person) and externally perceived (i.e. third-person) qualities of Meditative Flow and its changes during a single performance session. Drawing on the idea of a multiple-case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008), I conducted a series of case studies while adopting some elements of a structured experiment, such as consistency in the studio environment, instructions, and data collection procedures. In other words, instead of approaching an uncontrolled *őfieldő* and drawing data from participants who are embedded in that environment, the current study attempted to identify common patterns that arise within a series of semi-controlled studio sessions. This format was beneficial in honing the session towards the main research focus (i.e. Meditative Flow) and in avoiding major variations in the conditions of the experience (e.g. solo vs group movement, presence and number of observers, size of space, length of performance, etc.), thereby allowing for direct comparisons of the three trials, specifically in terms of the phenomenon at hand.

The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data in a within-stage mixed-model design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), utilising a triangulation method (Creswell et al., 2003) for its analysis. Whilst the study produced new insights that were expanded through further discussion (see Chapter 6), its design was exploratory and novel, as is often the case with mixed-method designs. As Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) note, one prominent weakness of the mixed-methods design is that some of its details *ő*remain to be worked out fully by research methodologists*ő* (p.21), meaning that it may lack the rigour that other, more established mono-method designs may be able to achieve. In the current study, for instance, procedures of data conversion (e.g. quantifying qualitative data; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006) were developed originally by myself, as there were few studies or similar methods from which I was able to draw. Consequently, whilst the procedures of the study were outlined in detail for future methodological evaluation and/or replication, the validity of its results is, at present, difficult to determine. However, I see this limitation as an inevitable aspect in

advancing novel research areas (e.g. Meditative Flow experiences during dance) and methodologies (e.g. pragmatist, mixed-methods approach).

There are also some aspects of this study that, when seen from certain epistemological standpoints, may appear as limitations that influence the validity of its findings. For instance, from a realist perspective, self-reporting methods (e.g. surveys, interview responses, visualisations) hold inherent threats to validity such as bias and distortion (Stone & Shiffman, 2002, p.236) or the possibility that participants' memories are inaccurate or that their responses are intentionally or unintentionally distorted (Dunlop et al., 2017; Paulhus & Vazire, 2007; Van de Mortel, 2008). On the other hand, the current study involved tools and procedures that the participants may not normally encounter in their regular practice, such as tracking devices, the presence of observers, and video-led reflections. From an interpretivist perspective, such an approach removes participants from their natural environment and places them in a laboratory setting, thus making the results including the participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections less transferrable to real-life contexts (Bem & Lord, 1979; Berkowitz & Donnerstein, 1982; Fine & Elsbach, 2000). However, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, the thesis takes a pragmatic approach in inviting and embracing epistemological plurality. Drawing on Depraz et al.'s (2003) pragmatist view, the thesis sees experiences as intersubjective items of knowledge (p.9) rather than as pure realities that could be distorted, or as individually constructed ideas belonging solely to the subject. They are treated here as valid quasi-objects (Depraz et al., 2003, p.9) which manifests uniquely to each individual and based on the context or environment, but not without rules or results (p.10) or, in other words, with logical explanations that can be sought. In this sense, the results of this study are neither distorted nor un-transferrable, as the participants' reflective accounts and my interpretation of those accounts, together, helped to form a valid, intersubjective understanding (albeit one of many) of the phenomenon.

Frameworks for assessing the validity of qualitative and mixed-methods research were explored in Chapter 3, including concepts such as credibility, transferability, consistency, and interpretive rigour (Carminati, 2018; Noble & Smith, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). These ideas informed my decisions on the methodology and reporting format for this thesis, including data conversion and triangulation, the use of rich description and verbatim extracts, detailed documentation of the research process, and the inclusion of a reflexive account on my position as a researcher. In future studies, additional steps ó such as member reflections (as mentioned in Chapter 5) ó may be taken to strengthen the credibility of the data and findings, given that the timeframe and scope of the research are appropriate. As for the transferability (or generalisability) of my findings, I agree with Smithø (2017) views that the idea of generalisability (i.e. whether oneø results are applicable to different contexts) can be approached in different ways depending on the purposes and premises of the research. Considering that the current thesis aimed to produce findings that inform and enrich contemporary dance practice and its discourses, the øtransferabilityö of its findings ó in Smithø (2017) use of the term ó may be assessed based on whether readers øbelieve that [the] research overlaps with their own situation and/or they can intuitively transfer the findings to their own actionö (p.5). However, such an assessment would rely on the reader øto engage with the report, and then either support or reject the results as generalizable to them,ö just as much as it would on the researcher øto render studies on meaningful topics, presented in depth, and with interpretive richnessö (Smith, 2017, p.6). This view ó that the transferability of (qualitative) research is fluid and partially dependent on the receiver of that knowledge ó aligns with the thesisø overall pragmatic perspective; that øwe cannot simply assume that our methods and our approach to research makes our results either context-bound or generalizable . . . instead, we always need to ask how much of our existing knowledge might be usable in a new set of circumstancesö (Morgan, 2007, p.72).

7.3. Outcomes of the research

Through discussions in Chapters 1 and 2, the thesis explored the nature of paratelic Flow experiences through an interdisciplinary lens, drawing perspectives from phenomenology, dance studies, Eastern philosophy, and psychology. The discussions shed light on the resonances between these perspectives and brought forth a set of speculations regarding the contextual and performative aspects of paratelic Flow states in dance:

1. Paratelic Flow experiences may occur during *meditative* processes that are embedded in dance and somatic movement approaches (i.e. Meditative Flow).
2. Meditative Flow may play an important role in movement performance, firstly as a neurological state of efficient sensorimotor processing, and secondly, as an observable/sense-able aesthetic quality.

Whilst these speculations were not treated as research findings per se and served more as foundations upon which the following chapters were developed, it is nonetheless worth noting that they mark an important outcome of the current research. As was discussed in Chapter 1, the idea of Flow has been implicitly related to phenomenological concepts such as pre-reflective consciousness (Fraleigh, 1987=Lefebvre Sell, 2013=Shacklock, 2006), as well as to other notions of altered states such as no-mind (Hahn, 2007=Krein & Ilundáin, 2014=Lefebvre Sell, 2013=Shacklock, 2006), meditation (Austin, 2010=Bruya, 2010a), and hypofrontality (Dietrich & Stoll, 2010). However, few studies have explicitly tied these accounts together to explore paratelic Flow experiences through an interdisciplinary approach. The rarity of such attempts can perhaps be attributed to the inherent challenges in drawing together the various epistemological perspectives (e.g. constructivism, phenomenology, positivism) from which these accounts derive. Indeed, the process of relating ethnographic or phenomenological perspectives to the more systematic, quantitatively driven psychological perspectives required

much effort, as can be seen in the discursive and densely packed state of the first two chapters. Nonetheless, these chapters demonstrated important alignments between these disciplinary views, allowing for a novel and integrated perspective on paratelic Flow experiences during movement.

The survey study (Chapter 4) explored the relevance and applicability of two key constructs, Meditation in Movement and Meditative Flow (as defined in this thesis) by examining the prevalence of the phenomenon. This process was another important element in the context of interdisciplinary research, given that ideas such as Flow and meditation are studied in a myriad of academic disciplines and are defined differently depending on the field. As was mentioned in Chapter 1 and discussed further in Chapter 3, this eclecticism poses a problem in the cross-disciplinary transmission of knowledge, as it is difficult to discern whether all parties are referring to the same idea(s). By providing clear definitions of Meditative Flow and Meditation in Movement, at least for the current research context, the study ensured that researchers who might undertake similar studies will have a point of reference to delimit their topic area and participants. Further, the study's results demonstrated that many dance and movement practitioners experience Meditative Flow during Meditation in Movement, and that there is a wide range of movement episodes that may involve elements of Meditation in Movement, including dance performances, dance technique classes, and other practices that are not explicitly labelled as "meditative."

The main practical investigation (Chapter 5: Study 2) explored the following three aspects through a novel methodological approach:

- Paratelic Flow states that occur specifically during meditative movement episodes (i.e. Meditative Flow)
- The temporal dynamics of Flow within a single occurrence (or movement performance)
- A combined look at the first-person (i.e. experiential) and third-person (i.e. physical or

observable) perspectives on Flow through participants' descriptive accounts

Whilst some studies have examined Flow experiences during explorative movement practice (Mullis, 2016; Rustad, 2012; Taylor, 2006), the temporal dynamics of Flow (Ceja & Navarro, 2012; Mackenzie et al., 2013; Uznik, 2018), and relations between Flow and movement performance (Bakker et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2001; Schüler & Brunner, 2009; Stavrou et al., 2007) respectively, few have explored all of the above aspects together to form a comprehensive account. As such, the significance of this study lies in the width and depth of its scope, which has led to new insights that bear specific relevance to dance (e.g. paratelic Flow, within-performance temporal model, audience perception).

The results of this study were separated into two main topics: the first focusing on the 'agreement' between the movers' experience and the observers' perceptions of Meditative Flow, and the second focusing on the qualitative and temporal aspects of Meditative Flow as experienced by the movers and perceived by the observers. As for the first topic, results showed that observers' perceptions tended to match the mover's experience during high levels of Meditative Flow more so than during low levels. The implication here is that there may be a difference between the performative outcomes of low or non-Meditative Flow and that of high Meditative Flow, and that these differences may be recognisable to the external eye. Meanwhile, there were instances wherein all or most observers reported a decrease in Meditative Flow level (in agreement with the mover's report), which were marked by harsh, abrupt pauses in movement, followed by rest. In terms of the second topic, the movers' and observers' verbal accounts helped to develop a cyclical model of Meditative Flow which consists of five stages, Entering, Opening, Riding, Ebbing, and Resetting, wherein each stage is characterised by distinct experiential and performative qualities. As was previously mentioned, research on the temporal dynamics of Flow has predominantly followed longitudinal designs, providing little evidence of what happens within a single occurrence. The current study not only contributed to

this gap in knowledge, but also provided a theme-based, cyclical model that draws together processual aspects such as induction, disruption, and restoration, which have commonly attracted the interest of other Flow researchers (Baumann & Scheffer, 2010=Ceja & Navarro, 2012=Mackenzie et al., 2013=Neal, 2012).

Chapter 6 responded to the main research questions presented at the outset of the thesis, reflecting on the findings of Chapters 5 and relating them to previously explored theories (Chapters 1 & 2). Part 1 examined the movers' cognitive processes in relation to Dietrich's (2004) hypofrontality theory, expanding on the cyclical model of Meditative Flow through two running themes, 'releasing the explicit' and 'engaging with the implicit.' Drawing on the movers' accounts, the section argued that movers release explicit cognitive processes such as self-reflection and conflict monitoring as they enter deeper into the cycle. At the same time, implicit sensorimotor processes become further engaged, allowing the mover to experience effortlessness and 'automaticity' in movement – or what Purser (2018a) might call an 'inhabited awareness' (p.49). A contrast in self-processing patterns was identified between the Riding (i.e. peak) and Ebbing (i.e. disrupted) stages, in that self-referential thoughts are seemingly absent in the Riding stage, whereas they appear to be highly prominent in the Ebbing stage. This contrast, alongside the appearance of enactive processes (e.g. active engagement with subjective experience) in the mid-Flow stages (i.e. Entering, Opening, Resetting), was examined in relation to theories on self-processing patterns during meditation (Austin, 2010=Dor-Ziderman et al., 2013).

The discussion demonstrated possible alignments between neuroscientific theories, phenomenological concepts, and Eastern philosophy, tied together via the movers' verbal accounts – further suggesting the relevance of cross-disciplinary research on Flow experiences in dance. It is needless to say, however, that these connections are still highly speculative and that there is scope to establish critical discussions on each of these topics in its own right. For

instance, there are critiques on the dichotomous view between objective and subjective forms of bodily self-consciousness (Ehrenberg, 2015; Legrand, 2007; Legrand & Ravn, 2009), which argue that we can be aware of ourselves as both *ö*belonging to the physical worldö (i.e. being an object in the world) and *ö*being a conscious subjectö (i.e. being the subject of experience) (Legrand & Ravn, 2009, p.390) at the same time. There are also questions regarding the concept of *ö*selfless-nessö in meditation and its implications in the context of Western psychoanalysis, given that some practices might focus on identifying (or *ö*findingö) the self rather than releasing one's attachment to the concept (Donner, 2010; Engler, 1984; Michalon, 2001). As can be seen, many of the core concepts that guided the sections' discussions hold a complex background of academic debate *ö* the evolution of which would obviously impact upon my own conclusions. I do not intend to claim, therefore, that any of my speculations are permanent or are ready to be applied directly to practice. Instead, my hope was to evoke and invite either practice-based or theoretical discussions on Flow and movement phenomena by proposing novel conceptual frames.

Part 2 of Chapter 6 reflected on how movers framed and described their respective movement approaches, as a way of understanding how Meditative Flow might be approached and accessed through somatically grounded movement. The discussion raised concepts such as: *ö*translatingö the not-yet-embodied to the embodied, *ö*suspendingö the habitual mind-body, and *ö*magnifyingö automatic processes of embodiment, which provided an experientially grounded view on some attitudes and intentions that were involved in the movers' journeys towards and during Meditative Flow. These findings respond to prominent questions on how dancers might access and navigate through Flow experiences, not by alluding to specific practices or techniques, but by presenting a set of intentions and approaches that were shared among movers who held various backgrounds. This outcome relates to the findings of Chapter 4, which indicated that Mediation in Movement can be embedded in a range of movement episodes

unlimited to codified or formalised techniques.

An important note to make, however, is that, precisely because these intentions and approaches are *embedded* in different movement contexts, they do not necessarily stem from the same value-system or ideological grounds. As was discussed in Chapter 1, practices which actively use kinesthetic attention to guide movement are often the subject (or setting) of studies which explore dancers' consciousness – as was the case with the current research. However, rarely do these practices explicitly promote the attainment of Flow or similar altered states, much less raise it as its sole goal. Rather, such experiences might be seen as a part of the process, or perhaps a byproduct, of personal, professional, or artistic growth (Ehrenberg, 2015; Ravn, 2010; Williamson, Batson, Whatley, & Weber, 2015). Whilst some practices might see the attainment of such state as a notable outcome on its own (as can be the case with some meditative or Zen-based practices – see Chapter 1, p.18), this is certainly not always the case with dance and movement practices. As such, whilst Flow researchers (including myself) may be tempted to position the attainment of Flow as a milestone or an overall goal, it is important to keep in mind that their participants and their respective beliefs/practices will seldom resonate with this view. Nonetheless, it remains true that there is an interest (across disciplines) in the matter of attaining the state of Flow, to which this section hopes to respond.

Part 3 of the chapter explored what happens to the body and its movements during states of Meditative Flow, as a response to the neurocognitive theories (Austin, 2010; Dietrich & Stoll, 2010) and practitioners' accounts (Allen, 2015; Fraleigh, 1987; Krein & Ilundáin, 2014) which suggest that Flow may allow (or manifest as) 'optimal' movement performance. By relating observers' accounts to existing theories on motor control and performance aesthetics, the section offered a set of descriptors that could guide future investigations on how Flow might influence physical performance. Based on the results of Study 2, the section argued that, indeed, certain stages within the Meditative Flow cycle (e.g. Opening, Riding) involve observable movement

qualities that can be regarded as enhanced or aesthetically striking performance. These qualities were presented in two separate threads, the former of which raised aspects such as effective uses of kinetic energy and the core, leading to harmonious muscular activations and whole-body coordination. The latter raised concepts such as grace, simplicity, organicity, suspension, and fluidity, which are all considered aesthetically valuable qualities in the context of Zen-based movement arts.

To examine the relationship between Flow and physical performance through a qualitative and exploratory lens, as opposed to a quantitative (e.g. high vs low) or evaluative (e.g. good vs poor) lens (Bakker et al., 2011=Jackson et al., 2001=Schüler & Brunner, 2009=Stavrou et al., 2007), is a novel approach with few preceding attempts (Douse, 2013= ucznik, 2018). The paucity in the former approach is perhaps due to the fact that physical activities with clear, evaluative guidelines on performance are simply more accessible for researchers who seek to explore causal relationships. Another reason may be that there has been an inherently stronger epistemological resonance between Flow research and the field of sport psychology ó both of which tend to follow ða pattern of normal scienceö (Swann et al., 2018, p.249) ó than for fields dealing with non-competitive, explorative movement practices (such as dance). In this sense, the above findings contribute to the latter area(s) wherein the relationship between Flow and physical performance could not be examined through pre-determined performance measures. The thesis proposes that there may be qualitative changes in the moverø performance that appear throughout a single occurrence of Flow, and that those changes might involve some of the descriptors presented above. It is, however, important to note that there are few foundations to support my claims or to compare against for critical reflection, as is the case with such a novel research area. Therefore, I see my findings, not as concrete ðevidenceö (nor even hypotheses for testing), but as a beginning sketch to where this topic (i.e. movement qualities associated with Flow) might lead in the future.

Part 4 of the chapter shifted focus to the observers' perceptions and experiences, exploring how the relationship between each mover and her observers appeared to change throughout the Meditative Flow cycle. The section argued that observers may experience a (stronger) internally simulated sensation (i.e. kinesthetic empathy) of the mover's actions during moments of high Meditative Flow (i.e. Riding), causing a sense of meditative resonance wherein the observers feel relaxed and present alongside the mover. On the other hand, the observers may experience a sense of disconnection with the movers upon the disruption of Meditative Flow (i.e. Ebbing), leading to a more objective (or objectifying) mode of viewing. These discussions bring about salient questions – both philosophical and scientific – on whether Flow experiences are kinesthetically shareable between mover and observer, and if so, whether the mover's internal states might be considered directly influential to the observers' perceptual experience.

Such questions bear relevance to dance and performance research, in that it urges a reframing of dualistic views on performer-spectator, subjective-objective, and mental-physical, towards a more fluid and interconnected understanding of the acting-perceiving mind-body(ies) in performance. Such debates – what Green & Stinson (1999) might describe as "deconstructive" (p.108) discussions – about performer-audience relationships are nothing new in the field of dance and theatre (Botha, 2015=Kershaw, 1999=Kolb, 2013=Rancière, 2007), often deeply rooted in philosophical or sociopolitical theory. The findings of this thesis may shed new light to this area in that it reinstates the validity of these debates from a psychological perspective. In offering this contribution, however, it is useful to address philosopher Jacques Rancière's (2007) notion of the "emancipated spectator" (p.271), which proposes a move away from ideologies and presuppositions on the "essence" or "ideal function" of a performance. Reflecting on the historical and sociopolitical evolution of such debates (primarily in Europe), Rancière reminds us that spectators are "active interpreters, who render their own translation,

who appropriate the story for themselves, and who ultimately make their own story out of it (p.280). I mention this view to clarify that, whilst parts of my account may imply that experiences of shared kinesthetic experiences (between mover and observer) are desirable outcomes of performance, my intention is not to enforce any such agenda. Rather, my view is that, *through* such phenomena and among many other relations that may arise between the participants of the performance and the shared experience forms meanings and values that are unique to each individual.

Overall, Chapter 6 provided descriptive responses to the initial research questions. Part 1 explored how dancers might experience Flow states within an explorative movement session (question 1), examining the cyclical model of Meditative Flow through a cognitive lens focusing on explicit/implicit cognition and changes in self-processing. Part 2 explored the movers' intentions before and during Flow experiences (question 1), identifying conceptual frames and thought processes that movers adopt to guide their movement, attention, and experience. Part 3 focused on how observers described the mover's performance to explore how changes in their psychological states might manifest in, or influence, movement (question 2). Finally, Part 4 responded to the question of audience experience (question 3), exploring changes in the observers' perceptual and embodied experiences in relation to those in the mover's Flow experience. Whilst there is scope to expand and evaluate each of these sections separately and for instance, through phenomenological, sociological, or physiological perspectives and I believe that the chapter serves as a point of convergence for a range of Flow-related topics (e.g. temporal dynamics, controllability, physical performance) brought together through, and addressed in relation to, the context of dance practice and performance.

In conclusion, the research has provided insights on the nature of paratelic Flow experiences during meditative movement episodes, including its behaviour across time, its influences on (or interactions with) the mover's performance, and its role within mover-

observer relationships. These findings may provide clarity to the role of Flow during dance and movement performance, making it more accessible and available for critical discourse among both academics and practitioners. Furthermore, the thesis has demonstrated possible links between the dancers' mental state and his/her physical (or observable) performance, thereby shedding new light on the relevance of consciousness research in discourses on dance performance.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Recruitment Sources

Participants for the online survey were recruited publicly via:

- Emailing lists: University of Chichester, SCUDD, DanceHE
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Speakezee website

The following dance companies were contacted via company email address:

- 2 Move Dance Company
- Adaire to Dance
- Ballet Ireland
- Batsheva Dance Company
- BodyVox
- Buglisi Dance Theatre
- Chen Dance Center
- City Dance Ensemble
- Dance Theatre of Ireland
- Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company
- DV8 Physical Theatre
- English National Ballet
- Independent Dance
- National Dance Company Wales
- Nederlands Dans Theater
- Prime Dance
- Rambert Dance Company
- Richard Alston Dance Company
- Scottish Ballet
- Scottish Dance Theatre
- Shen Wei Dance Arts
- Siobhan Davies Dance
- Stuttgart Ballet
- Tanztheater Wuppertal
- World Dance Theatre

Appendix 2 – Survey Pilot Notes

The pilot survey asked 3 dance lecturers and 13 student dancers from the University of Chichester (Dept. of Dance) MA programme to answer the questionnaire and give feedback on:

1. The clarity of the questions (e.g. Is the wording easy to understand?)
2. Overall structure of the questionnaire (e.g. Were you confused by any of the questions?)
3. Other (e.g. Any other thoughts that you had while answering)

*Written in red: participant feedback

*Highlighted in yellow: changes made

Please answer the following questions intuitively, according to your own experience. Some questions will become available according to your answers in the previous section.

Q1. Which of the following qualities sound familiar to you from any of your previous dance experience? (Please choose ALL that apply, even if you do not experience it all the time.)

- A. I have the intention to ðquiet the mindö or ðlet go of distracting thoughtsö.
- B. I am continuously focused on **one** internal aspect (e.g. breath, energy, flow of consciousness, etc.).
 - ðIs this one at a time?ö
- C. I experience a release of any conscious analysis or judgement (e.g. self-monitoring or evaluation of my own movement).
 - ðIn ballet, noí ö
 - ðWhat does ðreleasingðthese things mean??ö
- D. I am not rushed or pushed to attain an external goal such as winning a competition or hitting a target.
 - ðI answered NO because I feel it in assessment, competing, auditionsí ö
 - ðAt first, NO, but later on in the dancing, YESö
- E. I do not force my body to move in specific ways.
 - ðIn ballet, noí ö
 - ðI answered NO because I feel it doing set techniques & choreographyö

[If the participant has chosen any of the qualities in Q1, Q2 (a & b) will become visible.]

Q2 ó a. Are there are any activities that involve ALL of the qualities that you have chosen in Q1 (e.g. the qualities are all present throughout **a segment of** the performance / session / lesson)? If yes, please list them in the boxes below. (Please type in words or phrases, like: **ballet class, contact improvisation session, performing choreography on stage, self-directed**

movement exploration, etc.) You can make as many entries as you want. If you cannot recall any such activities, please move on to Q2 ób.

- The 'whole' (throughout a whole performance) puts me off

Q2 ó b. In which activities have you experienced ONE OR MORE of these qualities [the qualities chosen in Q1 will be listed below as a reminder]? Please list them below.

- What does 'most' (have you experienced most of the qualities) mean?

[If the participant has listed one or more activities in Q2 óa or Q2 ób, Q3 will become available.]

Q3. How often do you experience the following feelings during or right after ----, ----, ----, and ---- [the answers given in Q2 (a&b) will be listed in this question]? Please answer on a scale of 'Never' to 'Always'.

a. It is clear to me that the task is to maintain a focused attention.

[Never ó Seldom ó Sometimes ó Frequently ó Always] → same for all items

b. I am aware of my level of attention.

c. I feel that, at that point in time, my ability to maintain focus is sufficient for the task.

- The word 'ability' implies that it is talking about a trait, not instances

- Is that a judgement you make?? You should emphasize 'I feel that'

- I feel like 'attention/focus' is not so necessary when the task is to 'let go'

d. I feel that I attain stable focused attention (it is effortless).

- Sometimes, BECAUSE I lose focus, I become aware of my own level of attention/thought fluctuations

- NO, because I usually judge myself

e. Everything seems to naturally fall into place.

f. Movements just seem to be happening automatically without my conscious decision.

g. I am not concerned with what others may be thinking of me.

- NO, isn't it the nature of dancers to compare, judge, etc.?

h. I lose track of time.

i. Later, I feel that the activity was truly fulfilling and rewarding.

[Unless the participant has answered 'Never' to ALL of the items above, Q4 will become available.]

Q4 ó a. Are there any activities that involve ALL of these feelings [the items marked 'Seldom' or more in Q3 will be listed as a reminder]? If yes, please select from the list below [the answers given in Q2 (a&b) will be listed as choices]. If no, please move on to Q4 ó b.

Q4 ó b. In which activities have you experienced ONE OR MORE of these feelings? Please select from the list below:ö

GENERAL FEEDBACK:

- Scale of frequency would feel better.
- Needs more öopen-nessö to the Q1-4 quotes, because everything really *depends* on mood, environment, starting taskí etc.
- Examples given in the questions help.
- These qualities and feelings are all what we ALWAYS aim forí I feel pretentious saying outright ñyesøto any of them.
- Q2 & Q4 are difficult to understand=be clearer, give examples.
- Be clear that you are not looking for personality traits, but for one-time or reoccurring experiences.
- Be aware that these experiences are gradations=not all items come all at once ó acknowledge that.
- öSometimes, I caní ö or öSometimes, it happens (not always)ö would be a better answering wording.
- Make the distinction between Q1 & Q3 clearer.
- I have come from a competitive background, but recently I have been trying to let go of that mentalityí I didnø know if my current mentality was valid enough to say öyesö to the qualities.

Appendix 3 – Recruitment Email

Dear *(Name of candidate)*,

I am currently seeking participants for my next study, where I will be inviting participants into a studio space to engage in a movement-observation session. You will be asked to either show us a small segment of your own practice (whether it is free-form movement exploration, choreographed movements, or otherwise) or to observe a mover for up to 20 minutes. Afterwards, I will conduct a 30 ó 60min. interview on your experience of either moving or observing. The whole session will take 2 ó 4 hours total with breaks in between, depending on the timing of your interview (if you cannot stay too long, I can arrange for the interview to be held on another day at your preferred location). I am planning on holding 3 ó 4 sessions throughout March ó September 2017, and each participant will be invited to come to one of those sessions (The exact dates/times for the sessions are still to be confirmed). The location will primarily be at the University of Chichester (West Sussex, UK), but depending on the participant group's needs, some sessions may be held elsewhere within England.

If you are at all interested to join the upcoming sessions, **please let me know by replying to this email**. Furthermore, your reply to this email (indicating your interest to join) will not be treated as any sort of commitment whatsoever, and you can change your mind at any point. You will be asked to make an official decision to participate (including details such as when & where) once you have read through the Information Sheet and Consent Form which I will send to you once I have received your reply.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aska Sakuta

PhD Candidate

Department of Dance / Sports & Exercise Science

University of Chichester

Appendix 4 – Information Sheet

Department of Dance / Sports & Exercise Science

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY

Observers' Perceptions of Meditative Flow During Meditation in Movement

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is this research about?

This research focuses on the following two concepts:

Meditation in Movement . a movement-based (dance) practice or instance (training, rehearsal, performance, workshop) involving the following components:

- I have the intention to "quiet the mind" or "let go of distracting thoughts".
- I am continuously focused on one internal aspect (e.g. breath, energy, flow of consciousness).
- I experience a release of any conscious analysis or judgement (e.g. self-monitoring or evaluation of my own movement).
- I am not rushed or pushed to attain an external goal such as winning a competition or hitting a target.
- I do not force my body to move in specific ways.

Meditative Flow . a subjective feeling that one encounters during movement, involving the following components:

- It is clear to me that the task is to maintain a focused attention.
- I am aware of my level of attention.
- I feel that, at that point in time, my ability to maintain focus is sufficient for the task.
- I feel that I attain stable focused attention (it is effortless).
- Everything seems to naturally fall into place.
- Movements just seem to be happening automatically without my conscious decision.
- I am not concerned with what others may be thinking of me.
- I lose track of time.
- Later, I feel that the activity was truly fulfilling and rewarding.

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether the performer's experience of Meditative Flow during a segment of Meditation in Movement can be sensed or recognised by those who are observing the performer, and if so, how.

How will the research be carried out and what will you be asked to do?

I would like to invite you to a movement observation and interview session. The session will be carried out in the following format:

1. Movement observation & recording phase

In each session, one participant will execute a 20min. segment of his/her own practice as 3 . 5 observers watch the performance (movement content will be discussed and decided in advance). The movement will be filmed via a laptop computer, and the footage will be uploaded real-time onto an online streaming website (Twitch) for later review*. As the observers watch the live performance, each observer will operate a simple technological device to measure his/her real-time perception of the performer's fluctuation of Meditative Flow. (*The privacy setting on Twitch will only enable the researcher and other participants of the study to see the video during the session. Afterward the session, it will be deleted from the website.)

2. Performer interview phase

After the performance, the performer will first watch the footage as he/she operates the same technological device used by the observers, in order to measure and record his/her first reflective impression on his/her own fluctuating levels of Meditative Flow. Afterwards, the performer will receive a 30-minute semi-structured interview on his/her Meditative Flow experience. The whole interview process will be filmed on camera, for later qualitative analysis.

3. Observer interview phase

During the performer interview, the observers will be asked to review the footage as well as the results of their own real-time device measurements, and to write down notes on their impressions and thoughts on the perceived Meditative Flow fluctuation. Once the performer interview is finished, the researcher will approach each observer and conduct a 30 . 40-minute semi-structured interview. The observer interviews will be primarily back-to-back, but depending on each participant's schedule, some interviews may be conducted on another day. Similarly to the performer interview, the observer interview will be recorded on camera.

The whole session will take 2 . 4 hours total with breaks in between, depending on the time of your interview. If you wish to be interviewed on another day, this can be discussed and arranged with the researcher beforehand. You will be invited to one session which will be held during the period of March . September 2017.

What are the anticipated benefits of participating in the research?

By participating in this research, you may discover new insight about the nature of your own movement practice as well as others, through the process of reflecting and verbalising your experience of either moving or observing movement, especially in relation to the idea of Meditative Flow. By being a participant in this study, you will be playing a crucial role in the advancement of academic knowledge, not only in dance, but also in cognitive psychology and somatic practices. The findings of this study may also be of interest to you if you are interested or involved in the academic study of positive psychology, meditation, kinesthetic empathy and cognition.

Are there any risks associated with participating in the research?

The movement session will be conducted in a studio space appropriate for you to move, sit down and talk. The interviews will be held in an office space allocated to the researcher. I (the main researcher) will ensure that no data will be taken, nor will I proceed with the procedure if you express any discomfort or uncertainty with the process. If you do feel any discomfort (be it mental or physical) at any point in the process, the researcher will immediately halt the session and provide you with any space, time or medical attention that you need.

Do you have to take part?

No, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind at any point before or during the session, please let me know via email or in person, and I will cancel the session as well as delete any data that has been already collected.

Who can you contact if you have any questions about the project?

If you have any questions, please contact Aska Sakuta, the main researcher of this project:
Email: asakuta@stu.chi.ac.uk

What happens if you change your mind and want to withdraw?

If you change your mind after the session and want to withdraw your data or alter your response to any of the questions, please contact the researcher listed above, stating what you would like to change. Withdrawals and alterations will be available until November, 2017.

What will happen to the information collected as part of the study?

The footage uploaded to the online streaming website will only be accessible to members of the study during the session and will be taken down from the website once the study is finished. All data associated with your identity (including performance footage and interview footage) will be stored and retained confidentially throughout the duration of the research project and onwards, shared strictly within the group of researchers (main researcher, 3 supervisory staff members of the University) involved in the study. Anonymity is guaranteed as I will not publicise any information containing your name or any identifiable personal information. The real-time measurements and drawn line graphs may be archived in an academic library as an attachment to the researcher's PhD thesis, as well as in other future publications, but will not be available to any commercial or non-academic party. Because this project would have entered the next phase by November 2017, I will not be able to accept any withdrawal or alteration requests from then onwards. However, if you would like to withdraw your response any time before that point, feel free to contact the main researcher, and we will immediately exclude your data from analysis as well as any publications.

Who can you contact if you have a complaint about the project?

If you have any complaints regarding this study, please contact Dr Andy Dixon, the Director of Research at our University.

Email: a.dixon@chi.ac.uk

Phone: 01243 812125

This project has been approved in accordance with the University of Chichester Research Ethics Policy

Thank you for your time

Appendix 5 – Consent Form

Department of Dance / Sport & Exercise Science

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY AND ANSWER ALL STATEMENTS

Observers' Perceptions of Meditative Flow During Meditation in Movement

I have read and understand the Information Sheet (*version 1, 19/01/2017*) for this research project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. Yes No

I understand that my participation in the activity is voluntary and that I am therefore free to withdraw my involvement at any stage before November 2017, without giving a reason. Yes No

I am aware of the timescales in which I can withdraw my data (as indicated on the Information Sheet). Yes No

I agree to the video recording at the 1st phase of the study (as indicated on the Information Sheet).* Yes No

I agree to the video recording of the interview process at the 2nd phase of the study (as indicated on the Information Sheet). Yes No

I understand that all information will be anonymised and that my personal information will not be released to any third parties. Yes No

I agree to participate in this research. Yes No

Your name (please print)õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ

Your signatureõ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ

Date.....

Researcher's name (please print)õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ

Researcher's signatureõ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ

Date.....

Thank you for your time

*Question 4 for performer only.

Appendix 6 – Component Sheet

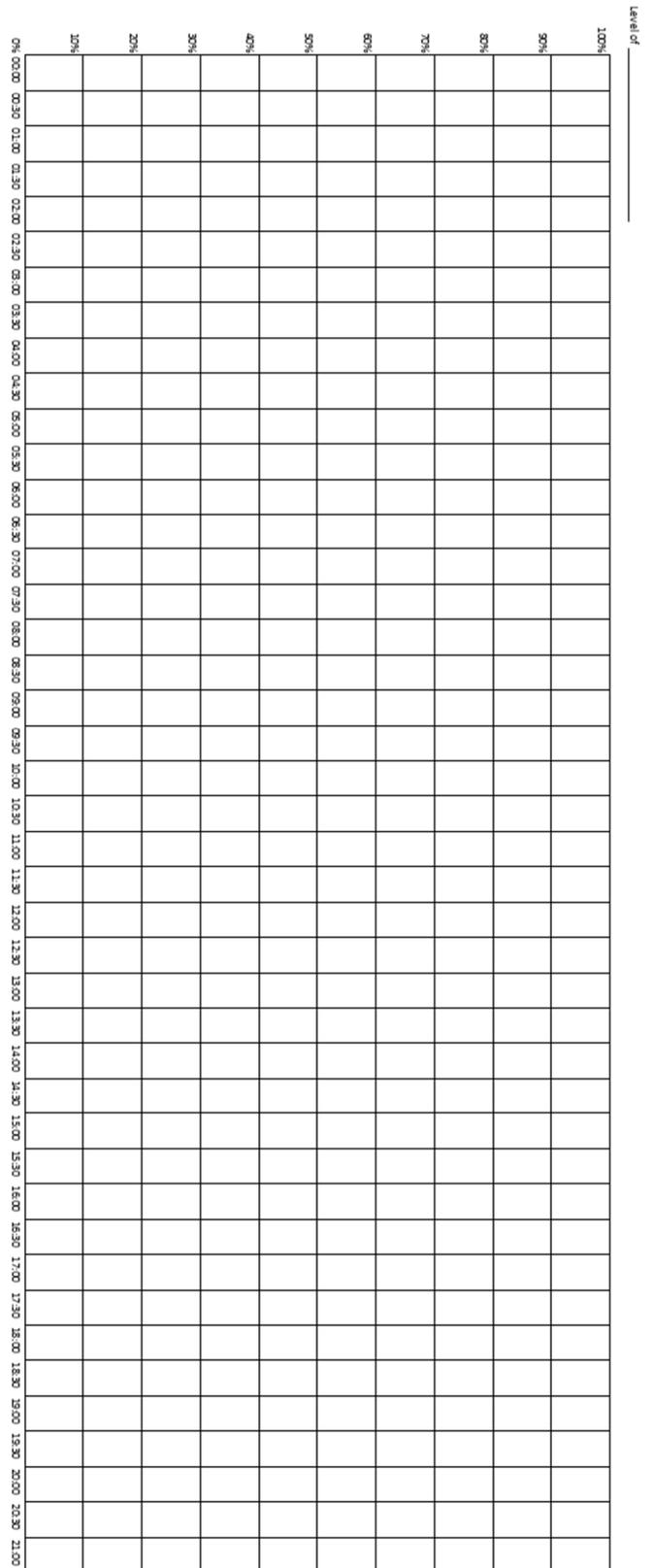
Meditation in Movement – a movement-based (dance) practice or instance (training, rehearsal, performance, workshop...) involving the following components:

- A. I have the intention to "quiet the mind" or "let go of distracting thoughts".
- B. I am continuously focused on one internal aspect (e.g. breath, energy, flow of consciousness, etc).
- C. I experience a release of any conscious analysis or judgement (e.g. self-monitoring or evaluation of my own movement).
- D. I am not rushed or pushed to attain an external goal such as winning a competition or hitting a target.
- E. I do not force my body to move in specific ways.

Meditative Flow – a subjective feeling that one encounters during movement, involving the following components:

- a. It is clear to me that the task is to maintain a focused attention.
- b. I am aware of my level of attention.
- c. I feel that, at that point in time, my ability to maintain focus is sufficient for the task.
- d. I feel that I attain stable focused attention (it is effortless).
- e. Everything seems to naturally fall into place.
- f. Movements just seem to be happening automatically without my conscious decision.
- g. I am not concerned with what others may be thinking of me.
- h. I lose track of time.
- i. Later, I feel that the activity was truly fulfilling and rewarding.

Appendix 7 – Line Graph Template



Appendix 8 – Verbal Instructions

Mover introduction:

- I understand that you have a personal movement practice which involves Meditation in Movement (list of components / brief description will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). I would like you to show a segment of that practice. Please treat this session just like any other instance of your practice as much as possible, whether that means including the presence of the observers in your awareness, or focusing on your own internal state. You can take your time to study the space and prepare your mind and body while I give instructions to the observers. I will check to see if you are ready before I start filming. Once I say “Begin,” it means that the filming has started. I will give you a gentle sign to bring your session to a closure in the last 30 seconds and indicate the end by saying “Please finish” after the 20 min. is up. However, you are free to finish your session anytime earlier than that if you like. If you would like to finish your session before I call out “finish,” please say the word “Finished” to the researcher so that I can stop the camera.
- After the movement session, you will have a couple of minutes to cool down, then, I would like to begin the post-performance reflection. You will be watching a video of your own movement segment and tracking your levels of Meditative Flow on a separate device (list of components / brief reminder will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). Afterwards, I will conduct a one-on-one interview with you to discuss your tracked changes. This is not a performance to be judged or evaluated by anyone including the researcher, observers and yourself, and all you need to do is to experience the movement as it is.

Observer introduction:

- This is a solo movement performance in which the mover will be showing a segment of his/her own practice. The movement may or may not be intended for performance or observation, but in either case, it involves the element of meditation. In my research, this type of movement process is called Meditation in Movement, and it involves (refer to written document on Meditation in Movement). In such movement processes, some movers experience Meditative Flow, which is a subjective feeling involving (refer to written document on Meditative Flow). I am interested in whether this subjective state affects the actual movement quality of the performer, and, if so, how that might be perceived by the audience, if at all. As observers, you do not need to actively analyse the performer’s thought process (e.g. score, intention) or to critique the structure of the performance, but rather, pay attention to your own internal responses to each unfolding moment of movement, whether it be visual, kinesthetic or emotional.
- Also during the performance, I would like you to track the changes (if any) in your perception

of the performer's level of Meditative Flow (i.e. in which points did you feel like the performer was in Meditative Flow most, if any?) by operating the device next to you. When you feel that the level is increasing, move the mouse away from you, and when you feel that it is decreasing, move it towards you. You will have some time to comment on this measurement later in our interview.

- The footage of the performance and your mouse recordings will be uploaded online. When the movement segment finishes, you will each be handed an iPad to review the performance, reflect on your experience, and take notes. I will give you a cue to get ready before the recording starts.

Mover instruction for mouse recording:

- Now I would like you to watch the footage as you operate this device. This recording is just for you to get accustomed to the idea of a video-stimulated recall method, where you try to recall your own experience of Meditative Flow by seeing yourself move. I understand that there may have been a variety of different sensations and thoughts during your movement segment, and that it may be difficult to attribute all of those experiences to one linear measurement. You may even feel that you cannot recall any moments of Meditative Flow at this stage. However, I will not be using this measurement as direct data, and you will have a chance to verbally express your thoughts later. At this stage, try to move the mouse intuitively, and be as honest with yourself as possible.
- As for the device, when you feel that your Meditative Flow level is increasing, move the mouse up (demonstrate). When you feel that it is decreasing, move it down (demonstrate). Your mouse movements will be recorded once, and you will not be able to pause or rewind during the recording. You can check the Meditative Flow components before you begin, but not all of the components need to be present for that experience to be identified as Meditative Flow—some components may appear earlier or later, more or less than the others. Remember, this is not the final data, and you can respond intuitively.

Pre-set mover interview questions:

- Please identify points in time during the performance in which you felt that some significant shifts occurred in your level of Meditative Flow (beginning, fluctuations, endingí).
→ Write down points in time & comments
- (For each point) What level would you say that is?
→ Mark levels and connect marks
- Do you feel that this line graph accurately portrays your fluctuation in Meditative Flow?
→ Make changes as necessary
- With regards to the components of Meditative Flow (refer to document), could you identify any patterns in how they occurred? (e.g. some earlier / later, less / more often than

othersí etc.)

- Please tell me if there are common feelings (subjective experiences) that you had during high or increasing levels of Meditative Flow, and in low or decreasing levels of Meditative Flow.

Pre-interview observer instructions:

- As you watch the video and your mouse recording, please write down your comments on *what* you saw, and *how* it felt. These comments can be short phrases or words, and do not need to be full sentences or anything extensive, as long as they make sense to you. They are only meant to aid our interview process later, and I will not collect them as data. However, in the comments, please try to reference specific points of time in the footage, as well as the quality of the performer's movements, as these will be important for our discussion. For example, you can write comments like 05:08 - 08:42: I can see breathing, I am also breathing or 07:20 - 09:15: the performer is fluid, I sense ease / it is beautiful. Please try to make as many time log references as you can, and try to write these down while your memory is still fresh.

Pre-set observer interview questions:

- Please tell me about your changes in level, with specific reference to points in time. Why did you feel that way?
 - ➔ Write down points in time & comments
- Did you sense any other significant moments? Moments stuck out? Left an impression/impact? Please specify the points in time for each of those moments.
 - ➔ Write down points in time & comments
- What level would you say each of these points is?
 - ➔ Mark levels and connect marks
- Do you feel that this line graph accurately portrays your perceived fluctuation?
 - ➔ Make changes as necessary
- Please tell me if there are common movement qualities that you saw during high or increasing levels of Meditative Flow, and in low or decreasing levels of Meditative Flow.
- Please tell me if there are common feelings (subjective experiences) that you had during high or increasing levels of Meditative Flow, and in low or decreasing levels of Meditative Flow.

Appendix 9 – Interview Pilot Notes

**Notes from each pilot session are written in red*

Pilot 1

The researcher prepared 3 movement footages where the performer experienced flow in certain parts of their performance, then sent the footage to two observers asking the following questions:

1. Do you feel that you were able to recognise the performer's experience 'flow' or "complete immersion"? If so, how or why? (please indicate specific points in the performance if possible)
2. Which points of the performance caught your attention? Why? How did those points make you feel?
3. Did you feel that there were any 'transitions' during the performance? If so, at which points, and why?

Please comment freely, as if you were being interviewed.

The observer's responses were reviewed alongside the performer's accounts on their own experience.

Notes:

- Performer gave highly descriptive reflections, and good indicators of 'flow'.
- Pre-performance instructions are necessary for performer recruitment.
- Post-performance questions must extract answers specifically referring to 'flow'.
- Possible questions:
 1. Did you experience any moments or segments of Meditative Flow?
 2. (In reference to the video) when were those segments?
 3. What word or phrase would you use to describe your 'flow'-like (Meditative Flow) experience?
 4. Can you elaborate?
- Observers gave much mention of interpretive observations as opposed to purely visual, kinesthetic, emotional responses.
- Observers expressed discomfort in imposing 'mental states' onto the performer
- The researcher is not looking for a movement analysis or a report on the movement process / score (although these could potentially become useful depending on the follow-up questions). Instead, the researcher should ask about impressions and feelings of watching the performance.
- Irrelevant comments: documentation of movements (movement analysis) (e.g. 'I identified some transitions' 'I saw changes in level' 'I recognized a pattern / structure'),

interpretation or imagination of performer's intentions (e.g. "There seems to be a score"
"The dancer was exploring body parts"
"Movements seemed to arise impulsively")

- Relevant comments: movement qualities (not processes or imagined intentions) that left a strong impression (e.g. "I liked it when" "I was surprised when" "I got drawn in by" "It was interesting how"), description of kinesthetic/emotional response to certain movements or moments (e.g. "I felt less tension in my body from point A to point B"
"There was a sinking feeling in the movement and in my own body from C to D")
- "Recognising/identifying/perceiving 'flow'" may not be the best expression to be used in the questions—they could however be used in the initial pre-performance introduction.
- Possible questions:
 1. Did you sense any significant moments in relation to the previously mentioned topic? (Which moments stuck out? Left an impression/impact?)
 2. (In reference to the video) can you describe when and why you felt that way? (Give examples of visual, kinesthetic, emotional)
- There was some distraction from music ó no music should be played.
- Observer recruitment process / criteria must be decided and outlined.

Pilot 2

1 mover + 3 observers were recruited. The researcher executed the live performance observation + group interview method as follows:

Introduction

- Brief introduction ó what is this about? What are we going to do?
- Hand out component sheet

Performer instruction:

- "I understand that you have a personal movement practice which involves Meditation in Movement (list of elements / brief description will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). I would like you to show the observers a segment of your practice. Although I will be filming you while you move, I would like you to treat this session just like any other instance of your practice as much as possible. You can take your time to study the space and prepare your mind/body for moving for now. I will check to see if you are ready before we start filming. Once I say "begin," it means that the filming has started. I will give you a gentle sign to bring your session to a stop after 20min. of movement by saying "Finish," but you are free to finish your session anytime earlier than that if you like. Once your session is finished, please say the word "Finished" so that we can stop the camera."
- "After your session, you will have a couple of minutes to cool down, then, I would like to begin the post-performance interview. The interview will be recorded on an audio recorder,

and I will be taking notes as well. In the interview, you will be shown the footage that has just been taken, and asked to answer some questions in reference to the video. The questions will revolve around the concept of Meditative Flow, which I have also mentioned in the online survey (list of elements / brief description will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). This is not a performance to be judged or evaluated by anyone including myself, the observers and yourself, and all I need for you to do is to experience the movement as it is, and later tell me about that experience.ö

- öThe footage will be uploaded to YouTube so that all participants can see it right away, but the setting on YouTube is -unlisted,øwhich means no one can access the video unless they have the exact URL=the video cannot be searched by keyword.ö

Observer instruction:

- öThis is a solo movement performance in which the mover will be showing a segment of their own practice. The movement may or may not be intended for performance or observation, but in either case, it involves the element of meditation. In my research, this type of movement process is called Meditation in Movement, and it involves [refer to component sheet]. In such movement processes, some movers experience Meditative Flow, which is a subjective feeling involving [refer to component sheet]. The mover in this performance may also experience such a state. I am interested in whether this subjective state affects the actual movement quality of the performer, and, if so, how that might be perceived by the audience, if at all. As observers, you do not need to actively search for -signsof what the performer is feeling, or analyse the structure of the performance, but rather, pay attention to your own internal responses to each unfolding moment of movement, whether it be visual, kinesthetic or emotional.ö
- öThe footage of the performance will be uploaded to YouTube. When the movement segment finishes, I will send a link to the footage to your phones.ö

Performance

Starting:

- To performer: öAre you ready for us to start filming your session?ö
- To observer: öAre you ready to operate your devices as you watch?ö
- öBegin.ö

Finishing:

- öFinishedö (end of 20min. or participant cue)
- To all: öPlease take a brief break, and when you are ready, check your text/email to see the link to the video. Let me know if you are having trouble seeing the footage.ö

Observer instruction:

- Hand out sheets of paper & pen
- ðOnce you have accessed the video, please take notes on your first impressions of the experience in short phrases or words, while reviewing the footage. Please try to make references to specific points of time in the footage while recording your thoughts, such as [example of time and comment].ö

Performer interview

Questions:

- Did you experience Meditative Flow (show list of elements)?
- Can you identify points in which you did experience Meditative Flow? (mm:ss to mm:ss)
- Can you identify any points in which you were NOT in Meditative Flow?
- Did it happen gradually or suddenly? Did you feel some elements (of Meditative Flow ó in reference to the criteria) earlier than others?
- Follow-up questions
- ðThank you, your session is done.ö

Observer interview

Instruction:

- ðThank you for waiting. Now please look at your notes and footage.ö
- ðI would like to know your impressions and feelings from watching this performance. Try not to focus too much on interpreting and/or analysing what you saw (for example, describing the performance structure or identifying a movement score), but more on which segments left an impression (impact), how it made you feel, and why (for example, certain movements or moments in the performance may have drawn your attention, made you feel calm, excited, or disinterested, or it may have given you a physical sensation).ö

Questions:

- Did you sense any significant moments? Moments stuck out? Left an impression/impact?
- (In reference to the video) Can you describe when and why you felt that way? (visual, kinesthetic, emotionalí)
- Follow-up questions
- ðThank you, your session is done.ö

Notes:

- Presence of observers did not fit the normal condition of the moverø practice
- The interviews could ask participants to speak in present tense.
- If was effective to just simply mention Meditative Flow at the introduction, and not explicitly instruct observers to ðfind flow.ö

- Observers should not know the performer personally.
- Observers should not try to "critique" the performer.
- In order to avoid comments like "I felt bored, frustrated, etc. throughout the whole thing, because it was bad practice," the observers should be told to look for *changes*, for the mover and for them.
- The observers should not focus on their own internal approach or attitude towards the act of watching, but on changes caused by the mover's performance.
- The video-stimulated recall method was effective, as it reminded participants of their experience without causing distraction during the live observation.
- When reviewing video, the observers could be asked to draw a line graph of their changes in perception, to which the interview can refer.
- The video upload platform was faulty & should change to different online streaming website.

Pilot 3

1 mover + 4 observers were recruited. The researcher executed the live performance observation + individual interview method with improvements, as follows:

Introduction

- Brief description of study
- Hand out component sheets, and ask participants to read through

Performer instruction:

- "I understand that you have a personal movement practice which involves Meditation in Movement (list of elements / brief description will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). I would like you to show the researcher(s) and the observers a segment of your practice. Although I will be filming you while you move, and there are observers present, I would like you to treat this session just like any other instance of your practice as much as possible. You can take your time to study the space and prepare your mind and body for moving while I give instructions to the observers. I will check to see if you are ready before I start filming. Once I say "Begin," it means that the filming has started. I will give you a gentle sign to bring your session to a stop after 20min. of movement by saying "Finish," but you are free to finish your session anytime earlier than that if you like. If you would like to finish your session before I call out "Finish," please say the word "Finished" to the researcher so that I can stop the camera."
- "After your session, you will have a couple of minutes to cool down, then, I would like to begin the post-performance interview. The interview will be recorded through a video camera, and the researcher will be taking notes as well. In the interview, you will be shown the footage

that has just been taken, and asked to answer some questions in reference to the video. The questions will revolve around the concept of Meditative Flow, which we have also mentioned in the online survey (list of elements / brief description will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). This is not a performance to be judged or evaluated by anyone including the researcher, observers and yourself, and all I need for you to do is to experience the movement as it is, and later tell me about that experience.ö

- öThe footage will be uploaded to Twitch so that all participants can see it right away, but the setting on Twitch is ~~Not Playing~~, which means no one can access the video unless they have the exact URL—the video cannot be searched by keyword.ö

Observer instruction:

- öThis is a solo movement performance in which the mover will be showing a segment of his/her own practice. The movement may or may not be intended for performance or observation, but in either case, it involves the element of meditation. In my research, this type of movement process is called Meditation in Movement, and it involves (refer to component sheet.). In such movement processes, some movers experience Meditative Flow, which is a subjective feeling involving (refer to component sheet). The mover in this performance may also experience such a state. I am interested in whether this subjective state affects the actual movement quality of the performer, and, if so, how that might be perceived by the audience, if at all. As observers, you do not need to actively analyse the performer's thought process (e.g. score, intention) or to critique the structure of the performance, but rather, pay attention to your own internal responses to each unfolding moment of movement, whether it be visual, kinesthetic or emotional.ö
- öThe footage of the performance will be uploaded to Twitch. When the movement segment finishes, I will send a link to the footage to your tablets, so that you can start reviewing the video and taking notes.ö
- öAlso during the performance, I would like you to loosely track the changes (if any) in your (different for each observer):
 - I. Level of engagement towards the performance (e.g. How intrigued were you to different segments in the performance?)
 - II. Perception of the performer's level of Meditative Flow (e.g. In which points did you feel like the performer was in Meditative Flow most, if any?)
 - III. Level of resonance with the performer (e.g. Can you feel the movements in your own body? Do you feel like you are feeling what the performer is feeling?)
 - IV. Preference towards the movements being shown (e.g. Did you think some segments were more aesthetically pleasing than others?)as I will ask questions about this later in the interview. I will give you a cue to get ready before the recording starts.ö

Performance & reflection

Observer instruction:

- (In reference to the line graph template) This is a graph on which you can draw your felt changes in (I, II, III, IV). The session was __ minutes __ seconds. Please write down this time at the bottom right end of the graph.
- As you watch the video, please try to draw out your tracked changes in (I, II, III, IV) on this sheet as you review the footage. The vertical axis represents your changing level (top point as highest and bottom point as lowest), and the horizontal axis represents the time. As you draw the graph, please write down your comments below the graph on why these changes may have occurred. These comments can be short phrases or words, and do not need to be full sentences or anything extensive, as long as they make sense to you. They are only meant to aid our interview process later, and I will not collect them as data. However, in the comments, please try to reference specific points of time in the footage, as these time logs will be important for our discussion. For example, you can write comments like "breathing 5:08 - 8:42" or "I liked 7:20 - 9:15"

Performer interview

Pre-set questions:

- Thinking back (and seeing the footage), did you experience Meditative Flow (in reference to Meditative Flow document)?
- Can you identify points in which you did experience Meditative Flow?
→ Write down points in time
- Can you identify any points in which you were NOT in Meditative Flow?
→ Write down point in time
- How would you express the fluctuation of your Meditative Flow in a line graph considering the comments that you have given me so far?
→ Draw line graph
- Did it happen gradually or suddenly? Did you feel some elements (of Meditative Flow) in reference to the criteria) earlier than others?
- (What do you think of the length of the performance?)
- (Did the filming and observers distract you in any way during the session?)

Observer interview

Instruction:

- Thank you for waiting. Now please look at your notes and footage. I would like to know your impressions and feelings from watching this performance. Try not to focus too much on interpreting and/or analysing what you saw (for example, describing the performance

structure or identifying a movement score), but more on which segments caused changes in your level of (I, II, III, IV), and why (for example, certain movements or moments in the performance may have drawn your attention, made you feel calm, excited, or disinterested, or it may have given you a physical sensation).ö

Questions:

- Please tell me about your changes in level=(in reference to the video and the time axis) Please point out the points in time when your level changed.
- Did you sense any other significant moments? Moments stuck out? Left an impression/impact? (points in time)
 - ➔ Note down points in time
- How did you feel when you indicate a higher (I, II, III, IV) in these specific instances?
- How did you feel in the lower sections?
- How did you feel *during* the level changes?
 - ➔ Note down qualitative comments
- How would you describe your changes in (I, II, III, IV) having discussed your impressions further?
 - ➔ Draw line graph
- (What do you think of the length of the performance?)
- (How do you feel about the interview process?)

Notes:

- Performance length confirmed (by multiple participants) as just right (i.e. long enough to enter Flow but short enough not to become exhausted)
- There should be a better way of accessing the footage (instead of manually inputting the URL in each iPad)
- Prior to the study, movers should be informed of the set-up (e.g. observers in the space, video recording), and confirm that this set-up would not be significant detriment to his/her experience of Meditative Flow.
- The performer mentioned difficulty in identifying Meditative Flow moments/fluctuations.
 - Interview design (i.e. line graph) should be mentioned prior to performance, as participants seemed confused by the idea.
 - A real-time measurement of the fluctuations of MF could be made: observers operate while watching live performance, and mover operates while reviewing the footage (prior to the interview) to familiarize themselves to the idea of a line graph representation
 - Interview questions to be edited to differentiate öreal-time, felt/perceived experience of attention shifts, thoughts, sensationsö from öfluctuation of Meditative Flowö
- The line graph should show 0 ö 100% on the y axis, as participants tended to express their

impressions in percentages.

- The observer interview should contain the following prompts:
 - “Tell me about your comments on the changes in level / why did you feel that way?”
 - “What level would you say each of these points are?”
 - “Is this line graph an accurate portrayal of your experience in level changes?”
- Observer interviews could be scheduled and conducted on another day, as each interview tends to take 40 ó 60 minutes, and the waiting time is long.
- Prompting observers to track their “III. Perception of the performer’s level of Meditative Flow (e.g. In which points did you feel like the performer was in Meditative Flow most, if any?)” produced the most effective results, in that the answer to this question acts as a starting point to expand to questions I, III, and IV.
- The drawn line graph produced an effective quantitative dataset for further analysis.

Pilot 4

1 mover + 4 observers were recruited. The researcher executed the live performance observation + interview method with improvements (mainly the employment of a real-time measuring device), as follows:

Introduction

- Brief description of study
- Hand out component sheets, and ask participants to read through
- Check that all devices are working

Performer instruction:

- “I understand that you have a personal movement practice which involves Meditation in Movement (list of components / brief description will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). I would like you to show a segment of that practice. Please treat this session just like any other instance of your practice as much as possible, whether that means including the presence of the observers in your awareness, or focusing on your own internal state. You can take your time to study the space and prepare your mind and body while I give instructions to the observers. I will check to see if you are ready before I start filming. Once I say “Begin,” it means that the filming has started. I will give you a gentle sign to bring your session to a stop after 20min. of movement (e.g. “slowly bring to a closure”), and then say “Finish,” but you are free to finish your session anytime earlier than that if you like. If you would like to finish your session before I call out “Finish,” please say the word “Finished” to the researcher so that I can stop the camera.”
- “After your session, you will have a couple of minutes to cool down, then, I would like to begin the post-performance self-report. You will be watching a video of your own movement

segment and reflectively tracking your levels of Meditative Flow on a mouse device (list of components / brief reminder will be given for reminder if prompted by the participant). Afterwards, I will conduct a one-on-one interview with you to discuss your tracked changes. During the interview, we will develop a finalised graph of your Meditative Flow experience throughout the duration of your movement segment. The interview will be recorded on a video camera, so that I can later analyse your response accurately. This is not a performance to be judged or evaluated by anyone including the researcher, observers and yourself, and all you need to do is to experience the movement as it is.ö

- öThe footage will be uploaded to Twitch so that all participants can see it right away, but the setting on Twitch is 'Not Playing', which means that no one can access the video unless they have the exact URL—the video cannot be searched by keyword.ö

Observer instruction:

- öThis is a solo movement performance in which the mover will be showing a segment of his/her own practice. The movement may or may not be intended for performance or observation, but in either case, it involves the element of meditation. In my research, this type of movement process is called Meditation in Movement, and it involves (refer to written document on Meditation in Movement). In such movement processes, some movers experience Meditative Flow, which is a subjective feeling involving (refer to written document on Meditative Flow). I am interested in whether this subjective state affects the actual movement quality of the performer, and, if so, how that might be perceived by the audience, if at all. As observers, you do not need to actively analyse the performer's thought process (e.g. score, intention) or to critique the structure of the performance, but rather, pay attention to your own internal responses to each unfolding moment of movement, whether it be visual, kinesthetic or emotional.ö
- öThe footage of the performance will be uploaded to a website so that you can review it later on your tablets.ö
- öAlso during the performance, I would like you to track the changes (if any) in your perception of the performer's level of Meditative Flow (e.g. In which points did you feel like the performer was in Meditative Flow most, if any?) by operating the device next to you. When you feel that the level is increasing, move the mouse up (demonstrate), and when you feel that it is decreasing, move it down (demonstrate). You will have some time to write down your comment on this measurement after the performance, and I will ask questions about your thoughts later in the interview. Do you have any questions on the mouse (brief Q & A)? I will give you a cue to get ready to operate the device before the performance & recording starts, and say 'Begin' to signal the beginning.ö

Performance

- Check that the mice are at the bottom of rail

Performer: “Are you ready for me to start filming your session?”

Observers: “Are you ready to operate your devices as you watch?”

- Starts OBS & device recording
- Check that the footage is live streaming on Twitch
- Say “Begin”
- “Finished”
- Stop recording
- To all: “Please take a brief break while I set up the footage.”

Pre-interview Procedure:

- Check to see that the footage can be played on all iPads (one per each observer)
- Hand out papers & pens
- “As you watch the video and your mouse recording, please write down your comments on *why* the changes in level may have occurred, and describe *how* it felt. These comments can be short phrases or words, and do not need to be full sentences or anything extensive, as long as they make sense to you. They are only meant to aid our interview process later, and I will not collect them as data. However, in the comments, please try to reference specific points of time in the footage, as these time logs will be important for our discussion. For example, you can write comments like “breathing 5:08 – 8:42” or “I liked 7:20 – 9:15”. Please try to make as many time log references as you can, and try to write these down while your memory is still fresh.”
- “You can find a comfortable place outside of the gym to do this if you like, but try not to interact with your peers until you are finished with your notes. Once you are done, please hold on to your notes, and take a break until your interview.”

Performer interview

Device measurement instruction:

- “Now I would like you to watch the footage as you operate this device. This recording is just for you to get accustomed to the idea of a video-stimulated recall method, where you try to recall your own experience of Meditative Flow by seeing yourself move. I understand that there may have been a variety of different sensations and thoughts during your movement segment, and that it may be difficult to attribute all of those experiences to one linear measurement. You may even feel that you cannot recall any moments of Meditative Flow at this stage. However, I will not be using this measurement as direct data, and you will have a chance to verbally express your thoughts later. At this stage, try to move the mouse intuitively, and be as honest with yourself as possible.”
- “As for the device, when you feel that your Meditative Flow level is increasing, move the

mouse up (demonstrate). When you feel that it is decreasing, move it down (demonstrate). Your mouse movements will be recorded once, and you will not be able to pause or rewind during the recording. You can check the Meditative Flow components before you begin, but not all of the components need to be present for that experience to be identified as Meditative Flow—some components may appear earlier or later, more or less than the others. Remember, this is not the final data, and you can respond intuitively.ö

- Once recording is finished, set up footage and mouse recording.
- Set up & check video camera
- öFind a comfortable position to view the video recording. You are allowed to rewind and review different sections as you please. Through this interview, I will be recording your responses on this graph (show template). The vertical axis represents your level of Meditative Flow, and the horizontal axis represents time. In the end, we will have created a line graph of your experience.ö

Pre-set questions:

- Please identify points in time during the performance in which you felt that some shifts occurred in your level of Meditative Flow (beginning, fluctuations, endingí).
- (For each point) What level would you say that is?
 - ➔ Write down points in time & comments
 - ➔ Mark levels
 - ➔ Connect marks
- Do you feel that this line graph accurately portrays your fluctuation in Meditative Flow?
 - ➔ Make changes as necessary
- With regards to the components of Meditative Flow (refer to document), could you identify any patterns in how they occurred? (e.g. some earlier / later, less / more often than othersí etc.)
- öYour session is now finished. Thank you for your time.ö

Observer interview

- Set up & check video camera
- Set up footage & mouse recording & notes
- öIn this interview, I will be asking you questions about your recording and notes. You can watch the footage to remind you of your feelings. You can rewind and forward as you please. Through this interview, I will be recording your responses on this graph (show template). The vertical axis represents your level of perceived Meditative Flow, and the horizontal axis represents time. In the end, we will have created a line graph of your experience.ö

Pre-set questions:

- Please tell me about your changes in level, with specific reference to points in time. (in reference to the graph) What level would you say is this? Why did you feel that way?
- Did you sense any other significant moments? Moments that stuck out? Left an impression/impact? Please specify the points in time for each of those moments.
 - ➔ Write down points in time & comments
 - ➔ Mark levels
 - ➔ Connect marks
- Do you feel that this line graph accurately portrays your perceived fluctuation?
 - ➔ Make changes as necessary
- öYour session is now finished. Thank you for your time.ö

Notes:

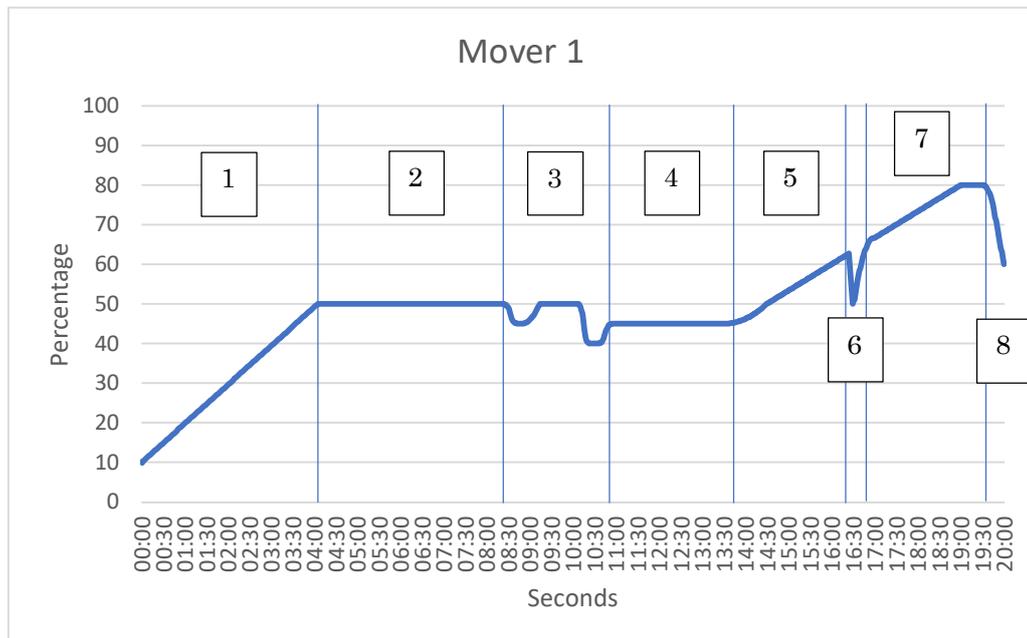
- For the post-performance reflection, observers should be instructed to focus specifically on the movements that they have witnessed, and also make comments on öhow that felt.ö This instruction should include more elaborate examples.
- For the interviews, the video recording should include all conversations including discussions on the drawn line graph, so that accounts can be referred to in the analysis.
- The researcher should first ask participants for significant shifts that occurred throughout the duration of the performance, so as to obtain a balanced response which covers the whole performance and save time for further detailed responses.
- All participants found the real-time measurement system useful to become accustomed to the idea of a line graph, and easy to use / intuitive. No observer reported any distractions caused by the mouse device.

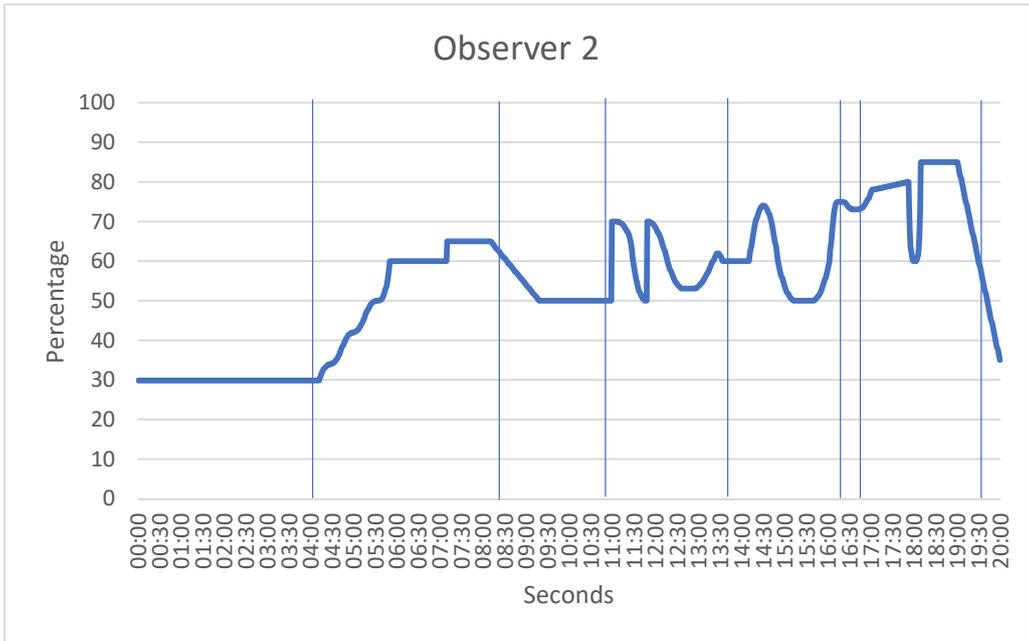
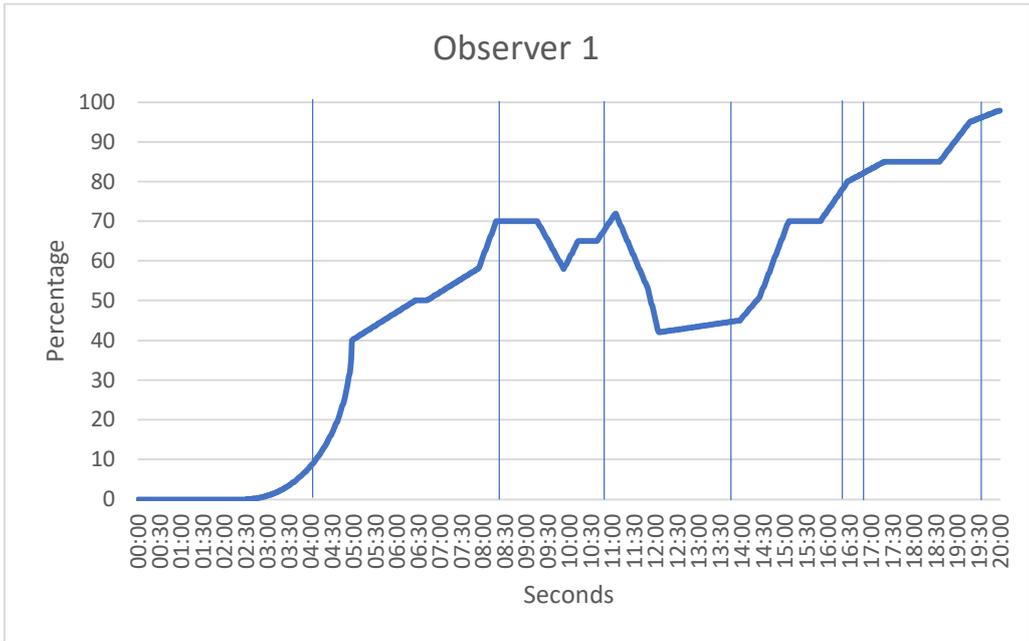
Appendix 10 – Line Graph Full Mapping

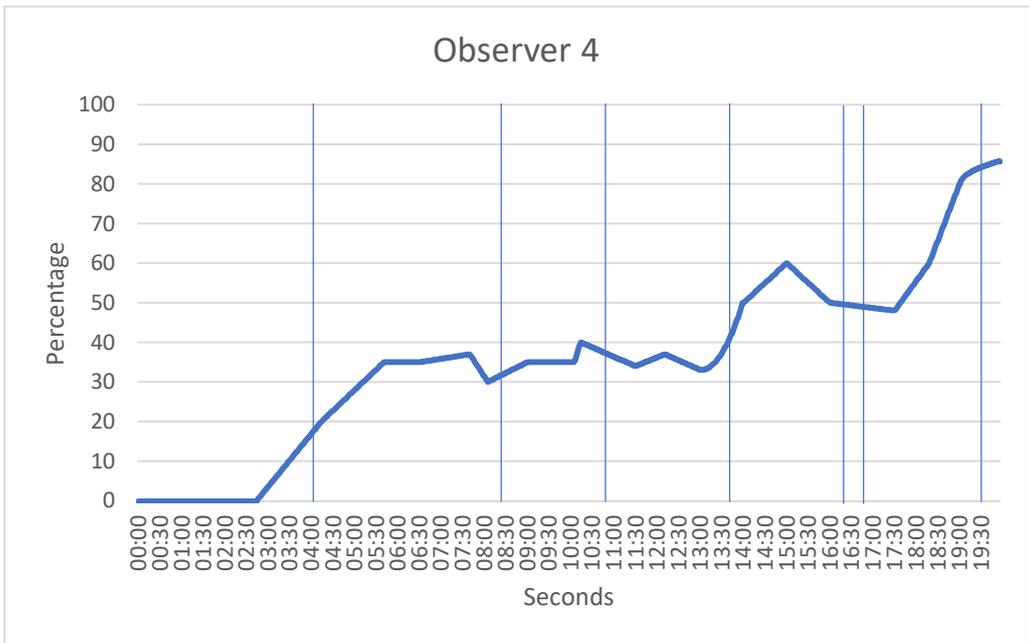
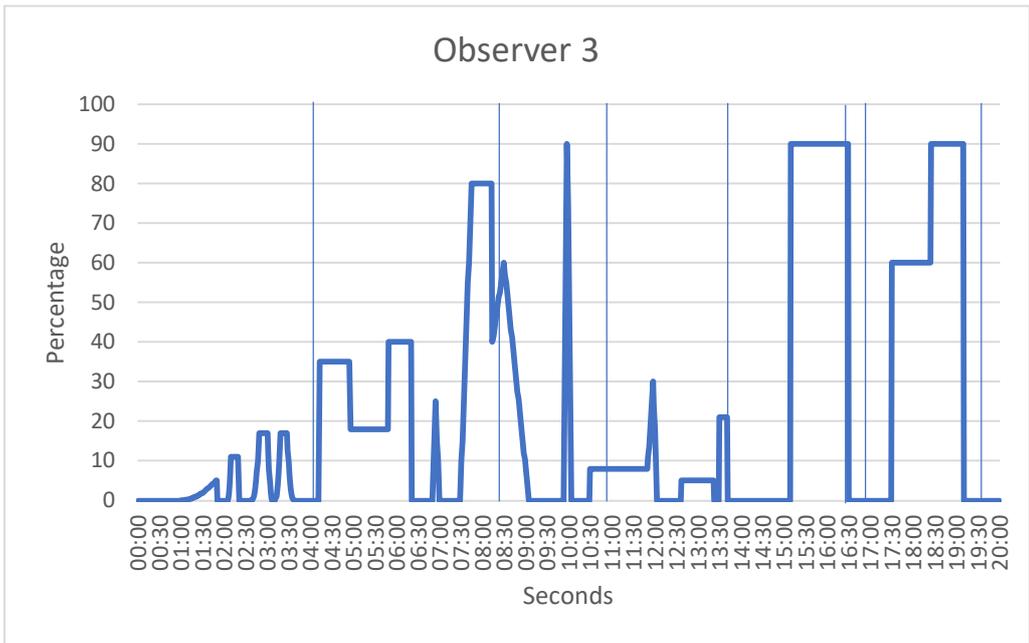
Mover 1

*List content: [Phase no.] [Timeframe] [level / shape]

1. 0:00 ó 4:05 (incline)
2. 4:05 ó 8:20 (level: + / plateau)
3. 8:20 ó 11:00 (level: - / dent ó plateau ó dent)
4. 11:00 ó 13:30 (level: - / plateau)
5. 13:30 ó 16:25 (level: + / incline)
6. 16:25 ó 17:00 (level: + / dent)
7. 17:00 ó 19:20 (level: + / incline)
8. 19:20 ó 20:00 (level: - / decline)

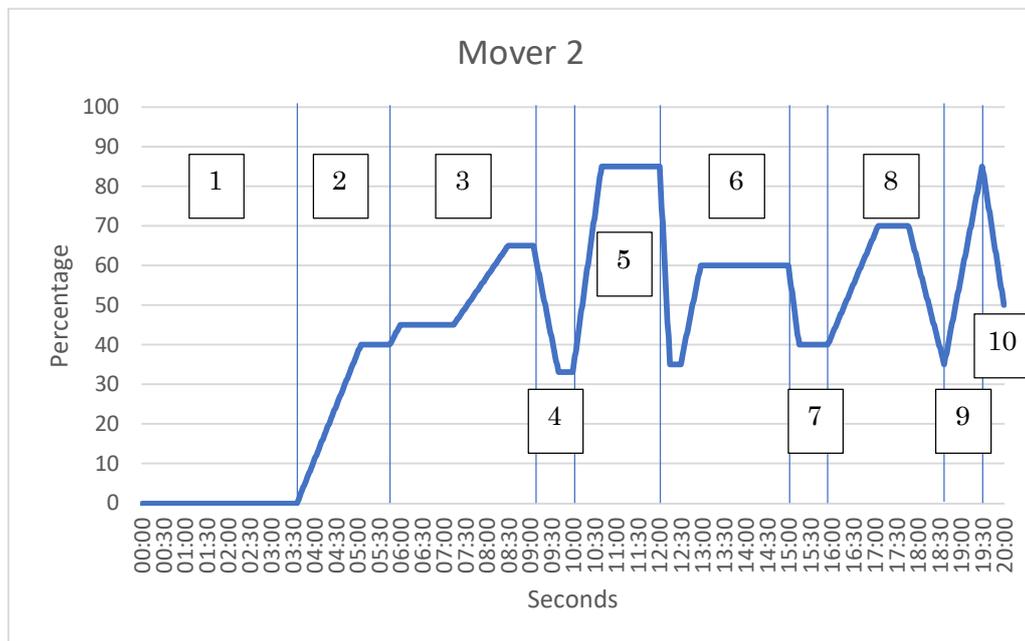


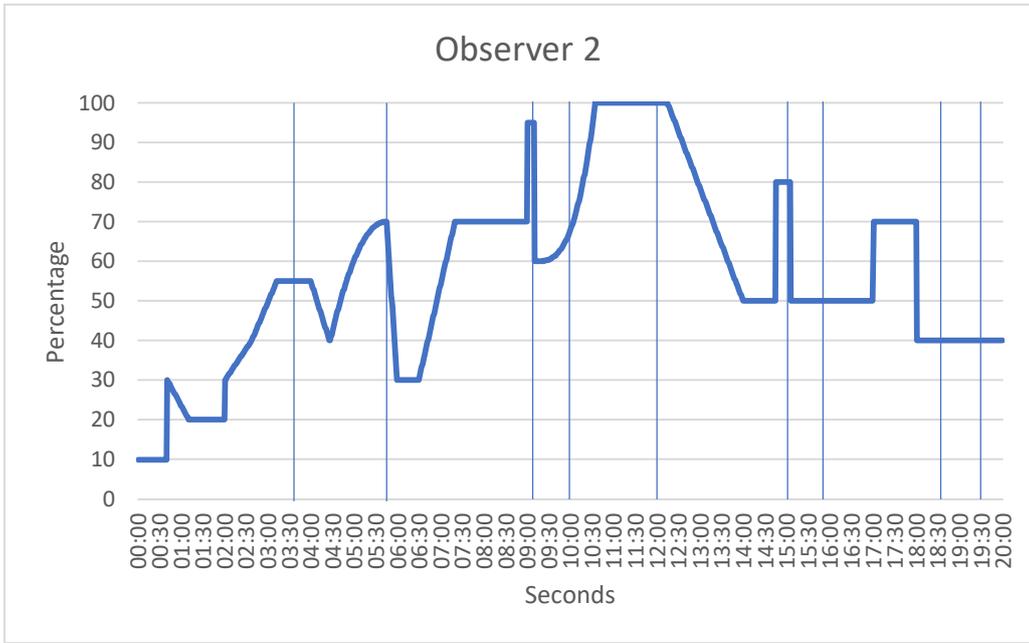
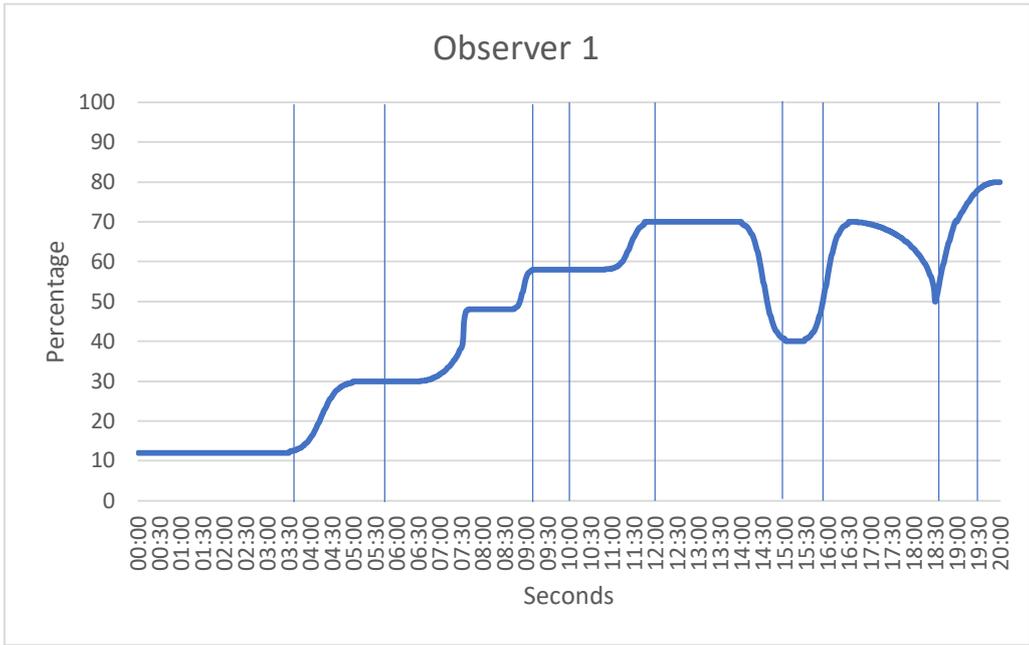


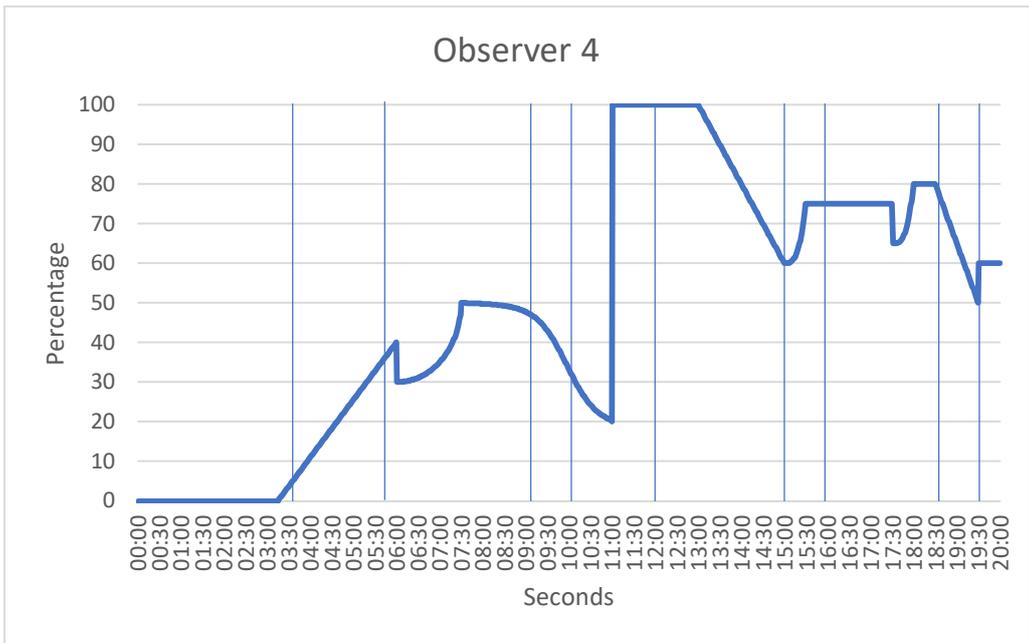
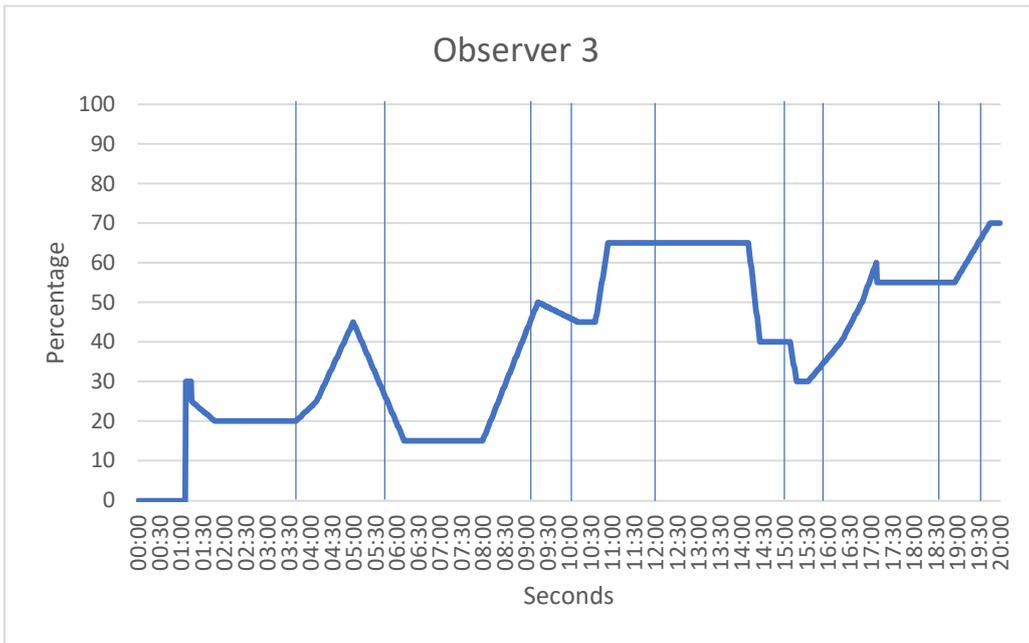


Mover 2

1. 0:00 ó 3:36 (plateau)
2. 3:36 ó 5:45 (level: + / incline)
3. 5:45 ó 9:05 (level: + / incline)
4. 9:05 ó 10:00 (level: - / decline)
5. 10:00 ó 12:01 (level: + / incline ó plateau)
6. 12:01 ó 15:00 (level: - / dent ó plateau)
7. 15:00 ó 15:55 (level: - / decline ó plateau)
8. 15:55 ó 18:37 (level: + / bump)
9. 18:37 ó 19:30 (level: + / incline)
10. 19:30 ó 20:00 (level: + / decline)

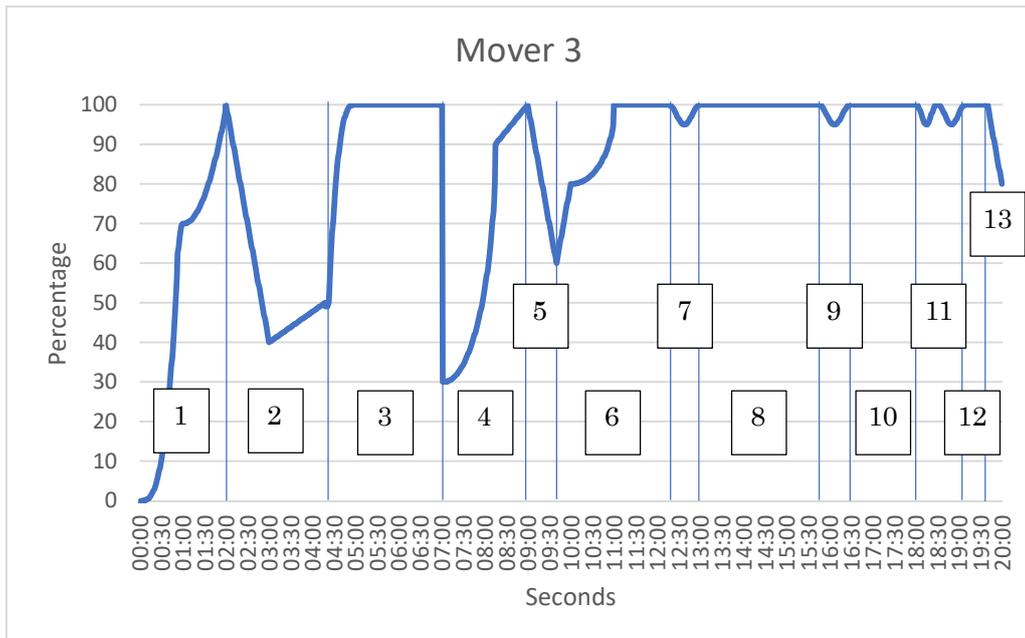


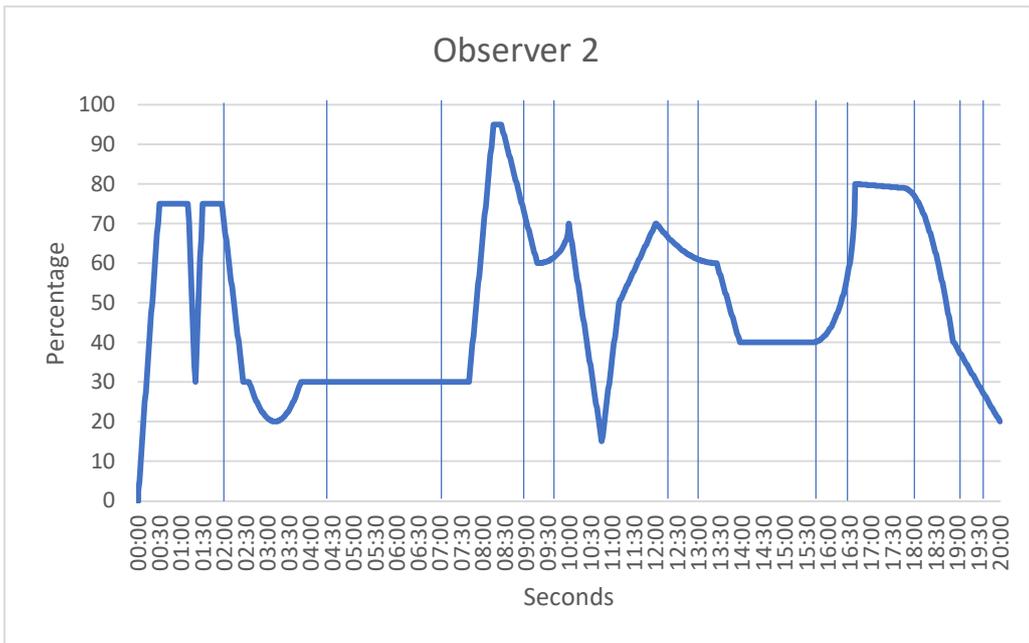
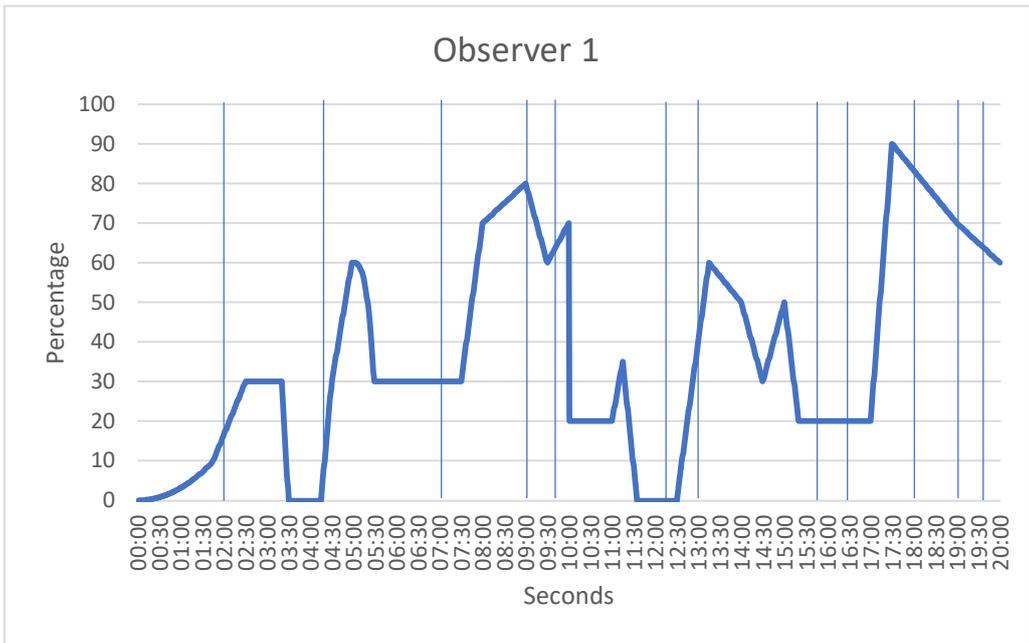


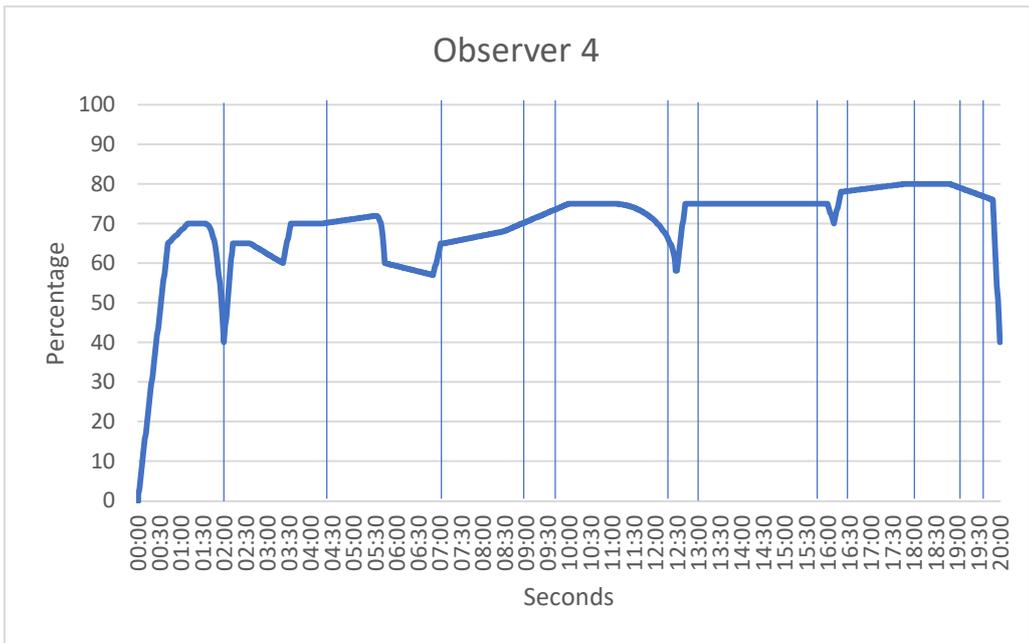
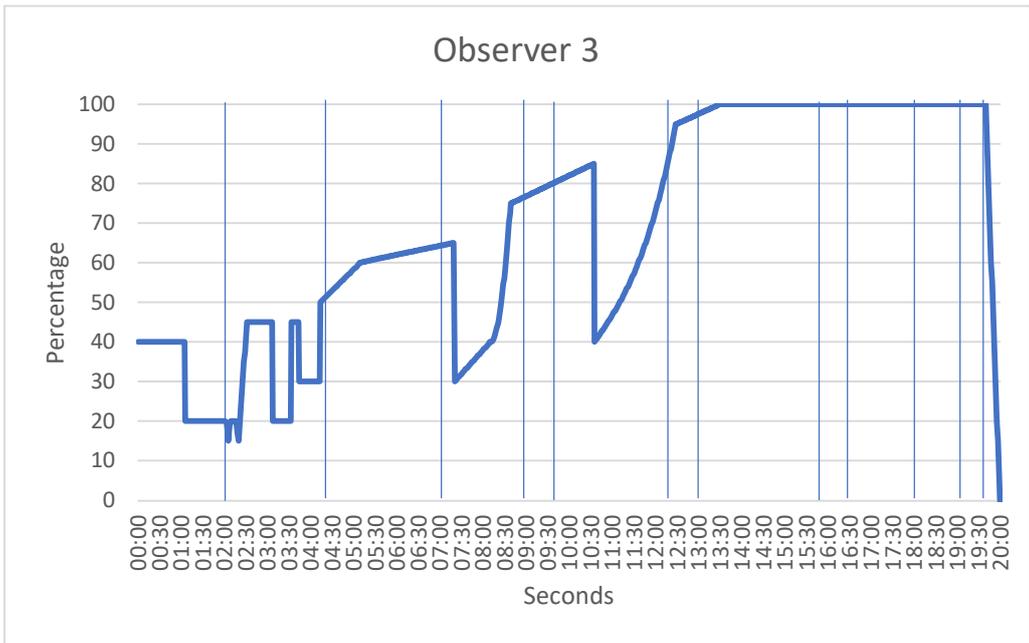


Mover 3

1. 0:00 ó 2:00 (incline)
2. 2:00 ó 4:20 (level: + / dent)
3. 4:20 ó 7:02 (level: + / incline + plateau)
4. 7:02 ó 9:00 (level: - / dent ó incline)
5. 9:00 ó 9:40 (level: + / decline)
6. 9:40 ó 12:15 (level: + / incline + plateau)
7. 12:15 ó 13:00 (level: + / dent)
8. 13:00 ó 15:45 (level: + / plateau)
9. 15:45 ó 16:30 (level: - / dent)
10. 16:30 ó 18:00 (level: + / plateau)
11. 18:00 ó 19:10 (level: - / 2 dents)
12. 19:10 ó 19:40 (level: + / plateau)
13. 19:40 ó 20:00 (level: - / decline)







Appendix 11 – Quantitative Methods

Some quantitative methods were explored to test whether the perceived overall similarity between the mover's and observer's line graphs were true. The following presents a brief description of each method and a rationale on why it was not employed in the study.

Local maximums & minimums

First, the local maximums (1st, 2nd, and 3rd highest points/durations) and local minimums (1st, 2nd and, 3rd lowest points/durations) were determined in each graph to see if the appearances of maximum (high) and minimum (low) match between mover and observer. This was done by identifying all inflexion points (i.e. switching points from increase to decrease or decrease to increase) in the graphs, and identifying the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd highest inflexions from increase to decrease, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd lowest inflexions from decrease to increase. Here, durations of sustention were regarded as points on inflexion as long as it appears between two opposing trends: increase and decrease. Also, if the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd highest/lowest value in the graph appears either in the beginning or end of the duration (i.e. without inflexion), those points (durations) were regarded as relevant local maximums or minimums. However, the number of total inflexion points widely varied between participants (4 to 14), which, for example, made all 3 of the highest inflexion points of one observer appear during just one of the highest points/durations of the mover. As such, comparing a limited number of local maximums and minimums between mover and observer would not have produced evidence that their perception of the appearance of highs and lows match in time.

Correlation analysis

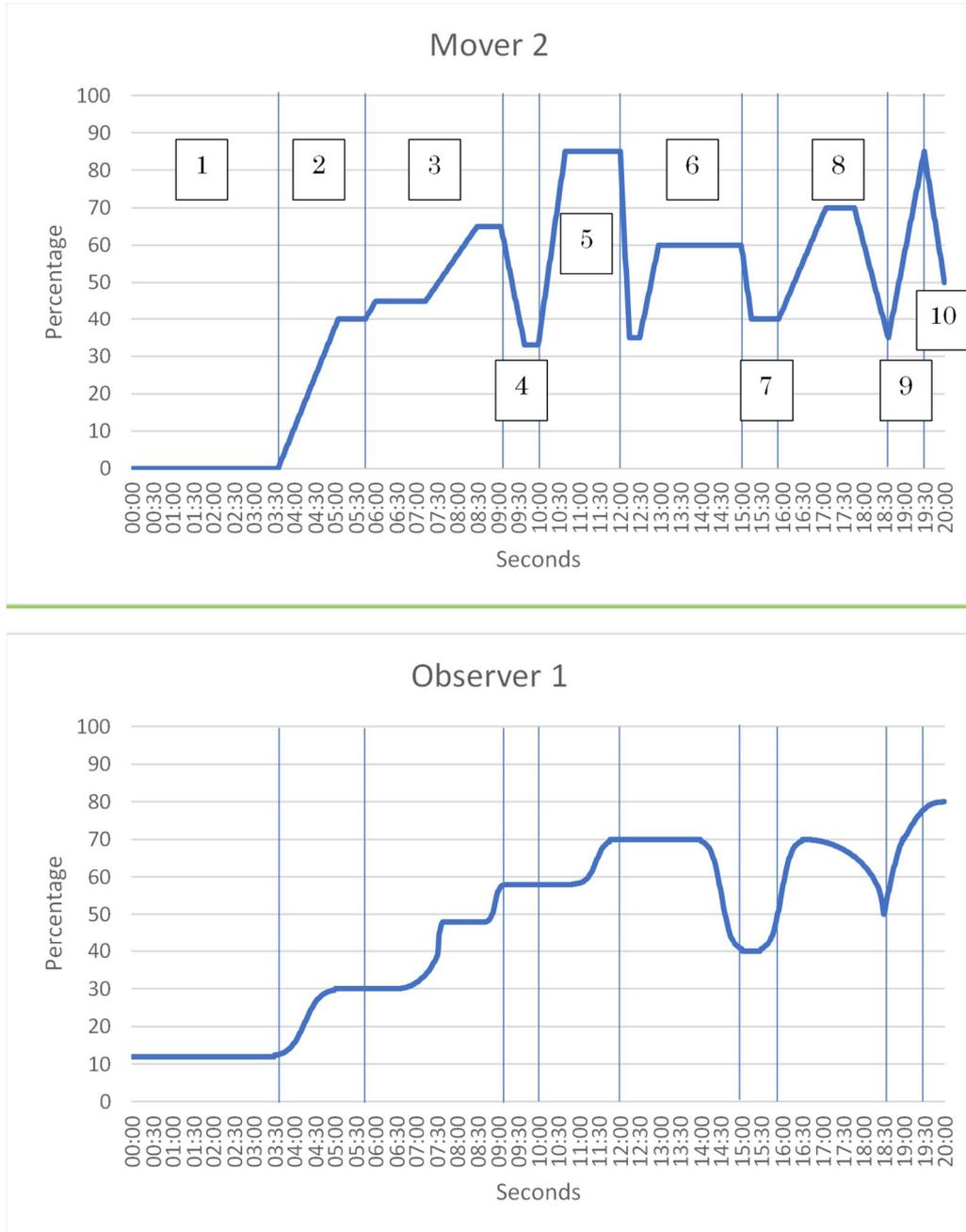
Next, a simple correlation analysis was conducted to examine the overall correlation between the mover's and observer's line graphs. Here, the Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated for each observer's line graph against the mover's. The average correlation of Mover vs Observer was 0.72 ± 0.18 for trial 1, 0.74 ± 0.08 for trial 2, and 0.44 ± 0.18 for trial 3 ($p < 0.01$). While the results for trial 1 and 2 showed that all observer's line graphs were positively correlated with the mover's, some observer's graphs in trial 3 showed relatively low correlation (e.g. Mover vs Obs.2 = 0.24). While the results may suggest that, in 2 out of 3 trials, the mover's and observer's line graphs generally tend to match each other, the fact that one of the trials proved to be an exception raises a question as to why this exception was not identified in the visual comparison. Moreover, it can be argued that overall correlation does not fully justify the specific *points* (or durations) of similarity identified visually.

Others

Other quantitative methods of validating specific *areas* of similarity between the mover's and observer's line graphs were considered, such as calculating the root mean square error (RMSE) between the two (Willmott et al., 1985), conducting a rolling-window correlation analysis (Dakos et al., 2012), and conducting a vector-coding analysis (Nanopoulos, Alcock & Manolopoulos, 2001; Tepavac & Field-Fote, 2001) all of which are existing techniques to analyse time-series data. However, some factors regarding the nature of the current data deemed these types of analyses to be ineffective for the purposes at hand—firstly, the RMSE represents the differences in Meditative Flow level reported by two or more participants at each point in the session. However, this analysis does not account for the contextual differences of what each level meant to the participant at that point in the session. For instance, some participants may label 'mid-level' as 50% (e.g. halfway between 0 & 100%), while another participant may label it as 30% (e.g. if maximum level throughout the session was 60%). Although the *range* of levels (i.e. 0% = lowest/none, 100% = highest) in which the participants were allowed to report their perception was unified, the levels themselves were determined by contextual interpretations of the participants (as mentioned in the data collection section). As such, even if the reported levels between two participants match (i.e. low RMSE), this may not indicate that the two participants' perceptions have matched. Secondly, both the rolling-window correlation analysis and vector-coding analysis can be used to examine the similarity in *trajectory* between two or more participants' graphs at a given time, regardless of the differences in overall volume. However, the calculation process involved in these analyses is highly sensitive to the specific points in time that the overall trajectory changes, as well as the precise direction of trajectory. For instance, even if an observer seemed to recognise an increase around the same time as the mover, his/her response may be slightly delayed—while the methods presented above can compensate for these delays by shifting the observer's line graph back, this assumes that the observer's responses were always delayed by the same amount of time. In reality, however, the observer may have recognised certain fluctuations earlier than others, meaning that delays may be inconsistent across time. Thus, these methods were considered unsuitable for identifying certain instances of notable similarity (i.e. those which can be identified visually and explained qualitatively).

Appendix 12 – Inter-rater Agreement Material

Each rater received a Word document displaying images of the mover and observer line graphs, similarly to how they were shown in Appendix 10. Within the document, the mover line graph was placed right above each observer line graph, as shown below:



The document contained comparisons between the mover and each of the 4 observers. Each rater also received an Excel form, which asked the rater to insert -yes (i.e. the observer pattern/shape matches the mover) or -no (i.e. the observer pattern/shape does not match the

mover(ø) for each of the phases shown in the Word document. See below for an image of the Excel form:

Task: take a look at the Word document, and see that each set of line graphs (Mover 2 vs Observer 1-4) are separated into 10 phases. Take a look at each phase for each set of line graphs, and decide if the Observer's line roughly matches the pattern/shape of the Mover's. The volume (high or low) does not matter - it's only about the pattern/shape. Some may be difficult to decide; if that's the case, take a look at the "Mover 2" row below, just to see what sort of shape you should be looking for (there's also a list of patterns at the bottom of this sheet). If there are multiple

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6	Phase 7	Phase 8	Phase 9	Phase 10
Mover 2	plateau	incline	incline	decline	incline / plateau	dent / plateau	decline / plateau	bump	incline	decline
Obs.1										
Obs.2										
Obs.3										
Obs.4										
Example:										
	phase 1	phase 2	phase 3	phase 4	phase 5	phase 6	phase 7	phase 8	phase 9	phase 10
Mover 2	plateau	incline	incline	decline	incline / plateau	dent / plateau	decline / plateau	bump	incline	decline
Obs.1	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Obs.2	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
Obs.3	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs.4	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes
Types of patterns/shapes too look for:										
1. incline										
2. decline										
3. plateau										
4. bump										
5. dent										

Once the rater had completed the form, their responses were compared to my own responses. To calculate the rate of agreement between one rater and myself, the number of phases in which the rater's response matched my own was divided by the total number of phases (in the above case, 10 phases × 4 observers = 40 phases).

Appendix 13 – Phase Catalogue

Mover 1

Phase 2 (Stage in cycle: Entering)

Mover comments: An unmanufactured question (an emergent %something+) appears as a result of prior conscious decisions on direction of attention. Thereon after, there is a continuous feeling of finding things leading into another. As the mover follows each thought that emerges, there is a sense of building, but at the same time, drifting (or being taken) through (soaring, or riding a wave). There is also a heightened sense of going inward into the self. the mover feels present and internalized, not worried about the outside, and she is not doing it for others.

4:05 . 4:15

Observer comments: Shift in attention, interest & movement

Movement description: Swift transition from squatting to standing in a direct vertical motion, head releasing backwards. There is a shift in movement leading into quicker, crisper movements at higher levels, occasionally using weight and momentum (e.g. swinging arms, head) to shift from position to position

5:00 . 6:30

Observer comments: Clarity in attention & movement directionLcoherence & connection within the bodyLuse of weight & momentumLcontinuity in movement

Movement description: Smooth slides across floor, fluently using the body: pushing against floor with the torso (folding, twisting) or limbs, using kinetic energy from floor as momentum to travel. Occasionally tracing large, circular trajectories, with one body part, and extended it with another. Head is released more often, acting as the initiator of movement. Each end of movement (theme) kinetically giving rise to the start of another movement (theme): like a Rube Goldberg machine

6:50 . 8:10:

Observer comments: Less control in attention & movementLsense of %falling into+or %iding+an abundance of informationL natural, organic, fluid movements (head-tail connection, curvilinear patterns in spine, quick switches between contrasting movement patterns)L deepening curiosity

Movement description: Limbs becoming more durable, able to sustain more weight and off-balance suspension. In-place (self-contained) looping trajectories on the floor, like a rope going through its own loops, but never getting tied. Tighter, quicker circular

trajectories appear within body and kinesphere. One continuous stream of momentum at the end: large dynamic glides → knee-slide → hand-stand

Phase 5 (Stage in cycle: Opening)

Mover comments: Working with sensory imagery (%olding+), internally asking %what happens ifō ?+in a conscious effort to %come back in+from %just dancing.+Something is emerging, and the mover is opening up to taking more risk, as she feels removed from othersq judgements. Shortly, the mover finds a %surge+. a somewhat euphoric awareness of having %eached something.+During the whole phase, the mover is attending to internal sensations rather than trying to %produce actions in the space+Lnot necessarily building, but a continuous feeling.

13:20 . 13:30

Observer comments: Clear nugget of inspiration: fluid, quick string of motionLuncontrolled burst of energy

Movement description: Using the momentum and weight of pelvis and lower body structures to lead movement. Spine and neck are soft and malleable, simply following the heavier structures. This is followed by slow, easy movements on floor, allowing the ground to hold and support the weight of the body.

14:00 . 14:30

Observer comments: Un-held, falling motions creating rhythmLbits of reflective or listening suspensions & slow motions

Movement description: Swinging head and upper torso down while lower structures maintain the mover's stance. As the upper body swings back up, residual energy is used to initiate the next momentum/release (appearance of rhythmLmoments of listening suspension). Hands eventually come into contact with the ground, at which point the arms replace the legs as weight-bearing structures, allowing lower body to freely release and produce momentum. A moment of full hand-stand appears, at which point the legs swing upwards into a suspended upside-down position. Back to standing, sudden direct movement with arm, leading the torso (then whole body) to twist down into the floor. Momentum is contained within the core of the body, leading to small squirming movements across the floor, finishing in sitting stillness. Overall, each surge of momentum is separated and isolated from each other with moments of slow, sustained motion wherein listening occurs.

15:00 . 16:00:

Observer comments: Honest, truthful, and emotionally resonantLbreathing as support for mental

& physical release presence of momentum & dynamic movement (travelling, falling, rhythm)

Movement description: After about 30 seconds of stillness and minimum movement lying face up, at 15:30, subtle motions emerge in the core, expands in energy and space, and takes the mover from laying to sitting, then standing in a short, fluid sequence. The energy moves into arms and hands, lifting the pelvis and legs by pushing the floor away. Chunks of dynamic movement with shifts in direction and level appear, all initiated from an energy in the core, extending to limbs, then brought back into the core as momentum. Later, energy starts to travel back and forth via the spine, causing the mover to travel smoothly (like a fluid) across the floor. Finally, the energy heightens, the speed quickens, and limbs become released, as the mover enters quick twists and small circular jumps travelling across the floor. Throughout the segment, the core is playing a significant role in generating and expanding movement and momentum.

Phase 7. (Stage in cycle: Riding)

Mover comments: New movement is initiated as a result of the honest response towards getting stuck. As the mover follows the movement, she is caught by a surprise, which then gives rise to new movement qualities. Mover enters a meditative state as things start to happen sequentially without effort, giving the feeling that the mind is the passenger of the body.

18:10 . 19:00

Observer comments: Burst of movement: dropping limbs & body thumping & swinging = messy, un-shaped, heavy (weighted) no thinking, no care (about aesthetics) = mind-body is released and free just going with it.

Movement description: Releasing/dropping limbs onto the floor in lying position, meanwhile generating momentum by rocking whole body side-to-side. Comes up to sitting, then standing, through the momentum of the rocking motions. At the end of each rock, the mover pushes against the ground with different body parts. Suspends arms in vertical upwards position, then releases it to a large swing which takes the torso along. Repeats leg-dropping motion, which leads the mover effortlessly into the ground (like a hollow box being crushed flat). Tipping motions appear: using the pushing force to get off of the ground, then suspending that position until the weight tips her over. Repetitive arm-dropping motions while walking, leading into large arm swings which take the mover to the ground in a gliding motion. Finishes with a few direction changes on the ground in a messy, released manner. Free-flow motions such as swinging, tipping, and dropping stand out within the whole segment, evoking a sense of release.

Mover 2

Phase 2. (Stage in cycle: Entering)

Mover comments: Stops thinking about what she needs to do and starts to accept the fact that she is being watched: %to does not matter+ %to am not being judged+ %to there is no goal.+ Movements just start to happen as the mover enters an attitude of %to acceptance.+

3:00 . 4:30

Observer comments: Curiosity increases . exploring and playing with weight, balance, and momentum = decrease in self-analysisL comes out of floor, feet planted = start of something new

Movement description: At 3:30, the mover is testing balance by rocking repetitively in a stiff sitting position, continuing until the feet become planted on the ground. The rocking eventually transfers into a swinging of the arms, knees, and pelvis, as the momentum gradually brings the mover to a standing position.

4:30 . 5:00

Observer comments: Movements sequentially leading into another (coming out of itselfL no stopping), building repetition and momentumL lessening of awareness, no effort, no waiting, no thinking

Movement description: The swinging arm motions eventually become extended into a circular pathway, which, by contrast to the movement up to this point (i.e. rocking, swinging), has no turn-back points, and is continuous. At the end of the segment, the whole body is led by the circular pathways of the arm, smoothly changing directions (swivels) and levels (swinging torso).

Phase 3. (Stage in cycle: Entering)

Mover comments: Once the mover finds an idea to work with, she is able to maintain a stable focus. Movements happen at a stable pace, as the mover allows it to continue and connect to the next. Eventually, movements start to flow, connect, and fall into place effortlessly.

6:30 . 7:30

Observer comments: Increased concentration & focus, back into own sense of awarenessL connected to & responding to inner impetus, causing heavy, weighted movements to flow out of the body through pelvic initiations

Movement description: Drawing circular patterns in the horizontal plane with pelvis, first starting slow, then expanding in space, causing the whole body to follow. Stepping and shifting weight, gradually bringing about a weight-shift theme (first hopping from side to side,

then bouncing in place). Eventually reaches the floor with a lunge and sinking motion. The mover seems attentive and responsive to inner impetus and the pathway of kinetic energy throughout the segment.

8:00 . 9:00

Observer comments: Releasing/released head-tilts + breathing + building speed & momentum initiates uncontrolled movementLlosing oneself in movement

Movement description: Leading movements with the head, shoulder, ribs, then pelvis (respectively) in a relatively controlled manner (standing, taking steps occasionally), while testing the respective body parts weight.

Phase 4. (Stage in the cycle: Ebbing)

Mover comments: Becomes stuck and senses that it is a %inish+to what she has been doing.

This seems like the right moment to go to the floor, take some %hinking time,+ and %connect+with (or %reset+) herself.

9:10 . 9:30

Observer comments: A moment of %an done,+ then finishing on the floorLwhile on the floor, mover is searching rather than allowing movement to take over

Movement description: Resting, laying on the floor, face up.

Phase 5. (Stage in cycle: Riding)

Mover comments: The %esetting+ moment allowed a new score (imagery: painting sentences with body parts) to appear, which takes the mover off of the floor, reestablishes focus, and initiates movement. During the segment, movement feels continuous and building, and words for the sentences (i.e. imagery) spontaneously come to mind.

11:00 . 11:55

Observer comments: High-momentum, high-speed movements using the whole body, like one whole, connected organism (soft, grounded, free, and relaxed body)Lhighly engaged, interested, and enjoying (eyes are following moving body parts)L%pregnant pauses+as well as free-flow releasing motions appearLmovements are not predetermined, and seem to be happening effortlessly (the %body%is taking over)Lthe %analytical%mind seems to be switched off

Movement description: The arms lead the whole body through smooth and dynamic jumps, weight shifts, and direction/level changes, all sequential and appearing as consequences of each preceding motion. Energetically charged pauses in between detailed, gestural movements (e.g. elbows in particular angles, hands making clear,

circular pathways in the air), reminiscent of movement sequences in martial arts. The whole body is resonating with, supporting, and following the gestures made in the extremities. An arm initiates even larger, more dynamic movements, which leads into a suspended, off-balance position: head/neck released and tilted back, one foot off of the ground and extended frontwards. The body is released and seems to indulge in the moment of suspension. Throughout the segment, the ends of movements are all smooth but firm, signifying that the weight of the body is handled with efficiency.

Phase 7. (Stage in cycle: Ebbing)

Mover comments: Feeling self-conscious (awareness of being watched) and judgmental towards own performance. Mover tries to ignore and overpower her thoughts by incorporating external stimuli into the score (attention to observers' actions), but this causes an internal conflict wherein the stimuli is both a distraction and inspiration. Eventually, the mover naturally (unintentionally) makes eye-contact with an observer. This further distracts the mover, evoking a new thread of self-questioning and self-consciousness, which includes thoughts such as "is it okay to just look at one person?" "will the others be offended?" The mover is also remembering past experiences of watching a performer make eye contact with the audience, which she remembers to have made quite a strong impact on her as an audience member. She goes to the floor in order to think, reset, and quiet down her thoughts.

14:10 . 15:00

Observer comments: Mover has lost her train of thought OR reached the end of her thought OR she is in need of a break. Mind-body-free-flow is lost. Aware, thinking, not letting go. Frequent pauses in movement.

Movement description: Movement has slowed down (energy level dies down). The mover is working with a particular theme involving the arms linking to each other (making a loop). The rest of her body closely mimics that quality, dynamic, and direction. Arms eventually disconnect, leading into the next theme involving hand gestures of sliding/gliding over a (real or imaginary) surface, as if to wipe something. There are more frequent moments of pausing, and movement becomes more minimalistic towards the end of the segment, in that limb gestures become disconnected from whole body movements (e.g. hand makes wiping motion while rest of body simply follows that direction in a pedestrian walk).

15:00 . 15:20

Observer comments: Comes to a full stop on the floor = resting, reconnecting, thinking about what to do next. The body is turned off.

Movement description: Previous theme comes to an end in a face-down, lying position with one arm stretched forward. The mover turns over to face up and lies in stillness, then eventually rests both hands on abdomen area and clasps them together.

Phase 8. (Stage in cycle: Opening)

Mover comments: Movements become less %stuck+once the mover is off of the floor, and once movements become quicker, they block (disallow) self-reflective thoughts. The mover is simply allowing movements to happen, and thoughts are moving away from recent happenings.

15:55 . 16:30

Observer comments: High speed & momentum (hits a stride in movement)L fluidity and smoothness in movement (e.g. organically achieves standing position without effort, through swinging arms)Lshowing clarity in movement sequencing

Movement description: The mover gains momentum through swinging limbs in place, eventually travelling across the floor. Free-flow arm swings lead the whole body, smoothly transitioning between different directions, levels, and dynamic qualities. Soft, responsive joints and spine.

16:30 . 17:10

Observer comments: Sustained balance and clarity between mind & bodyL high speed & momentum = at one with the impetus within the body (naturally/easily flowing/swinging into positions)L moving without calculation = surrendering to movement, letting the movements %ake her-Lvariations in movement ideas & levels

Movement description: The mover begins with large open stance, then talks an easy walk across the floor (towards back corner of room). Soft arm movements appear close to the body and eventually turns into thrusting. Legs echo arm motions and bring about small, released jumps and limbs swings. Momentum is briefly contained within the torso, soon surfacing as another, larger and more dynamic swinging theme led by the arm. Pelvis swings appear alongside swift swivels of the whole body, eventually taking the mover into the floor (face up, lying position). Movements are quick and dynamic, all seemingly following a single thread of momentum.

17:10 . 18:20

Observer comments: State of togetherness / fascination and openness towards floor

Movement description: The mover twists the torso, arm muscles supporting slow, careful rocking motions bringing her up to sitting, then back to lying. Steadily controlled rolling (in and out of floor) motions appear, smoothly connecting with the next. Each movement

is initiated gradually by applying force to (and receiving force from) the floor with different body parts. The mover is easily, yet fluently following through on the direction of force. Movements are slow overall but executed with a particularity and care towards the level of tension within the muscles and joints.

Mover 3

Phase 3. (Stage in cycle: Entering)

Mover experience: Makes a conscious decision to face back, which allows the mover to release the stress of performing, being watched, and being formally studied (e.g. presence of technology). This allows the mover to get back to the %self+ as she continues moving, and into a space where she can accept and incorporate whatever happens in the environment. For instance, when the mover hears a phone ringing in the distance, the sound is accepted as a part of the experience (or just as a %happening+) rather than a distraction.

5:00 . 6:00

Observer comments: Turns away from observers = intentionally clearing mind, away from self-awarenessL physicalising a preparationL resettlingL recalibrating presenceL thinking through movementL continuous/consistent internal dialogL feeling of opening & separatingL sense of ripple in whole bodyL flow in movement

Movement description: The mover is standing facing back towards the observers (a physical representation of %releasing+), head slightly leaned forward, arms moving slowly within the area in front of the mover, as if to feel a wall or sift through something. One foot comes off of the ground as the torso makes sudden, small jerking motions. The mover then makes isolated motions in the head, torso, arms, and legs, simultaneously, all soft and clay-like in quality. Movements are generally controlled, making the motions appear to be a process of exploration and listening. The mover repeats a particular arm gesture: both hands brushing something away from her face (forehead), in a sideways motion. The mover shifts weight from side to side, then takes a few steps backwards (towards the observers) as the gesture is repeated. Extends both arms towards the ceiling, as knees bend to bring the mover into squatting position. Arms slowly descend, moving through the space in front of the mover. Simultaneously, the torso curves inward in response to the descending arms. The mover reaches a kneeling position with both arms floating at a distance from the torso, elbows pointed outwards. Movements are overall quiet, controlled, and slow, which gives a thoughtful and reflective impression.

Phase 4. (Stage in cycle: Opening – Riding)

Mover comments: The mover grabs her mouth by accident . this is an unexpected, unplanned,

spontaneous movement which provides inspiration. Shortly, the energy naturally leads the body to follow through on movements without the mover's control. The mover is able to recognise, appreciate and play with each event that arises, highly interested and invested in living in that moment. There are moments of an expansion of her craft. Later, there is a conscious decision to bring inside the head and groove to that internal music, which is a way of relaxing and letting it all loose. an activity that the mover normally does in private spaces.

8:00 . 8:50

Observer comments: Emergence of new interest, then maintained high interest (e.g. sensation of body parts) Lclear articulation of body Lfluid, mesmerizing movement Lquietly settling into each found position, each stillness charged with a deep engagement towards something (not landing, but not floating)

Movement description: The mover begins in neutral standing position, then one arm and one foot slowly begin to float upwards. The foot smoothly swings forward and retreats closer to the body for a split second, lingers, then expands (explodes) outwards along with an arm. Leg enters a grand rond de jambe en l'air, and arm provides dynamic balance as it draws a large circle in the opposite direction. Leg and upper torso bounce back up before touching the ground, taking the mover back to neutral stance like a rewinding video. The mover takes a step forward as one foot swings off of the ground and one hand touches the face. The other arm floats in the air while the head is tilted (released) backwards. The mover softly takes a step forward, as one hand pushes the head backwards and the other arm extends upwards in a reaching motion. The head, now pushed back, takes the upper torso in a backwards arch. The mover briefly recovers to upright position by reaching the arms upwards, then swings both arms towards the backspace, opening the chest and swinging the pelvis forward to send a ripple up the spine (whole body now leans back in a more intense arch), eventually releasing the head completely. Arms thrust forward to provide weight and momentum to recover from the arch, then forward and down into a squatting pose (arms still elevated at head-level). Continuing the energy of movement, one hand slashes back diagonally to swivel the mover into a standing position, which initiates a small twist in the torso and a half-promenade with one leg lifted and torso leaned away. The leg slowly lifts up further, finally reaching full extension as the torso releases and the standing leg bends softly. In one swift action, the leg comes down to the floor and takes the whole body to the ground. The mover is lying face-down on the floor, limbs bent and one foot slowly circulating just above the floor Llike an animal waiting to attack its prey. A slow, controlled twist in the torso takes the mover on her side → back, then with a thrusting, outwards kick, back on to her stomach, but this time, arms supporting upper body in an arched position. One

leg is brought closer to the body, folding itself into a crouching position, wherein the mover seems to briefly test her balance (on her toes) before coming up to standing in a swift, vertical motion. Overall there are intricate uses of suspension, tipping motions, and gravity-defying forces in the limbs. There were multiple positions and suspensions that require dynamic use of core. There were also seamless transitions between slow and quick movement. Joints appear loose and soft.

Phase 6. (Stage in cycle: Opening)

Mover comments: Letting thoughts, feelings, and actions happen/arise and pass, followed by a new inspiration, wherein the mover is drawn to the environment, such as the observers and the trees outside the window. The mover feels that she has naturally found it. From this point onwards, the mover feels that her feeling of presence has increased.

10:35 . 11:45

Observer comments: Slow progression (or expansion) in movement and engagement: open palm of hands = inviting something to emerge. Gathering and holding motions (pattern in movement) = an idea is transferring from limb to whole body, a clear attention-shift occurs, then a pre-event or foreshadowing emerges. Movement quality is animalistic: there is a sharpness and softness, and movements ripple through the body

Movement description: Soft, fluid hand motions: gathering the air in frontal space, legs also soft and bent, constantly moving and allowing the mover to travel towards open space in front. Walking continues as the mover's focus fixates on a particular space at the front of the room. One hand is reaching/wiping something in the air. The hand brings the mover's focus (facing) to the back and into a brief moment of slow motion, grounding the weight and containing (charging?) something within the body. A sudden frontwards kick leads into a smooth, fluid-like backwards release (clear ripple in spine) into an off-balance arch . suspended effortlessly . then a large, smooth lunge and slide into seated (kneeling) position. Hand, then leg glide on the floor, and takes the mover into standing, focus fixed on one hand. The mover walks towards the wall as if to place something in her hand onto the radiator, then the hand makes a U turn to change the mover's direction. The mover suddenly thumps both hands on the chest, which initiates a short sequence of swift motions involving one hand holding the face, and the other slapping the thigh. Without a stop, one leg swings outwards, taking the mover slightly off-balance for a moment, then swiveling her around slowly (hand still on face). The mover finishes in crouch position. Shifts in eye focus is prominent in this segment, possibly because the movements in between swift, dynamic ones are simplistic and allows the viewer to notice it more than other segments = clarity in eye focus gives an impression of clarity in attention and line of thinking.

Phase 8. (Stage in cycle: Riding)

Mover comments: The mover starts to sing, which causes a feeling that a %lam has been broken+La nugget of thought translates itself into movements via the body, and there is an outward release of that idea. This moment of release is followed by more freedom in movement.

13:50 . 14:10

Observer comments: Singing voice enters: voice is guiding actions (connection between movement & voice)L change in pace appears: happy, playful = creating emotional resonance

Movement description: Mover begins on all fours, then stands with upper body hanging down, arms dangling. The mover begins singing as arms start swinging and weight is shifted by softening knees. The mover begins to travel forward and back, swiveling the body and prancing with the momentum of arms (swinging) and the weight of the head. Joints are loosened and limbs are released. Movements are relatively quick, light and easy, like a rope dangling and threading through itself.

14:10 . 15:00

Observer comments: Rhythmic attentionL continuous movementL hypnotising/seducing movementsL flow is established . comfortably & effortlessly vulnerable in her own skin

Movement description: (Singing continues) rhythm becomes more defined. Overall quality is similar to previous segment, but each gesture (or string of movement) has more of a sense of itself. Weight and gravity (e.g. dropping, flopping, skipping, hopping) are more prominent. The mover slows down near the back wall and continues smaller (i.e. contained within kinesphere), more controlled movement, then finishes on the ground. The movements appear slippery.

Phase 10. (Stage in cycle: Riding)

Mover comments: The mover starts speaking and enters a stream of consciousness. There are no stops in the stream of consciousness, and there is a feeling of being %off the cuff.+ The possibilities of the body are opened up, and barriers are broken down: the mover finds herself balancing well, and movement feels %placed+(in the right place) effortlessly. The mover is not thinking, and the movements are just happening. In the end, the mover experiences an effortlessly genuine moment when her hand simply %lands+on the chest.

16:20 . 18:00

Observer comments: Speech enters, and sets the stage for the next movement journeyL

movement and speech are in flow with each other (stream of consciousness is influencing movement) L the mover is not questioning anything, and continues to be comfortably and effortlessly vulnerable (comfortable being watched), purely enjoying movement L there is strong attention and presence L movement is continuous

Movement description: The mover begins speaking in cross-legged sitting position, occasionally using hand gestures as supplementary expression. The mover lifts her pelvis and leg up towards the side while still facing front (speaking to the observers), shifts weight, then rests an arm on the knee. The mover swings one leg around, arms held out for balance, and eventually comes to standing in an open stance, arms extended out and above. The mover releases head backwards and naturally brings one leg up as the head recovers. The mover enters a promenade (similar to one that was seen previously), then the leg falls quickly, swiveling the mover into neutral standing. Slow movements appear in one arm, knees soft, cradling the weight of the body in the pelvis, legs strong and supportive, yet fluid. The mover is shifting weight and changing direction, ~~resting~~ resting weight and balance in each found position. The mover eventually starts travelling in the same movement quality, taking large steps to find the next balancing position. The mover comes off balance, twists legs, then swivels down into floor. The mover is speaking towards the observers while lying on side, one leg held up and one hand on chest. The mover slides/rolls on her chest and stomach to come into a different position facing front: arching on floor, front thighs touching the ground, upper body held up with arms, knees bent, and feet in the air. The mover uses hands to crawl forward in the same pose, towards the observers. The mover stops speaking, and carefully brings pelvis back towards the feet to come into a child-pose like position. Movements are steady and controlled, but varied, and evenly paced.

Appendix 14 – Data

Please download the Excel file from the following link to see the data from Study 1 and 2:

<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/privateurl.xhtml?token=f12ff63b-c0f2-41ca-843d-c612da236bbf>

Included in the file are:

Sheet 1: Raw survey data

Sheet 2: Processed survey data

Sheet 3: Survey activity list

Sheet 4: Trial 1 line graph

Sheet 5: Trial 1 comments

Sheet 6: Trial 2 line graph

Sheet 7: Trial 2 comments

Sheet 8: Trial 3 line graph

Sheet 9: Trial 3 comments

Sheet 10: Agreement analysis

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