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Touching Work:
A Narratively-Informed Sociological Phenomenology of Holistic Massage

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Contents

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Declaration

I confirm that this thesis, entitled 'Touching Work: a Narratively-Informed Sociology of Holistic Massage', is my own work, and has not been submitted in any previous form for a degree at another university or institution.

Signed

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Abstract

This thesis comprises an exploration of the practice of Holistic Massage, working across the sociological areas of complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), body work, emotional labour, sociological phenomenology and narrative inquiry. Holistic Massage is one of a plethora of practices encompassed by the field of CAM. While there has been steadily increasing sociological interest in CAM in recent years, much research has treated this diverse group as relatively homogeneous. This thesis looks at one practice in depth, in order to address issues specific to Holistic Massage – including what 'holism' adds up in to in practice, and the devaluation of knowledge based on touch(ing) – as well as those concerning CAM more broadly. Hence, whilst drawing on existing research on CAM, this research also addresses a lacuna within it.

This thesis employs the conceptual tool of 'touching work', which brings together the concepts of 'emotional labour' and 'body work' in a way that draws out relevant aspects of each around the fulcrum of touch, thus accounting for the latter in both its sensory and emotional meanings. In so doing, it also contributes to the recently burgeoning literature on the senses in sociology, and to an embodied sociology more generally. The thesis also draws on sociological phenomenology, in particular the notion of the intersubjective 'stock of knowledge', and the understanding of talk as constitutive of the everyday social world. The overall methodological approach taken brings together phenomenological theory with narrative inquiry, and specifically with the analysis of the form and content of talk.

The analysis presented is based around data from loosely-structured interviews with ten women who do Holistic Massage. The interviews were analysed in terms of their overall shape and distinctive features (Chapter Three) and, in subsequent chapters, with respect to both what was said and how it was said. This analysis examines the constitution of a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge (Chapter Four) and how the practice is bounded (Chapter Five), and concludes in Chapter Six by taking a step back from the detail of the data to look at what can be known from it about Holistic Massage and touching work

Piecing together the constitution by practitioners of a stock of professional Holistic Massage knowledge makes a significant contribution to the sociology of CAM. Also, by uniting phenomenological sociology and narrative inquiry, it provides a novel perspective on a form of work which is part of a small but significant contemporary occupational field in the UK. In particular, it draws out the multiple aspects of touch which can in fact be known and articulated through talk and challenges ideas about the supposedly ineffable character of touch. In this regard, it points to similarities between how practitioners talk about this and the Foucauldian challenge to the 'repressive hypothesis', which sees people as in fact talking readily and in detail about matters where they claim silence prevails.

We write – think and feel – (with) our entire bodies rather than only (with) our minds or hearts. It is a perversion to consider thought the product of one specialized organ, the brain, and feeling, that of the heart.

Trinh Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*

Be it grand or slender, burrowing, blasting or refusing to sanctify; whether it laughs out loud or is a cry without an alphabet, the choice word or the chosen silence, […] language surges toward knowledge, not its destruction.

Toni Morrison, *The Bird in Our Hand: Is It Living or Dead?*

Introduction

This thesis provides a sociological exploration of the practice of Holistic Massage, working across the areas of complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), embodied sociology, body work, emotional labour, sociological phenomenology and narrative inquiry. It is based on interviews conducted in early 2009 with ten practitioners of Holistic Massage working in a Scottish city. It offers a 'thesis', in the narrow sense, by drawing out the fact that touch – while commonly characterised as 'untalkable' or 'ineffable' – is in fact talked about at length, in an assortment of ways.

The CAM field is broad ranging and there are a number of often overlapping perspectives from which it can be understood.[1] I situate Holistic Massage primarily as a healthcare practice since this is how it was presented to me by the practitioners whom I interviewed. However, it is also understood in the thesis from a sensory perspective, and a concern with touch is key throughout my analysis. In this I employ the conceptual tool of 'touching work', which brings together the established concepts of 'emotional labour' and 'body work' in a way that draws out relevant aspects of each around the fulcrum of touch, thus accounting for the latter in both its sensory and emotional meanings.

The numerous large-scale shifts in ideas and perceptions which have led to a greater acceptance of CAM in the UK in the last forty years have produced a context in which it is now possible for Holistic Massage practitioners to talk of themselves as legitimate healthcare professionals. However, this is still a relatively new and tentative development, and their status is by no means stable.[2] Indeed, much of the recognition received by the

[1] Amongst these are the 'medical', 'recreational', spiritual', 'consumerist', 'pedagogical' or 'sensual' (Barcan 2010).

[2] There have been many fluctuations in attitude and policy regarding CAM in general in the time I have been researching it, including the introduction in the UK in 2011 of a new EU law on the prescription of herbal medicines, and moves toward statutory regulation for some practices (Medical Herbalism) and decisions against it for others (Acupuncture). Changes have also occurred in the organisations which represent CAM. For example, the high profile lobbying group the Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health was disbanded in 2010 following a fraud scandal involving its financial director. A new and somewhat condemnatory Science and Technology Committee report on the efficacy of Homeopathy (House of Commons 2010), a (largely dismissive) response from the present coalition government (Department of Health 2010) and the subsequent governmental silence on the subject have proven interesting developments in the CAM field, and may suggest waning momentum, at least in relation to government interest. However, as Saks (2011) has noted, the last period of Conservative rule in the UK saw a proliferation of CAM practices and use. These shifts are indicative of the overall instability of CAM in the UK, and impact of the contemporary political context will thus be interesting to follow in this respect.

more mainstreamed practice of, say, Osteopathy (or even Physiotherapy, given its roots in massage practice),[3] continues to elude massage. Nonetheless, the participants in my research have trained at least to diploma level and embody up to twenty years of 'hands on' experience. They can, I argue, be seen to constitute a 'professional' group, in so far as they are a group which is defined, not by membership of one common professional organisation, nor by precisely the same training, but by a shared stock of practitioner knowledge, knowledge which is embodied, sometimes tacit and difficult to express, and other times more readily spoken. Phenomenological sociology and narrative inquiry are employed as a methodological framework through which the form and content of these practitioners' talk – which is taken as constitutive of their everyday social world – can be explored in depth. A dual aim of this introduction is not only to summarise what is to come, however, but also to locate myself in the research field. This I now do, before presenting a brief outline of the structure of the thesis.

Locating myself in the research field

The ways in which I came to Holistic Massage being the focus for this thesis are multiple, involving intertwining academic and personal interests, and it is possible for me to locate my 'natural standpoint' (to borrow Schutz's term) toward the research in a number of ways. Some of the factors shaping this standpoint are that I am a female, able-bodied, middle class, heterosexual, white, Scottish sociologist. I am also a CAM user and, over the last decade or so, I have engaged with a range of practices including Osteopathy, Acupuncture, Cranio-Sacral Therapy, Herbalism Nutritional Therapy, Chinese Medicine and Homeopathy. These factors have different implications for the way in which I approach the subject matter: my gender and class, for example, position me as a 'typical' CAM user (Bishop and Lewith 2008). Moreover, given that every individual's embodiment shapes how they experience the social world – sociological researchers being no different – they also have implications for my orientation to doing research overall. Hence it is helpful here to account for some of my bodily experiences of massage.

I have at various times engaged in introductory training in Thai Massage, Tibetan Head Massage and, more recently, Holistic Massage.[4] I thus have (to an admittedly limited

[3] See Chapter One on the Society of Trained Masseuses.

[4] A course in Thai Massage was my first engagement with doing massage, and was undertaken in Thailand after I had been the recipient of a number of different styles of massage in South East Asia

extent) something of an 'insider' perspective on doing massage. I have also had a number of different bodily experiences of massage treatment including Sports, Swedish, Detoxifying, Relaxation, Hot Stone, Aromatherapy, Indian Head, Shiatsu, Manual Lymphatic Drainage, and Deep Tissue Massage. These have taken place in a variety of locations including a 'luxury' spa, CAM centres, a hotel room, a Physiotherapy clinic, a beauty salon, a town square, a beach, a Buddhist temple, and in what (I began to suspect only during the treatment) was most likely a venue for sex work. These massages took place with my body variously clothed, partially undressed or naked and draped with sheets or towels, and ranged from light stroking and gentle manipulation, to being walked on, and to the application of pressure so excruciating that it left me tender for a week.

The variety of ways in which I have engaged with massage sparked my sociological imagination and raised a plethora of questions. Why was massage seemingly practiced so publicly in some countries (such as Thailand and Vietnam) and yet so privately in the UK? Was this in/visibility simply down to who it is that massage workers aim to attract, who the workers are, the status of the work, or something else altogether? Why did massage in the UK often involve the massage worker standing at a (safe) distance from me on a table, while other kinds which I had experienced outwith the UK involved the massage worker entwining themselves much more intimately (to my 'westernised' mind) with my body, whether on a table or a mat on the floor? And why did I, having undertaken a course in Thai Massage (which was of the closely entwining sort of practice), and having been happy to practice on my teacher and on my partner, feel shy when faced with giving such a treatment to friends and family? What did this tell me about understandings of touch and the contexts of its use? What of these issues were peculiar to massage and what was common to other bodily practices and kinds of work which involves one person touching another? And what issues of broader sociological significance might this point to?

Parallel to this developing interest, I embarked on an adult learning course which offered an overview of 'holistic healthcare' and, around the same time, I also began working in a

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and elsewhere. The fact that such training is readily available and undertaken by western tourists is in itself interesting and indicative of, amongst other things, a burgeoning interest in such practices. The Tibetan Head Massage formed part of my exploration of the background of massage practice/study, and the 'introductory weekend' in Holistic Massage was undertaken in Scotland as part of my fieldwork for this thesis, in order to scope how I might pursue the research via experiential methods (my reasons for deciding against this are discussed in Chapter Two).

CAM centre and natural health retailer. Working as a shop assistant and receptionist in this centre afforded me a degree of involvement in the field and allowed me to observe massage workers and other practitioners in their day to day interactions with clients and co-workers.[5] I was thus immersed in this CAM world for some time before beginning my research: dealing with the needs of practitioners and their clients, attending training sessions, learning about the (upwards of thirty) practices on offer and socialising with practitioners. This not only afforded me valuable background knowledge of the field, but also eventually gave me a 'way in' to researching it through the contacts I had established. The Masters dissertation which was the forerunner of this thesis was based on interviews with some of these people. Others kindly volunteered for pilot interviews for my PhD research, as well as suggesting colleagues who might offer interesting insights and opinions.

Having experienced this immersion prior to beginning my PhD, I initially intended to look at a range of CAM therapies in order to compare the ways in which practitioners talk about the bodies/people they work with, and to explore commonalities and differences between, for example, more or less mechanistic or holistic, esoteric or mainstream practices. Almost immediately I had to rethink this breadth of scope as I began to comprehend the extent of the resources which would be required to enable any meaningful comparison between types of practice. Moreover, I began to recognise as a limitation of the existing sociological literature on CAM the tendency to treat what is an extremely (theoretically, philosophically, culturally, historically) diverse group as a homogeneous unit. In the interests of averting the confusions and muddiness such an approach creates, I decided to look at one practice in depth. In doing so, whilst drawing on existing research on CAM, I would therefore also be able to address a lacuna within it.

As a result of the interest I have outlined I chose to narrow my focus to massage. In previous research (Purcell 2007, 2009) I had looked at the experience of male massage practitioners using a loosely-structured 'narrative' approach. This had highlighted a number of key issues which would simply not have emerged in a more tightly researcher-controlled context, including the various sensory aspects involved, and which

[5] Fortunately, it also allowed me to further my experience of the range of massage practices available, since practitioners were encouraged to offer free 'taster sessions' to enable receptionists to better understand (and thus sell) their skills.

have become a more explicit focus in this thesis. While the men interviewed each practiced different types of massage – which used different ways of touching the body and were based on diverse understandings of bodies, health and illness – there remained enough commonalties to allow for adequate comparisons in that case. However, as I began the pilot interviews specific to my PhD interests – this was to test the interview guide devised for this study and included in Appendix Two – a question repeatedly posed by the participants was 'which therapy are you asking about?'. Many CAM practitioners are trained in more than one kind of massage, offering Holistic alongside, for example, Indian Head, Aromatherapy or Remedial Massage.[6] Hence they were able to speak from a number of positions, and often tended to talk about their other practices as well. In order to reconcile my commitment to allowing the participant to guide the interviews and raise issues they deemed important (as explained in Chapter Two) with my aim of producing data with some overarching cohesiveness, it became apparent that I needed to narrow my focus further still. I therefore chose to look at the particular kind of massage which had most intrigued me by this stage, which was Holistic Massage.

Why Holistic Massage? This particular practice is sociologically interesting as it sits across the fuzzy boundary of 'science' and 'non-science'. Physical manipulation is to some extent a 'proven' technique for soft tissue problems. However, the holistic aspect of this practice simultaneously aligns it with more esoteric presences in the CAM field. Hence, aspects of how practitioners talk about doing Holistic Massage, and how it interfaces with other practices, are telling of the wider context in which these practices take place. In theory, Holistic Massage takes into account a whole being, and encourages the client to experience fully what happens to them in the course of a treatment.[7] This relates not only to the practitioner's physical touch, but also to broader physical and emotional effects/affect. The focus on the whole person is portrayed by practitioners and in practice-specific literature as being more of a feature than in practices such as Osteopathy or Chiropractic (although practitioners of these may consider themselves as working holistically nonetheless). Focusing on a body practice which is specifically, in its name, 'holistic' has opened up a space in which to explore the ways in which touching and feeling are presented. The collapsing of touching and feeling is a common theme in the literature on touch (see

[6] In some cases they also practiced other CAMs including Reiki, Herbalism and Kinesiology.
[7] An 'official' description of Holistic Massage from its main accrediting body is given at the beginning of Chapter Two. What this translates to in practice is explored at different points in Chapters Three to Six.

Chapter One) and concentrating on Holistic Massage offers an opportunity to examine the interrelationship in situ. Furthermore, 'holistic' has been something of a buzzword in both CAM and conventional healthcare over the last two to three decades. But, with the exception of Coward (1989), how holism is understood and accomplished has not been addressed. A practice which is nominally holistic provides a context in which it would be possible and interesting to explore how holism is 'done'. With these issues in mind this thesis has been structured as follows.

Outline of the thesis

Chapter One begins with an overview of the relevant literature on CAM, embodiment and the senses, in order to situate my research in its sociological field and to foreground a concern with the sensory and with contributing to an embodied sociology. A range of literature on touch is unpacked in order to provide a background to a subject matter which is presented as 'ineffable'. The chapter then goes on to address emotional labour and body work. In exploring these, the conceptual framework of the thesis is further established, and the key concept of 'touching work' is introduced. Chapter Two builds on the first chapter and expands my methodological framework. This is conceived of broadly as a narrative inquiry underpinned by sociological-phenomenological theory. In order to elucidate how this methodology was constructed, the chapter pays particular attention to the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz and the narrative scholarship of Catherine Kohler Riessman, alongside other relevant contributions to the narrative field. In so doing, I address the question of how the sensory might best be investigated, and the utility of talk in this respect.

Three data-oriented chapters follow. Chapter Three examines the 'how' of my data, the overall form of the nine interviews I carried out with ten Holistic Massage practitioners. It examines what they actually choose to articulate when asked to talk about their work. It also begins to draw out the ways in which a narrative inquiry can be used to identify links between the individual and the societal, with reference to phenomenological concepts of 'typification' and the 'stock of knowledge'. The analysis in Chapter Four moves on to look in closer detail at the ways in which a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge is constituted through practitioners' talk. Four embodied aspects of this knowledge – touching, tailoring, awareness and presence – are critically examined, as is the role of 'holism' in informing these. This is followed by discussion of the residual

category of the ineffable, the ‘something more’ which was commonly evoked in the interviews. Chapter Five explores the bounding of Holistic Massage, first in the sense of the boundary work done by practitioners when they talk about their work, and second in relation to the un/boundedness of the practice and its nebulous stock of knowledge. This is done with reference to different forms of massage and other types of touching work including sex work.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, takes a step back from the close examination of the interview data to look at the broader implications of what has been said about Holistic Massage. It revisits the concept of touching work, and the phenomenological-sociological and narrative inquiry perspectives which have underpinned the preceding analysis. It returns to the questions about massage and touch posed earlier in this introduction, and addresses the impact of gender on the analysis presented. It also takes the analysis forward in terms of what can be known from a narratively-informed sociological phenomenology of touching work, and presents my overall thesis.

Chapter One
Bringing Sociology to its Senses: A Review of the Literature

Introduction

Research on Holistic Massage has the potential to offer insights into a range of issues of sociological significance. Holistic Massage crosscuts the sociological fields of complementary and alternatives medicines, the body and the senses, and body work and emotional labour. This chapter examines literature from each of these three key areas in order to clearly position the empirical exploration presented in this thesis, and to identify the central arguments with which it might engage. An initial exploration of the sociological constitution of the field of complementary and alternative medicines leads on to a consideration of a number of key aspects of body-oriented and embodied sociology. The chapter then focuses on touch, which has to date been something of an 'absent presence' in sociology,[8] and this section is complemented by a brief detour into the social significance of skin. The concepts of body work and emotional labour are then addressed in order to introduce the analytical tool of touching work which is drawn on in later chapters.

Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAM)

The sociology of bodies is the broad field in which this research is situated and significant aspects of this field are addressed below, with particular attention to sensory concerns. However, a more specific area of relevance that I would first like to examine is the emerging sociology of complementary and alterative medicines (hereafter CAM). One of several 'striking' shifts in the field of healthcare in the UK in the last fifty to sixty years has been 'the re-emergence of alternative and complementary healing modalities' (Stacey 2002:270).[9] While accurate statistics are notoriously difficult to come by, CAM has seen significant growth, and it is thought that somewhere between one third and half the UK population is likely to use at least one type of CAM at some point in their life (Bishop and Lewith 2010; Fadlon 2005).[10] Moreover, with at least forty thousand practitioners (Marks

[8] To borrow the phrase Shilling has applied to the body in sociology.
[9] Another being 'third party involvement in formerly intimate domestic matters' (Stacey 2002:270), a shift which is addressed toward the end of this chapter and later in my analysis.
[10] Bishop and Lewith refer to England-specific statistics (see also Thomas et al 2001), and Fadlon to 'industrialised countries' on the whole.

2010),[11] CAM has become a small-but-significant occupational group in the UK. Despite this prevalence in everyday life, and aside from a flurry of interest in the 1990s, relatively little specifically sociological attention has been paid to the range of health practices and associated body ways which comprise this field (Tovey at al 2004b), with even less focusing on massage. This section sketches out some aspects of the sociology of CAM so that this thesis can be located within it, and in order to identify gaps in the literature which my research goes some way to filling. Following a brief discussion of the problem of terminology associated with this diverse field, it looks at the main themes extant in the literature on CAM, before moving on to consider the concept of 'holism', and closing with an exploration of the literature specific to massage.

Talking CAM

I have chosen to use 'CAM' over other possible labels for this field of practices. While the debate on what does and does not constitute 'CAM' is not the key concern of this thesis, the need to clarify terminology is acute. A range of umbrella terms have been applied to those practices which lie outwith conventional mainstream 'western' healthcare, including 'folk', 'traditional', or 'natural' medicine, and each term in its own way emphasises or constructs certain significant aspects of these practices. However, these labels are not unproblematic, not least because they imply an unquestioned continuity from a time before the normalisation of conventional medicine and that these practices are in some way less risky or invasive, when neither is a given. Aspects of the practices in these groups – massage or herbalism for example – do indeed pre-date 'modern' medicine in the west. However, as conventional medicine came to prominence, practitioners of these were marginalised, deemed 'quacks', or even persecuted as 'witches' (Ehrenreich and English [1973] 2010; Maple 1992; Oakley 1992, Porter 1989, 1996). Other medical systems such as Ayurveda or Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)[12] have extensive histories extending back to pre-modern times, but are classed as CAM in the west due to their non-western origins.[13]

[11] A figure which Marks cites as having increased from 13,500 in 1981.

[12] TCM is an interesting case here in that while the use of acupuncture and medicinal herbs can be traced back to at least two thousand years (see the Huangdi Neijing, trans. Veitch 2002), 'TCM' as it exists today was largely systematised and re-packaged into its contemporary shape by Mao after the founding of the PRC. A similar, politically motivated 'revival' has taken place in recent years in Vietnam (Wahlberg 2006).

[13] Due to the hegemony of medicine such systems have often been marginalised in their countries of origin – as in India, where they are largely confined to the private sphere of the home (Broom et al

The majority of debate on nomenclature has focused on the relative merits of the labels 'complementary' and 'alternative'. For example, in an early contribution to CAM sociology, Coward (1989) favours 'alternative' to represent practices, the acceptance of which she sees as indicative of 'profound changes in attitudes towards health and the body' (Coward 1989:4); and which has seen individuals take increased personal responsibility over the active seeking of health and wellbeing, including exploring non-mainstream approaches (see also Hughes 2004 for a more recent discussion of individual responsibility in this respect). 'Alternative' has also been advocated as highlighting the 'political marginality' of practices which sit outside the mainstream (Saks 1992, 2002); and on the grounds that:

> '…there are fundamental and often irreconcilable differences between most alternative therapies and conventional medicine with regards to such central conceptions as disease, symptoms and treatment.' (Siahpush 2000:173)

Hence, 'alternative' is taken as reflecting a political and ontological divide between the mainstream and non-mainstream. While deep-seated differences do exist between medicine and the various CAMs, approaching the latter as 'alternative' nevertheless runs the risk of creating a false dichotomy in that certain features of one side – for example a holistic approach to patients/clients – may in some cases also be applied to the other (Harris and Rees 2000). It implies a rigid boundary and that CAM therapies present a 'whole system' alternative to conventional medicine, which is the case in only a handful of practices (such as Homeopathy) and which is a significant marker of the diversity within this tentative grouping (Broom and Tovey 2007b).

Where 'alternative' implies a substitute for or total divergence from conventional medicine, the label of 'complementary' suggests a more collaborative attitude, although a clearly hierarchical one. In another milestone in the sociology of CAM, Sharma (1992) argues for the use of 'complementary' in order to detach these practices from an association with 'alternative lifestyles' rooted in the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s. Sharma also suggests the 'complementary' label comes closer to the views of practitioners and users (Sharma 1992:6). Having come to the fore in the course of the commodification of health and healthcare of the 1980s, 'complementary' has been

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2009) – although in some cases the two work in an integrated fashion, as is largely the case in China (Fulder [1988]1996).

characterised as a deliberate re-labelling to facilitate CAM practitioners working alongside doctors, and to prevent the latter from losing patients (Easthope 2003). This term is no less problematic than 'alternative', however, since it risks 'obscuring' the power imbalance and playing down the hierarchicalisation of practices by implying a more even-handed collaboration than is the case on the ground (Easthope 2003).

A preference has emerged recently for the term 'integrative medicine' or 'integrative healthcare (IHC)', particularly amongst those researching both mainstream and non-mainstream healthcare (Adams at al 2009; Coulter 2004; Lewith et al 1996, 2006; Tovey et al 2007, Wisenski and Anderson 2009). While this term may suggest greater co-operation between practitioners and ideologies more usually in opposition,[14] such co-operation should not be over-stated (Sharma 2002). The integration debate is highly complex, given that it involves questions not only of the meeting of practices which have long been characterised as 'mutually indigestible' (Fulder [1988]1996), but also of the state provision of healthcare and debates over which practices it is appropriate to include therein. In the UK and elsewhere, the implication of biomedical gate-keeping means the reality of provision by the state may be closer to co-opting (Adams et al 2009; Willis and White 2004) or cultural assimilation than integration, with conventional medicine maintaining a clear hegemony.[15]

The 'integrative' perspective is useful in pointing to the 'pluralism' now extant in healthcare (Broom et al 2009; Broom and Tovey 2007a, 2008; Cant and Sharma 1999) – primarily in certain spheres such as cancer care and chronic pain – and helps to account for the pragmatic choices made by users who move between CAM and conventional treatments. However, it begs a significant question:

> 'are complementary medicines simply being absorbed into biomedicine in some way – or are biomedicine and other modes coming together to make a

[14] Lewith et al, for example, see the term 'CAM' as 'representative of early development in this field', whereas 'integrative medicine or integrated health care […] suggest a stronger focus on integrating these different philosophies' (Lewith et al 2006:283).

[15] Some commentators (such as Easthope 2003) argue that doctors have largely lost their role as gatekeepers to treatment since individuals now have the option to seek other options directly, given that they can afford to pay for them. To the question of 'whether the growing acceptance of CAM is mainstreaming, co-opting or neutralising' (Turner 2004:xiii) other commenttaors point clearly to co-opting, rather than 'an amalgamation of philosophies or knowledges' (Collyer 2004:94). While this may be so from biomedical perspectives, I argue later in this thesis that there is a distinctive 'amalgamation of knowledges in Holistic Massage.

> new kind of health care system? Could "integrated medicine" constitute a radically new kind of medicine, or is it just a benign buzzword, another term for the co-option of complementary forms by the biomedical establishment?' (Sharma 2002:212)

The answer thus far seems to be the latter.[16] 'Integrated' is ultimately set aside here since it does not specify practices which currently operate outwith mainstream medicine in the UK. A key issue in understanding CAMs is the question of competing knowledge forms and, while this is also crucial to understanding integration, the 'integrated' label risks not only downplaying significant conflicts, but also taking a biomedical perspective as the framework into which marginalised practices must fit.

I have instead opted to use the acronym 'CAM' in the recognition that these practices are usually politically marginal, but are not exclusively tied to 'alternative' lifestyles (as I argue later in the thesis), and that while they are involved in a hierarchical relationship to biomedicine, this is not their sole or primary defining characteristic.[17] This is also the most commonly used term in the sociological and practice-oriented literature on the field (see Doel and Segrott 2003; House of Lords 2000; Kelner et al 2000; Lee-Treweek et al 2005; Ong and Banks 2003; Spencer and Jacobs 1999; Tovey et al 2004; Welsh et al 2004). This umbrella term should not be read as implying that the practices which fall under it can be spoken of as a unified whole, or that they should be considered only as they relate to biomedicine. 'CAM' is used here with the acknowledgement that it is '…a chaotic conception without taxonomic closure' (Doel and Segrott 2003:131), and so does not denote a fixed and bounded group of practices, but one which is 'temporally and spatially variable' (Tovey at al 2004b: 7). Furthermore, 'CAM' is applied in the view that there needs to be a shift away from treating the field as a homogeneous unit, towards investigating individual practices (Astin 2000). While CAM is an unbounded category, the term nonetheless allows for ease of reference and is effective in socially locating an individual practice such as Holistic Massage in and of itself, and in the broader field of practices which lie outwith the healthcare mainstream.[18]

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[16] Although Sharma also notes that 'biomedical power is not a zero-sum game', and just because this form of knowledge remains dominant does not negate the fact that their presence in mainstream healthcare 'will have contributed to general social legitimation of certain forms of complementary medicine' (2002:226).

[17] While there was an association with alternative lifestyles for some of my participants, this was not the dominant impression.

[18] Given this unboundedness, what is included and excluded under the umbrella of CAM and the most appropriate term for what CAM is complementary or alternative to may also be mooted. Given that

Key themes in CAM literature: an overview[19]

Much of the social scientific literature on CAM can be classed for the most part as focusing on the 'big five' of Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Homeopathy, Herbalism and Osteopathy (for example Bivins 2007; Lee-Treweek et al 2005; Saks 2002; Sharma 1992), which were categorised in a frequently cited House of Lords report as having the most extensive professional organisation in place as well as the greatest scientific 'evidence base' (House of Lords 2000).[20] There has also been intermittent academic interest in the practices outwith the 'big five' – such as Aromatherapy (Fournier 2002), Alexander Technique (Tarr 2011), Reiki (Paterson 2007) and Yoga (Smith 2007) – as well as some more journalistic tracts warning of the 'dangers' of CAM (Bausell 2007; Singh and Ernst 2008). The literature generally tends to focus on either reasons for the growth in popularity of CAM, the issues surrounding the professionalisation of CAM, or aspects of both of these.[21] The former is addressed largely from the perspective of users, and the latter from that of practitioners. Both are outlined here, but with greater attention given to the latter, given its more direct relevance to the focus of this thesis.

There have been numerous analyses of the increased presence of CAM in contemporary 'western' life and the range of reasons for this growth (Astin 2000; Bishop and Lewith 2010; Cant 2005; Cant and Sharma 1999; Coulter and Willis 2004; Coward 1989; Fulder [1988]1996, 1998; Goldner 2004; Kelner and Wellman 1997; Ong and Banks 2003; Sharma 1992),[22] and it is useful to draw out from these some key points for consideration. For over two decades, sociological critiques of CAM have linked increases in CAM use to broader societal-level shifts in beliefs about health and healthcare. With the gradual change in predominance from acute to chronic illness

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the focus of this thesis lies elsewhere, I do not intend to engage with these debates, and use the terms 'orthodox', 'scientific', 'mainstream', 'conventional' and 'bio-' medicine interchangeably to signify hegemonic 'western' healthcare practices.

[19] The aim here is to refer primarily to literature based on the UK context, although it does also make reference to work from the US, Canada and Australia, where significantly more CAM research has been conducted. This is not overly-problematic since, while there are significant differences, the prevalence of CAM use and practice in these contexts is largely similar, as are the practices which are considered to be 'CAM'.

[20] This report has been the basis of some of the movements in the professionalisation of CAM and the categorisation of practices at a policy level, and it is thus referred to a number of times in the course of this chapter.

[21] There is also a growing scientific literature on the efficacy of various practices. See Lee-Treweek et al (2005) for an informative overview, and also the journal Complementary Therapies in Medicine.

[22] Bishop and Lewith (2010) in particular offer a useful review of the factors associated with CAM use, including gender, education, income, ethnicity, age and 'general health status', although they limit their review to quantitative studies to the exclusion of any qualitative contributions.

(Turner 1984) and, moreover, the shift toward illnesses with distinctly emotional components (Bendelow 2009), the limitations to conventional medicine have become increasingly evident, thus encouraging people with such illnesses to 'turn' to CAM. Growing CAM use is in this argument attributed to the 'failures' of mainstream medicine (Coward 1989), to the 'alienation that it [biomedicine] has itself induced amongst the consumers of its own services' (Bakx 1991: 22), and to growing 'criticism[s] of Cartesian dualism and the body-mind reductionism of biomedical approaches' (Bendelow 2009:17). From this perspective, CAM fills gap a left by these failures and offers a non-reductionist alternative.

From a slightly different perspective, users are also portrayed as actively choosing CAM, not necessarily because they are 'refugees' from conventional medicine (Fulder [1988]1996), but because they are taking a 'proactive' role in their own health, because they believe that a particular practice is best suited to them and their health concerns (Kelner and Wellman 1997), or because they find that practitioner-client relationship offers them a more empowered role (Budd and Sharma 1994). In this way users are 'seeking to regain control over their life-worlds' (Easthope 1993:293) by actively pursuing health – or rather 'wellbeing' – which is in a contemporary context characterised as an 'entitlement of citizenship' (Turner 2004:xvi). These moves toward CAM are regarded as indicative of broader shifts in approaches to bodies and health (Coward 1989) in which compartmentalising, mechanistic conceptions of illness and disease are rejected in favour of balancing the mind-body-spirit as a whole: the 'holistic' approach, which is unpacked further below.

Alternatively, CAM use can be seen as exemplifying an aspect of postmodern consumption or identity formation (Bakx 1991; Cant and Sharma 1999; Goldner 2004; Rayner and Easthope 2001). Where diversification is taken as characteristic of post-modernity, and consumption is understood in post-modernist terms as central to identity formation (Bauman 1992; Giddens 1991), CAM exemplifies a fragmented medical monolith. Approaching CAM in terms of consumption is also useful in drawing out gender disparities in practices which see far more uptake by women than men (see Adams et al 2003). Although this viewpoint risks shifting the focus onto the purchase of over-the-counter remedies – another factor which frequently blurs the picture of CAM usage – it ties into the notion of the body as an ongoing project which is the site of

identity construction (Shilling 1993).[23] In a similar way CAM has been interpreted as a 'new social movement', read in terms of Foucauldian 'technologies of the self' (Schneirov and Geczik 1996; 1998; 2002; see also Goldner 2004). However, I argue that framing work on the body as an aesthetic project parallels the body-as-project perspective, rather than offering a vast departure from it. Moreover, the 'new social movement' approach tends to over-emphasise the 'alternative lifestyle' aspect of CAM which, as I argue in later chapters, is something of a misdirection. It can also be argued that these perspectives are limiting with regard to the complexity of users' decision-making, and tend toward a pinning down of certain aspects without addressing the whole picture. That is to say, it is more likely that CAM use – particularly by those who are chronically or terminally ill – is marked by a highly 'complex dialectical tension between the appeal of individualization […] and depersonalization' (Broom and Tovey 2007b:1036), which is managed in an ongoing process.

Somewhat less attention than has been paid to CAM use has been directed toward practitioners' perspectives – why people choose to practice them, who practitioners are, how they experience CAM as occupations and so on – a gap attributable to their largely unthreatening (to biomedical hegemony) 'complementary' status (Cant and Calnan 1991).[24] The literature which does explore the questions of 'who' and 'why' suggests a field where individual interest in practicing CAM frequently stems from personal experience as a client, and that this has most often come as a career change (Sharma 1992; Sered and Agigan 2008).[25] A clear gendering of CAM practice has also been observed, with by far the majority of practitioners being female (Sharma 1992) – a point which seems to hold as true for massage today as twenty years ago (see Marks 2010) – although with some notable exceptions in the more mainstreamed practices.[26] For the

[23] Parallels between some aspects of Holistic Massage practice drawn out in this thesis and Shilling's notion of the body project are explored in later chapters, and Shilling's work is further unpacked below.

[24] And even when practitioners' views are sought, this has often focused on the relationship with mainstream medicine and has thus been filtered through that particular lens (for example Adams 2000; Cant and Calnan 1991).

[25] This was largely the case for my participants, with the exception of two practitioners who had not had any experience of massage prior to their training.

[26] Obtaining representative numbers is problematic since there are no comprehensive registers of practitioners. However, the general trend seems to be that while the majority of CAM practitioners are female, a relatively larger proportion of men are found in the more 'scientised' and mainstreamed practices such as Acupuncture and Osteopathy. In the interest of illustration, a search of the online database of the British Acupuncture Council shows 15 women and 8 men practicing in the city where my research was based. The database of the General Osteopathic Council returned 18 women and 11 men for the same city. The directory of the Scottish Massage Therapists Organisation, on the other hand,

most part, however, there is a lacuna in the literature in terms of exploring practitioners' experience in-depth – what they do and say, and especially how they constitute their knowledge – a gap which this thesis contributes to filling.

The second major theme of the existing literature relates to the debates over the intertwined issues of 'epistemic authority',[27] professionalisation and regulation in CAM. It is impossible to discuss the histories of any CAMs without reference to the rise to dominance of conventional medicine, given that it has been the 'exclusionary closure' associated with the latter – embodied in the UK by the 1858 Medical Registration Act – which brought about the marginalisation of other practices (Saks 2002). Since the rise to dominance of what currently comprises mainstream medicine, the discourse around CAM practitioners – often portrayed as 'quacks' (Porter 1989) – has focused on the danger they may be to the general public, a rhetorical device which continues to be used in the present day (Fournier 2002). The House of Lords Select Committee report (2000) presented as its key aim the maintenance of public safety, and the repeated rationale behind the majority of CAM research is to provide an 'evidence base' which vouches not only for the efficacy but the safety of treatments (see Ernst 2007).

The 'evidence-based medicine' (EBM)[28] debate is a controversial one in both mainstream medicine and CAM, and there is not space to engage with it fully here. [29] However, it is important to highlight that while EBM propounds randomised control trials and meta-analyses as the epistemological and methodological 'gold standards' of research – and thus a standard which must also be met by any practice wishing to professionalise and integrate into the mainstream – EBM is in fact an ideal type which is implemented subjectively and inconsistently in day-to-day practice (Broom and Tovey 2007a, 2007b). One of the things this points to is that it is not only a lack of positive 'evidence' which continues to marginalise many CAM, but also the 'boundary work'

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lists 77 women and only 18 men. Registers are available respectively at http://www.acupuncture.org.uk/component/baccsearch/form.html , http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/infor mation/finding-an-osteopath and http://www.scotmass.co.uk/directory/Directory.html (date all last accessed 27/06/2011.

[27] A term which I borrow from Gieryn (1999). See the discussion of 'boundary work', below.

[28] A term which 'entered common parlance in medical literature in the early 1990s and has become internationally dominant' (Bendelow 2009:6).

[29] Amongst the criticisms of EBM are that it 'prioritis[es] the biological germ theory based on single causation' and provides 'an incomplete picture of contemporary patterning of health and illness' (Bendelow 2009:6-7); that it is largely incompatible with general practice (Adams 2000); and that it is highly problematic with regard to palliative care (Broom and Tovey 2007a), where treatments with little (if any) evidence base are frequently used.

(Gieryn 1983) done in order to maintain the position of CAM 'on the margins of the medical marketplace' (Cant and Calnan 1991)[30] by those who adhere to the hegemonic scientific epistemology.

Gieryn's (1983; 1999) conception of 'boundary work' suggests a number of strategies by which different groups might establish 'epistemic authority' over a sphere of knowledge.[31] While there is no impermeable boundary between CAM and conventional medicine (Cant and Sharma 1999), and while the epistemic authority lies largely in the hands of mainstream science, it should be acknowledged that CAM also have 'their institutions, doctrine and concepts' which may be 'jealously, and sometimes rather stubbornly guarded' (Stacey 1997:22). The ways in which knowledge is protected or divulged, boundaries maintained, and a space created for Holistic Massage, is an especial concern of this thesis (see Chapter Five in particular).

Adams' (2001, 2004a, 2004b) research on GPs who practice CAM offers an interesting insight into boundary work in this context, particularly in his finding that, as well as utilising the narrative resources of science, GPs also tend to emphasise the 'intuitive' and 'artistic' components of what they do.[32] What this highlights is the permeability of the boundaries between different types of knowledge: a point which I will develop in later discussion. While the interfaces between CAM and mainstream healthcare are a key site for boundary work (see also Ho 2007; Keshet 2009; Mizrachi et al 2005), there are also other highly significant boundaries which practitioners enact. Amongst those which have been addressed elsewhere are boundaries between clients and practitioners (Barcan 2010; Deverell and Sharma 2000; Stone 2008), with sex work (see Oerton 2004a, which is discussed below and taken up in Chapter Five). To this list this thesis adds boundaries with spa/beauty work and other kinds of work focused on touching.

[30] Steps have been taken toward identifying alternative methods to create a CAM evidence base: for example, 'ethnographic evidence' has been proposed as a basis for judgement (Barry 2006), and new measurements of key elements such as 'holism' have been proposed and tested to a limited degree (Long et al 2000; Hughes 2004). But while the need for further CAM research is largely agreed to be acute, there is also an acknowledged lack of funding: the House of Lords report acknowledged that obtaining funding for such research is extremely difficult, a situation which has changed very little in the last ten years and may, in the current economic climate, be set to worsen.

[31] While Gieryn's work has focused on the context of the 'hard' sciences, the concept of boundary work has since been applied to other contexts of knowledge production and protection, including the social sciences (Lamont and Molnar 2002).

[32] Keller's (1983) biography of geneticist Barbara McClintock is illustrative of a similar point.

One further key feature of the existing literature, which is closely bound with epistemological debates, is the question of regulating CAM. Major shifts toward both voluntary and statutory regulation have come about in different practices since the 1990s when Osteopathy and Chiropractic were the first to gain statutory regulation. Recommendations by the House of Lords Report for the definition and development of 'core competencies' by a dedicated 'professional regulatory body' for each practice (House of Lords 2000:4) have begun to be heeded by several practices, including massage (more on which below). It has therefore been suggested that regulation in the UK has 'reached a critical and volatile phase' (Walker and Budd 2002). However, recent changes in government and policy mean that while some CAM practices which had been aiming to make the transition from voluntary to statutory regulation are about to achieve this, others may have for now missed the swelling wave of support.[33] Overall, the lack of political organisation which Coward (1989) identified twenty years ago has seen minimal change. Most CAM practices continue to have a complex relationship to the professionalisation process (Doel and Segrott 2004), and the contemporary picture in the UK continues to be one of conflict and confusion.[34]

Given the focus of this thesis, it is worth making a brief sketch of the 'official' situation as it stands with regard to massage. The 2000 House of Lords Report categorised massage in a second tier of CAM, described as 'complementing' conventional medicine. Massage was deemed to be in need of more extensive professional organisation and regulation in order to increase acceptance, and to improve both the position of massage vis-à-vis conventional science and the confidence of the general public (House of Lords 2000). There have been significant moves towards clearer organisation with the establishment of the General Council for Massage Therapy (formerly the British Association of Massage Therapy) as the 'governing body' for all massage in the UK. The GCMT represents a collection of professional associations including those which

[33] Due to new the introduction in April 2011 of new EU legislation on the sale of unlicensed herbal medicines, Medical Herbalists have recently been promised statutory regulation by the current government. The bid of Acupuncturists, however - who have been organising with a view to the same goal for somewhat longer than Herbalists – has been rejected on the grounds that they have been very successful in executing and maintaining voluntary self-regulation (the irony being that this was established largely in the pursuit of the statutory form).

[34] The most extensive examination of professionalisation in CAM has come from the work of the interdisciplinary 'CAM Lab' at the University of Toronto, who have been researching the unfolding process – and particular the role of the state – in the Canadian context since the 1990s (see, amongst others, Boon et al 2004; Kelner and Wellman 1997; Kelner et al 2004a, 2004b; Welsh et al 2004).

accredit Holistic Massage in the UK: the Massage Training Institute (MTI) and the International Therapy Examination Council (ITEC). The GCMT is in turn affiliated to the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), an umbrella regulatory body founded in 2008 and funded by the Department of Health. The CNHC offers voluntary regulation to practitioners of CAM, including Holistic Massage, and has been actively developing professional standards for massage practitioners, although the impact of these remains to be seen.[35] This being the case, and given that the state of regulation is not the key concern of this thesis, I will now draw a line under this part of the discussion and move on to look at the historical context of massage and the small existing social scientific literature on the practice.

Focusing on massage

While CAM are frequently portrayed as new and novel health practices by advocates and critics alike, there is a contrary position, primarily in practitioner-oriented literature, which seeks to establish a long history for massage in the west,[36] and which traces its roots back to antiquity. Such histories of massage tend to allude to its 'ancient' origins and to the promotion by Hippocrates and then Galen of the benefits of 'rubbing' (Calvert 2002). Building on this foundation, massage is presented as having been formalised in the 19th century in Sweden by Per Henrik Ling – hence the common label of Swedish Massage.[37] Others highlight the prevalence of massage in mainstream healthcare in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and its marked decline post-World War II (Goldstone 2000). In this version of massage history it is presented as a practice which was for a period decidedly conventional; which found a home particularly in nursing and physiotherapy; but which was increasingly marginalised as the latter practice became professionalised and increasingly technologised (Goldstone 2000). This perspective is sociologically interesting on a number of counts. Firstly, Goldstone lists a number of

[35] Three initial 'competences' were published in 2009, one of which relates directly to massage provision and sets out the 'knowledge and understanding' practitioners should have, as well as a number of 'performance outcomes' (see http://www.cnhc.org.uk/pages/index.cfm?page_id=3, last accessed 29/06/11).
[36] Since the west is the socio-cultural location of this research, I do not go into detail about the history of massage in other cultures such as China where it has equal, if not greater, longevity.
[37] In general, most texts on massage position Ling as its 'founding father'. There is also a conflicting (and perhaps more historically accurate) argument which attributes this title to Dutchman Johan Mezger, who attempted to systematise massage as a form of manipulation, rather than to develop it as 'movement', as was the case with Ling (see Calvert 2002; Goldstone 2000).

authors (amongst whom are a significant number of women)[38] who wrote on massage from the late 19th century onwards, whose work he suggests comprises evidence of the integration into the mainstream of massage at the time. Certainly, the plethora of books cited by Calvert and Goldstone as talking about massage are convincing evidence of a certain prevalence, or at least indicative of massage having a significant platform within mainstream healthcare.[39]

In contrast to this, Goldstone also pinpoints a marked 'decline' in massage subsequent to the establishment in 1894 of the Society of Trained Masseuses, which has since evolved into the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists. The society is interesting in itself, as it was formed by a group of female massage practitioners who sought to distinguish themselves from sex workers, and thus marks a concrete early example of boundary work in massage (see Barclay 1994 for a history). But what is also significant here is that the waning of massage outwith Physiotherapy appears to have been paralleled by a decline in the massage component of Physiotherapy as it professionalised.[40] Despite something of a 'golden age' in the UK in the inter-war period – embodied by the 'women in uniform' of the Almeric Paget Massage Corps[41] – the increasing popularity of technological interventions marginalised massage (Goldstone 2000). This begs the question of whether Physiotherapists had to distance themselves from the hands-on aspect of touching work as, and so that, their professional status increased.[42]

In relation to the language of massage: Goldstone suggests that while common terminology suggests continuity in contemporary massage practice with pre-20th century massage, the way in which touching is actually done is now so different that to consider

[38] Since massage was well-established in nursing and midwifery by the turn of the 20th century, it is perhaps not surprising that women (such as Margaret Palmer and Kathryn Jensen) were commonly authors of massage texts. According to Goldstone, Palmer was 'manager of the Massage Department of the London Hospital' (2000:170), while Jensen was 'General Director of Physical Therapy Instruction at a US nursing school (2000:171) and thus wrote as professionals.

[39] Unfortunately not many of these texts are in print and widely available, aside from a few such as Graham ([1884]1902) and Peters ([1901]1937), which are held by the National Library of Scotland.

[40] Goldstone notes that while the exams set by the Society in the early 1900s were largely massage-oriented, this declined steadily so that by 1945 'none were directly on the topic of massage' (2000:171-2).

[41] See http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/womeninuniform/almeric_paget_intro.htm (last accessed 30/07/2011).

[42] This may be indicative of the 'dematerialising tendency' (Twigg 2000b) in work which takes place on the body: see the section on 'touching work' later in this chapter.

it the same practice is misleading.[43] He raises the question of the lack of specifics in the majority of accounts of massage. He argues that the 'very limited degree of explicitness' on what strokes are used, to what speed and pressure, limits the possibilities for systematic research on massage and thus undermines the knowledge claims made by practitioner-researchers (see also Vickers 1997).[44] While there is something to be said for an effective description of massage – which is an aspect of what this thesis aims to do – what is not addressed in the existing literature is whether there is a fundamental limitation to doing so. Goldstone's call for a 'vocabulary to specify massage' is helpful, but his suggested scheme fails to account for the aspect of massage which is not quantifiable or even tangible. It begs the question of whether there may be a limit to the extent to which massage can be fully described, or whether this limitation may be a trope drawn on by practitioners by way of justifying their knowledge claims or otherwise. These are all concerns taken up in later chapters of this thesis.

As well as the historical insight and significant questions raised by these contributions, there have also been a small number of other social scientific contributions to literature on massage. Of these, Lea (2009) in particular raises some interesting questions about the tensions between codified and tacit knowledge, and the packaging of a somewhat 'nebulous' practice in a way more amenable to western thinking. Lea highlights the 'corporeally distinctive grammar' of bodies, movement and touching through which this knowledge is constituted and conveyed in Thai Yoga Massage, and thus underlines the significance of recognising practice-specific vocabularies. Oerton (2004a, 2004, with Phoenix 2001) also offers a fascinating point of departure for sociological massage research, by placing the gendering and de/sexualisation of this work centre-stage, and exploring in-depth the ways in which practitioners negotiate problematic facets of their work on an everyday basis. Since Oerton's work ties in closely with the notion of 'touching work', it is explored in greater detail below. Before I conclude this discussion of CAM, I first turn to examine one further aspect of the literature which is highly

[43] For example he cites Graham's (1884) suggestion that the speed at which touching should be done was between 60 and 360 strokes per minute, depending on the ailment. Daily or twice-daily sessions were also recommended. This is quite distinct from what might be expected of massage today and may, by its labour-intensiveness, have contributed to the mid-century decrease in massage's popularity.

[44] Vickers (1997) underlines the shakiness of the 'evidence base' (for want of a better term) which writers on massage have attempted to establish, and which is built on poor referencing, inadequate provision of source material, and frequently unfounded or misinterpreted claims.

significant for the particular kind of massage to which my empirical research attends, which is the notion of 'holism'.

Holism in CAM

In a general sense, the concept of 'holism' in western thought can be traced back at least as far as Aristotle's aphorism of the whole being 'more than the sum of its parts' (Aristotle [c.350BCE] 1994). In the sense of taking a rounded and complex, rather than compartmentalising and reductionist, view of phenomena, holism has philosophical congruence with anti-Cartesian, often influenced by feminist, approaches to the body.[45] However, the term 'holistic' is now so much a part of everyday language in advertising, political rhetoric and so on, that its meaning has been muddied by over-use. Since it is in reference to healthcare, and in particular to a practice which is in name 'holistic', that the concept is relevant to this thesis, understandings of holism in this context that are briefly outlined here so that they can be explored in relation to the interview data in Chapters Three to Six.

The notion of 'holism' is often cited as a unifying approach or underlying philosophy for an array of CAM practices and, as I have mentioned, it is in some instances is used as a substitute for the term CAM. However, 'holistic' is most often used to signify that the user/client is being approached as a whole, in an incorporation of 'mind' and 'body', or mind-body and 'spirit'. The inclusion of 'spirit' in this equation can be problematic in the sense that it invokes the '"magical" and religious ways of dealing with health and illness' (Bendelow 2009:4) which were supplanted by biomedicine. But it also speaks to existing perspectives on some CAM practices which situate them in terms of spirituality and so-called 'New Age capitalism' (Lau 2000, Taylor 2010). The spiritual angle has merit given the recognised overlap in social territory between medicine and religion (Friedson 1970): shaman, the earliest medical practitioners, also catered to spiritual needs. Moreover, it has been suggested that in organisation many CAM have as much in common with religion as medicine (Coward 1989). While spirituality offers an interesting framing of what practitioners do and why (see Taylor 2010), I argue that as with the 'new social movement' perspective cited earlier, approaching CAM from this perspective once again over-states the role of spirituality and alternative lifestyles in

[45] See below on perspectives on embodiment and Chapter Two on the phenomenologically informed narrative inquiry methodology which underpins this thesis

these practices and choices.[46] 'Spirituality', broadly conceived, may play a part in understandings of these practices, but it is not necessarily a primary factor for all those involved and should not be assumed to be such. Constituting CAM in terms of 'faith healing' (which is usually done in a derogatory sense) is a similar misdirection since, as a massage practitioner participating in Hughes' research suggests, there remains 'more faith in doctors than in CAM practitioners' (Hughes 2004:36, my emphasis).

However, a mind-body approach presents numerous advantages which chime in with the criticism of conventional medicine that steers people toward CAM. As Coward notes:

> 'A holistic approach tends to mean a quality of personal attention and care which is a total anathema to orthodox medicine. What is more, this holistic approach also appears to give an individual an unparalleled sense of participating in, perhaps even controlling, his or her own well-being.' (Coward 1989:68)

Having said this, the ideal of holism does not necessarily translate to actual practice, and thus the concept can also be used as a hook on which to hang a critique of the more manipulative, questionable or negative implications of CAM practices. Coward's work in particular was crucial in positing an early critical assessment of ideas about healthcare which may emphasise personal blame and promote an ideal which is essentially impossible to attain (see also Bendelow 2009; Sered and Agigan 2008). Similarly, a process of 'holistic sickening' has been identified as a way in which CAM practitioners account for the conditions of the people they treat (Sered and Agigan 2008). Using the holistic model means that individual illness narratives (in the sense of the potential stories people can tell) become more expansive than they might be in a conventional interpretation, and introduces new factors such as:

> 'constructing the patient in total as unwell (rather than as essentially well with one diseased organ), holding the patient accountable for being unwell or for failure to be healed, and an absence of clear determinants for the end of treatment' (Sered and Agigan 2008:617)

[46] This is very much contingent on what is implied by 'spirituality'. The more narrow sense of 'relating to religion' is certainly limiting here. However, the broader sense of a 'something more' than the physical or worldly is relevant to the understandings of my participants. As is explored through the coming chapters, and in particular in Chapter Four, only one of my participants explicitly grounded her work in terms of her spirituality. However, there were also more subtle ways in which a relation to spirituality was expressed in the interviews.

This is not to suggest that such 'hidden costs' are exclusive to CAM treatment (Sered and Agigan 2008): the iatrogenic effects of conventional medicine are widely recognised.[47] Moreover, the increase in CAM use suggests that that this broad framing of illness experience is understood as a positive rather than negative attribute by those involved (Sered and Agigan 2008). What these examples do is once again to emphasise that holistic approaches cannot be assumed to be straightforwardly 'good', and must be critically engaged with. Essentially, what the existing research on holism together emphasises is that 'holistic', like 'CAM', is another problematic conception which requires deeper exploration to understand what it involves in situ. However holism is defined or interpreted, it appears to be a significant factor in the way in which CAM practitioners construct the illness of their clients and the service they provide. So long as this complex and problematic notion continues to be presented as a straightforward advantage in everyday CAM discourse, a debate over its utility as a concept needs to be maintained. Since these key concerns have not been sufficiently addressed in the existing literature, this thesis aims to examine them in the context of a practice which is, in name, 'holistic'. Having surveyed the field and identified gaps in the sociology of CAM with particular pertinence to Holistic Massage, the next section looks at understandings of embodiment and the role of the sensory in sociology.

Bringing sociology to its senses

My aim in this section is to focus on contributions with greatest relevance to what might be understood as an embodied sociology. It does not offer a summary or synthesis of the vast literature on the sociology of the body, but instead draws out some key points which contextualise my interest in the sensory. Embodiment is taken as the fundamental to this perspective, in the complex sense that:

> 'Human beings are embodied. We are not spirits or minds that exist inside a body. Our bodies are all there is to us. As the expression "our bodies" indicates, however, we are capable of objectifying our embodiment and constituting it as an object and possession: "my body". I <u>am</u> my body but I also <u>have</u> my body. I am somehow alienated from my embodiment, in my

[47] Equally, holistic approaches are not exclusive to CAM, but also have a presence within mainstream healthcare, and are used by GPs as a means of providing more rounded care (Adams 2001; see also, for example McEvoy and Duffy 2008 on holistic practice in nursing).

> conscious experience, but at the same time reunited with it as I experience it as mine.' (Crossley 2006:140, original emphasis)[48]

The basic argument taken up here is that embodiment – as a way of being, rather than 'the body' as theme or object (see Shilling 2007) – should be 'central rather than peripheral to the sociological enterprise' (Williams and Bendelow 1998:8);[49] and that closer attention to the sensory will go some way to reconcile the perspectives on embodiment of the 'creature within' and the 'body-as-machine' (Oakley 2007:90). There is a broad corpus of well-established body-oriented sociology including, but not limited to, Bendelow (2000, 2009), Cregan (2006), Crossley (2001a; 2006), Davis (1997), Featherstone et al (1991), Howson (2004, 2005), Mellor and Shilling (1997), Nettleton and Watson (1998), Shilling (1993, 2007a), Turner (1984, 1992) Williams and Bendelow (1998) and Witz (2000).[50] A significant debate in this field has been whether or not the body has truly been 'absent' in sociology (and has thus been 'brought back in', as much early body sociology attempted to do); or whether it has been an 'absent presence', present but insufficiently or unacknowledged (see Crossley 2007; Shilling 1993; Witz 2000).

This latter assertion is founded in arguments for the presence of the body in classical sociology such as the work of Mead, Simmel, Durkheim or Marx, and in the focus on 'behaviour, action, interaction, practice, praxis' and so on (Crossley 2007:84).[51] Marx is put forward as offering an appropriately embodied and sensuous basis for a feminist sociology concerned with everyday life (Smith 1987),[52] and it is in fact:

> 'precisely because capitalism is characterized by a division of labour that robs work of creativity, generates hunger and disease, and warps the sensory

[48] Crossley's perspective here also relates closely to the concept of body/touching work, which is discussed later in the chapter, since '[t]he process by which "my body", the body that I am, becomes an object of perception, thought and feeling for me, and becomes something that I act upon by way of exercise, diet, adornment and so on, is the phenomenon of reflexive embodiment' (Crossley 2006:140).
[49] See also Csordas (1994) for an anthropological perspective.
[50] While the 'recuperation of the body in/for social theory […] has been a predominantly male activity' (Witz 2000:2), there have of course been indispensible contributions to the debate from numerous women scholars addressing the 'absent woman in sociology' (Witz 2000) and this section draws on some of this work.
[51] Crossley notes that '[t]he body has not been absent in sociology in the sense of literally not being there. […] But it has been pushed into the background in order to enable the foregrounding of issues which, historically at least, have assumed a greater importance: eg. purpose, meaning, goals, norms, rules etc.' (2007:94).
[52] Smith notes: '[c]learly the body is there when we speak of "sensuous activity". The activity or practices [to which Marx refers] are "sensuous", done with or in the body' (Smith 1987:144 note 20).

> development of even the most privileged […] that Marx condemns it as a system that alienates embodied subjects from their own species capacities and their fellow embodied beings.' (Shilling 2007:5)

In this light embodiment and the sensory can be seen as nothing short of pivotal to Marx's theory. Both Simmel and Durkheim also take bodies as a 'source of' and 'location for the social', as well as a 'means by which individuals are attached to, and positioned within, their social milieu' (Shilling 2001:333-5). It can also be argued that a Durkheimian sociology 'has tended to concentrate on either the work of the mind or the interactions of (embodied) individuals than on the question of embodiment itself' (Cregan 2006:1): taking bodies for granted in a way which clearly illustrates the 'absent presence' argument.

Whereas Durkheim may have viewed the sensory on Cartesian lines – as dichotomous with rational thought (Durkheim [1938]1895; see also Synnott 1993)[53] – Simmel ([c.1908], see Frisby and Featherstone 1997) on the other hand drew explicit attention to the senses and their role in everyday life. He notes that while the main concerns of social scientific inquiry at that time were seen as large-scale social structures, sociology would do well to look at the more basic interactions upon which these structures are built, including the sensuous aspects of those interactions:

> 'That we get involved in interactions at all depends on the fact that we have sensory effect upon one another. [… Moreover,] these sensory impressions, running from one person to another, in no way serve merely as the common foundation and precondition for social relationships, beyond which the contents and distinctive features of those relationships arise from quite different causes. Rather, every sense delivers contributions characteristic of its individual nature to the construction of sociated existence; […] the prevalence of one or the other sense in the contact of individuals often provides this contact with a sociological nuance that could otherwise not be produced.' (Simmel in Frisby and Featherstone 1997:110)

Simmel's essay on the senses valorises sight in a way typical of the 'western' hierarchy of the senses (more on this below) and identifies, in eye-to-eye contact, 'perhaps the most direct and the purest interaction that exists' (Simmel in Frisby and Featherstone 1997: 111). In Mead (1934, 1938), on the other hand, there is a greater interest in the

[53] Synnot cites Durkheim: 'on the one hand … sensations and sensory tendencies; on the other hand, conceptual thought and moral activity. Each of these two parts represents a separate pole of our being, and these two poles are not only distinct from one another but are opposed to one another.' (Synnott 1993:256).

sense of touch which, in the guise of the grasping, manipulating hand, is the means by which we appreciate and verify reality. In this way tactility is central to the construction of society and self. It can be argued, certainly in Mead's 'Philosophy of the Act' (1938), that Mead's work displays a more explicitly 'embodied' aspect, including a consideration of the senses, their role in perception and the fundamentality of touch to his theory of the act.

Likewise, Schutz's ([1932]1967, 1970, 1974) phenomenological sociology takes a close interest in the physical, in what he terms the 'manipulatory area' and the 'world of working'. Having said this, direct attention to theorising bodies by Schutz and other 'classical' (male) sociologists was often fleeting. Schutz's attitude is telling when he suggests that the attention to the bodily required of an individual, that is the philosopher or sociologist, regarding 'household chores' is usually minimal (Schutz 1970).[54] Of course what facilitates the organisation of the male sociologist's lifeworld in such a way as to allow for his 'conceptual' working is the work of women, as Smith has noted:

> 'Once we are alerted to how women's work provides for this organization of consciousness, we can see how this structure depends in actual situations on the working relations of those providing for the logistics of the philosopher's bodily existence – those for whom household chores are not horizonal, but are thematic, and whose work makes possible for another the suppression of all but passing attention to the bodily location of consciousness.' (Smith 1987:83)[55]

That is to say, a masculinist sociology – conceived of by men and interested in 'male' concerns – rendered invisible the work (body work and otherwise) which women were doing around them, work which many sociologists of embodiment have sought to make visible.

It has taken the development of a feminist sociology, then, to bring about what is now a ubiquitous concern with bodies and embodiment. Indeed, much of the most interesting and insightful work on embodiment has its roots in feminist-influenced accounts of 'lived experience'. Some of the resulting perspectives have begun to challenge Cartesian

[54] Schutz's relevance to an embodied sociological methodology is explicated in Chapter Two.
[55] Cf. Lofland on the 'thereness' of women in (specifically urban) sociology, which she compares to the butler in a detective story, 'essential to the set but largely irrelevant' (1975:145). Delamont (2003) notes that research such as Gimlin's (1996) study of hairdressers goes some way to redress the imbalance Lofland identified. This and other contributions to the literature on body work are discussed later in this chapter.

dualism and the 'flight from the feminine' (Bordo 1987); while others have underlined the (sometime) utility of dualistic thinking in women's everyday life (Wendell 1996). Others still highlight the misleading nature of conventional notions of the biological body which tend to emphasise fixedness, when it in fact makes more sense to see bodies as fluid and changing, as 'insides' react to the outside environment (Birke 1999; Grosz 1995). Contemporary (masculinist) perspectives on bodies which conceptualise them as bounded 'containers' of the self (see Johnson 1990) have been challenged by the argument that such perspectives are far from representative of women's experience of their bodies (Battersby 1998). Women, Battersby suggests from her own lived experience, are not threatened by the possibility of their bodies not being a bounded container 'precisely because [they] do not envisage [their] body-space as a container which the self is inside' in the first place (Battersby 1998:47). In fact, such a way of thinking about the body 'pathologises' women from the outset.[56] Taken together, these contributions offer 'a promising alternative' to perspectives which disembody the body (Davis 2007:56).

A note of caution must be sounded here in relation to the ways in which feminist scholarship is represented in the 'new' sociology of the body. The danger inherent in locating the beginnings of the latter in the work of Foucault (as is frequently the case), 'is that the contribution of the feminist health movement will not be recognised and also that, as a result, analysis will become distorted in certain ways' (Bendelow at al 2002:3).[57] Witz's (2000) critique of Turner and Shilling is useful here. Drawing on Foucault, and frequently cited as a cornerstone in the sociology of the body, the uptake of Turner's (1984) position by feminists in the field was limited. This is attributable to his 're-corporealising' women at a time when feminists sought to emphasise sociality (Witz 2000). By positioning female sociality within the boundaries of female corporeality, Turner's work 'grated discordantly with the feminist sociological project of the time' (Witz 2000:4).[58] In a similar light, Shilling is seen to 'misread' the contribution

[56] This ties to Lawton's (1998) notion of the 'unbounded body' which is used as a way into the exploration of un/boundedness taken up in Chapters Five and Six.
[57] Pertinently to the subject matter of this thesis, the women's health movement, which 'was – and continues to be – one of the most vibrant fields of feminist activism' (Davis 2007:52), has included new/revived interests in bodily awareness practices such as yoga, meditation and CAM.
[58] As Stanley and Wise have noted of this period, 'It has become de rigueur for feminists making claims to theoretical sophistication to eschew any invocation of "the body" as anything other than discursively,

of feminism in relation to a sociology of the body (Witz 2000). Where Shilling (1993) suggests that feminists brought the body to the centre of the sociological stage, what was happening at the time was in fact the opposite. Whether explicit or implicit, a central concern of much feminist-influenced sociology of the body has been to negotiate the relationship between (women's) sociality and corporeality, without losing the utility of the concept of gender in the fleshiness of the latter (see Stanley and Wise 1993; Witz 2000; also Wolkowitz 2006, as discussed below).

Other ostensibly feminist contributions to debates around embodiment have been criticised in a similar way for their tendency to theorise from the outside of bodies, as though they were in some way able to distance themselves from fleshiness (see Cregan 2006; Wendell 1996 on Haraway). This rings false when, through illness or disability, a person is 'forced by [their] body to reconceptualise [their] relationship to it, not due to a differential 'cultural "reading"' of the body or 'technological incursions into' it (Wendell 1996; see also Stacey 1997).[59] Rather, Wendell suggests:

> 'a major aspect of my experience [of becoming ill] was precisely that of being forced to acknowledge and learn to live with bodily, not cultural, limitation. In its radical movement away from the view that every facet of women's lives is determined by biology, feminist theory is in danger of idealizing "the body" and erasing much of the reality of lived bodies.' (Wendell 1996:169)

Where some, such as Haraway (1991) or Butler (1989), may have tended to avoid the lived corporeality of women's bodies, others – including those cited above – have addressed the interplay between the biological and the social head-on. In this way feminist sociology of the body has been able to move forward in addressing the sociality and corporeality of fleshy lived bodies.

A significant portion of body-focused (primarily sociological) scholarship draws on phenomenological theory (for example, Hockey and Collinson 2007; Marshall [1996]1999; Wendell 1996; Williams and Bendelow 1998. See also Bartky 1990;

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textually and thus linguistically created, to insist that the body has no "real" physical or material importance outside this' (1993:197). Any serious illness underlines the futility of such an attitude.

[59] Stacey evocatively portrays the complexities of embodiment in the context of her experience of cancer: 'Trapped inside the body in revolt, there is no escape. The body becomes the only reality. Its limits are no longer visible…The claustrophobia of internality. This matter is all I am… And yet it is not me at all. An "alien" body taken over by another […] the body has lost its form and its integrity, it has become abject' (Stacey 1997:85).

Csordas 1994; Young 1990). These approaches have often turned to Merleau-Ponty (1962), although there has been some debate over the utility of his philosophy for the practice of sociology (Crossley 2001; Howson and Inglis 2001; Shilling 2001).[60] While there may be methodological issues here, this is not to say that Merleau-Ponty is not very much relevant to an embodied and feminist-influenced sociology (as well as one which is interested in the shaping of stocks of knowledge). Indeed, as Grosz suggests:

> 'His emphasis on lived experience and perception, his focus on the body-subject, has resonances with what may arguably be regarded as feminism's major contribution to the production and structure of knowledges – its necessary reliance on lived experience, on experiential acquaintance as a touchstone or criterion of the validity of theoretical postulates.' (Grosz 1995:94)

Moreover, Merleau-Ponty 'refuses to relegate experience to an ineffable, unquestionable, given category, as some feminists have tended to do', since he recognises '[e]experience is not outside social, political, historical and cultural forces and in this sense cannot provide an outside vantage point from which to judge them' (Grosz 1995:94).

Influential contributors to the embodying of sociology, such as Williams and Bendelow (1998) (and Csordas (1994) in anthropology), have demonstrated the utility of elucidating the phenomenologically 'lived body' in such a way.[61] Moreover, they have made clear the crucial difference between a sociology that takes the body as a topic, versus one which:

> '…takes the embodiment of its practitioners as well as its subjects seriously through a commitment to the lived body and its being in the world, including the manner in which it both shapes and is shaped by society' (Williams and Bendelow 1998:8)

While earlier sociologists (such as Goffman and Elias) attended to body management in important ways, there has until recently been insufficient attention given to 'the voices

[60] In particular Merleau-Ponty is criticised for not offering an account of social structure and/or power (Howson and Inglis 2001). This criticism can be countered with the argument that structure is in fact 'central' to Merleau-Ponty's work (Crossley 2001) – although Crossley also concedes that Merleau-Ponty's account of structure and power are 'inadequate' – or with some suggested correctives from the work of Bourdieu. However, rather than debating the applicability of philosophical standpoints to sociological investigation, what it seems more obvious to do is to look instead at a phenomenology which is specifically sociological, namely that of Schutz (as I do in Chapter Two).

[61] Martin (1987) also offers a fascinating analysis of female embodiment, although she uses the label 'phenomenological' to signify everyday experience as distinct from medicalised understandings, rather than being indicative of the use of phenomenological theory per se.

emanating from the bodies themselves' (Nettleton and Watson 1998:11). Sociological contributions which 'reflect upon how ordinary men and women articulate their bodily experiences' are thus crucial in establishing a corpus of work that interprets and engages with bodies as lived, and with the 'human being [as] an embodied social agent' (Nettleton and Watson 1998:9).

Several fascinating and diverse examples of how such work might be done do exist: in relation to, for example, sensory aspects of breast feeding (Britton 1998); female surgeons (Cassell 1998); doing social scientific fieldwork (Okely 2007); emotions as feelings (Lupton 1998); glassblowing (O'Connor 2007); gendered experiences of pain (Bendelow and Williams 1998); experiences of arthritis (Williams and Barlow 1998); and professional dancers (Aalten 2007). What such contributions highlight, amongst other things, is the difficulty with which individuals verbally express their embodiment, particularly aspects of this which are supposedly ineffable. Scheper-Hughes and Lock sum up this linguistic messiness:

> 'We lack a precise vocabulary with which to deal with mind-body-society interactions and so are left suspended in hyphens, testifying to the disconnectedness of our thoughts. We are forced to resort to such fragmented concepts as the bio-social, the psycho-somatic, the somato-social as altogether feeble ways of expressing the myriad ways in which the mind speaks through the body, and the ways in which society is inscribed on the expectant canvas of human flesh.' (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987:10)

As well as this limitation, it is also worth considering the fact that people may never have been asked to verbalise these issues before and do not therefore have a rehearsed account to hand. Researchers may somewhat unreasonably expect participants to fluently verbalise their embodied experience whilst writing of the 'indescribability' of the same (Richardson 2009). The conflict between what is commonly deemed ineffable and how such phenomena are actually expressed is another key theme in this thesis.

But it is perhaps not only the availability of appropriate language, but the assumed solipsistic character of embodied, sensory experience which creates difficulty here. This is particularly evident in the literature on pain, which is commonly positioned as one of the least communicable and most definitively subjective of human experiences, 'relying as it does on expressivity of both bodily signs and language which are culturally embedded, subject to multiple interpretation' (Bendelow 2009:59). Pain is the context in

which the body most clearly comes to the forefront of our awareness or 'dys-appears' (see Leder 1990; Williams and Bendelow 1998), and yet it can simultaneously underscore the inadequacy of language and obliterate it altogether (Scarry 1985). Pain consists in a 'catch-22' situation where:

> 'we cannot consistently comprehend what another person's experience is because we know but cannot readily speak our own sensations. The less bodily experience is discussed, the harder it is for us to grasp the reality of others' experiences' (Marshall [1996]1999:70)

The fact that those who live with chronic pain are essentially 'bereft of adequate cultural resources for organising their experience' (Williams and Bendelow 1998:163), is arguably the most difficult aspect of that pain. And yet, bodily experience is discussed and we assume by way of intersubjective understanding – based on our prior experience and the experience of others which is passed on to us via language (Schutz 1962; see Chapter Two) – an understanding of the sensations of others.

Indivisible from a consideration of physical pain – particularly from a holistic, embodied perspective – is a concern with emotions. The 'gut churning' experience of grief, or the sadness or anxiety caused by pain, offers a pronounced example of the physicality of emotions (Leder 1984), of emotions as 'embodied thoughts' (Rosaldo 1984). Emotions too cause the body to dys-appear, 'by virtue of their sensual dimensions (Lupton 1998:94). And the way these emotions are talked about in turn says something interesting about embodiment. 'Stress', for example, is an emotional state particularly pervasive in contemporary life and one which, as is often the case with embodied experience, is frequently described using metaphor. Interestingly, the metaphors of wet/dry and hot/cold drawn out by Lupton as being used in accounts of this quintessentially contemporary concern suggest a closer identification with the 'humoral' body than might be expected given the dominance of the biomedical/mechanical model (Lupton 1998). Where embodiment is articulated, then, it is often done in such interesting and perhaps surprising ways.

The recognition of the close interrelation between emotions and pain is significant, and also ties into what has been termed the 'emotionalism' of contemporary western culture, which is pervaded by a 'therapeutic imperative' (Furedi 2004; see also Foucault 1979). Such an imperative – to focus on and seek help in dealing with 'emotional problems' –

in some ways contradicts the argument for the 'untalkability' of emotional or physical pain and sensory experience, since those who adhere to it involve themselves in doing just that.[62] However, a significant point to be made here is that lay people are assumed to need professional guidance – namely a 'therapist' – to equip them to talk in such a way, as well as a dedicated space in which to do so. In particular this has resonance with the commercialisation of intimacy and feeling which Hochschild has so effectively explored, and which is addressed later in this chapter and throughout this thesis.

The work highlighted here constitutes a move towards a more embodied approach to doing sociology: one which not only takes bodies as its focus but also conceives and understands sociologists and the people they study as 'embodied beings' who have and are their bodies. Hence this approach takes embodiment as 'the condition of possibility for our relating to the other people and to the world' (Cregan 2006:3). Despite the way in which an embodied sociology puts the sensory centre stage, sociological work which attends specifically to the senses is nonetheless minimal in its present quantity. An aspect of this which requires closer attention in the present context is the sense of touch, and it is to unpacking what has been and can be said about this that I now turn.

Touch

It has been suggested that the sense of touch 'may well prove to be the most difficult of all the senses to analyse because it is composed of so many interacting dimensions' (Grosz 1995:98). This section seeks to explore some of these dimensions and to approach touch as a shared social phenomenon. I am wary of terming the increased interest in all things sensuous as a 'return' to the senses (Paterson 2009), given the implication of revisiting some earlier state. However, as with the re-reading of early sociology outlined above, this is so in that social scientific interest in the senses is not an entirely new direction, but one which has the opportunity to re-read or extend earlier work. The 'sensuous turn' can also be seen, in a suitably tactile metaphor, as a move by sociologists and anthropologists to 'wrestle the senses out of the hands of psychologists' (Howes 2011), whose conceptions of the sensory have dominated in social science for so long. Recent scholarship has (re)emphasised the significance of the senses and

[62] Furedi refers specifically to 'talking therapies' such as counselling and psychotherapy, although this can be extended to include Holistic Massage, given the implicit emotional component to holism and the more explicit inclusion of counselling techniques in some Holistic Massage training (see Chapter Three).

embodied sensual experience for sociology and the social sciences and humanities in general (see Classen 2005c; Mason and Davies 2009; Paterson 2007; Smith 2007). Attention has been drawn to the grounding of perceptions of the social world in cultural assumptions pertaining to the senses and to consciousness (Howes 2005b), and touch is singled out as 'a continuous thread that helps constitute the thickness and reassurance of everyday embodied experience' (Paterson 2009:129).

The position of touch in the hierarchy of the senses has varied through its interaction with changing cultural and historical contexts and its status has long been the subject of debate. Whatever its common-sense standing, the importance of touch in human life is difficult to deny, since:

> 'Without a sense of touch, moving about in the world would be impossible. We usually think it is our hands that give us the most touch information because we use them to manipulate objects, but everything we do, including sitting, walking, kissing […] depends on touch.' (Field 2003:75)[63]

This all-pervasiveness is evident in the English language, where the use of 'touch' itself indicates something of its prominence in our experience: as numerous texts which focus on touch point out, the word has one of the longest entries in the Oxford English Dictionary. 'Touch' also forms the basis of idioms ranging from informal uses with fairly negative connotations such as 'touchy-feely' or 'touching (someone) up', to those implying the need for careful handling ('touchy' subjects), to associations with emotion and affect (to be touched' by an event or action). It becomes evident that the language of emotional experience is inextricably linked with notions of touching and tactility. The 'conceptual slippage between touching and feeling' (Paterson 2007:6) becomes clear: people feel happy or sad, emotions are embodied.[64] The extensive presence of touch in the language of embodied experience indicates its crucial role in constituting this experience.

Foremost among the many 'interacting dimensions' of touch are the role of touch in being-in and knowing-of the world, and the social and cultural factors which shape understandings and uses of it. The central aim of this section is to touch as a, if not the, primary mode of embodiment: the most immediate and a crucial way of knowing-of and

[63] Field claims here that feeling pain also depends on touch, a point which seems somewhat odd, given that many kinds of (for example internal or emotional) pain have nothing to do with touch.
[64] This conceptual slippage permeates the way the practitioners I interviewed talked about their work, and is also capitalised in my conceptualisation of 'touching work' discussed later in this chapter.

being-in the world. The conceptual framework developed here will then be used in later chapters in relation to Holistic Massage, in order to gain greater understanding of what touch means and does and how it is done in that particular context. The advantages provided by doing so include the unpacking of touch in a specific type of social interaction which is located within multiple relationships – including relations of healthcare, marketisation/commodification, embodiment and power – and of wider understandings of embodiment in the contemporary UK.

This thesis is concerned with inter-personal or 'social' touching, in the sense that it is 'other-oriented' (Schutz [1932]1967). This is touch between two (or more) people for whom it can be meaningful, whether or not these meanings are congruent. The ubiquity of touch in social life means not only that it is of significant relevance to every social individual, but that its exploration is a necessarily inter-disciplinary endeavour. The following section will consider perspectives from sociology as well as from nursing studies, social psychology, anthropology, history, education and the arts. Through an examination of these arguments, a workable sociological framework for this thesis will be presented.

Qualities and possibilities of touch

> 'Touch is not only essential for well-being, it is essential for being' (Synnott 1993:156)

The social, context-dependent character of touch means that there are innumerable possibilities for its interpretation. Touch can be procedural, a means to an end (Chang 2001; van Dongen and Elema 2001) and therefore notionally devoid of care, and focused instead on technical outcomes. As an action between two people, touch is immediate and demanding of a reaction (Thayer 1982; 1986). Touch can be sexual, and may be experienced as pleasurable or unpleasant in this sense: as in the caress of a lover (Sartre [1969]2003); or the unwanted touch of an abuser. Touch can be seen as aggression (O'Brien at al 2007; Westmarland et al 2008); as an invasion of personal space and bodily security (Finnegan 2002); or positive, as a route to wellbeing (Turp 2000) and a way of re-integrating mind and body when embodied experience has left these at odds (Leder and Krucoff 2008). The meanings associated with touch are historically and culturally specific, and therefore subject to change over time, as Elias has illustrated

([1939]2000). Touch can be framed as a mode of communication (Barnett 1972; Routasalo 1998). It is influenced by a range of social factors including gender (Stier and Hall 1984; Evans 2002; Savage 1995) and age (Savage 1995; Edvardsson et al 2003). It has the potential to signify or convey power and status (Henley 1973; Stier and Hall 1984; Storrs and Kleinke 1990). And as I have already suggested, it is a way of being embodied, of knowing-about and being-in the world (Field 2003; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Paterson 2007).

Many perspectives on touch take a somewhat dualistic view, characterising it as one or the other of, say 'expressive' or 'instrumental'; 'affective' or 'procedural'; 'active' or 'passive'. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'affect' as 'making a difference to', and cites touch as its very medium: as in to 'touch the feelings of (someone); move emotionally'. Affective touching can be a feature of caring in a domestic context – for example for an elderly or disabled relative, or between parent and child – and a 'nurturing' tactile relations between mother and baby is highly significant for child development (Benthien 2002; Orbach 2004; Barnett 2005; Montagu 1971; Burton and Heller 1963). Harlow's ([1962]1999) controversial experiments using touch deprivation with rhesus monkeys are often cited in touch research as evidence of the correlation between physical contact and development.[65]

Affective or expressive touch is also present in more formalised care contexts, although in such settings interpersonal touch is more often presented as a procedural 'technique': as used in Physiotherapy or other health practices, and in care work. Conceptualising touch as purely 'procedural' or 'instrumental' is problematic, however, in that while touch may well be understood as a method of achieving goals (Chang 2001), it assumes that emotion/affect can be fully removed from the equation. Framing touch specifically as a procedure or technique – of manipulation or palpation, for example – can be read as an attempt to lessening the ambiguity around the interpretation of that touch (see Nathan 1999), and to contain touch within 'professional' boundaries. However, a division between affective and procedural touch is ultimately difficult to maintain, not least

[65] The young monkeys were found to prefer the cloth 'mothers' to their wire counterparts regardless of whether they provided milk, and to return to them for comfort when distressed: the overall implication being that comforting tactile experience is crucial for healthy physical and mental development (Harlow and Harlow [1962] 1999).

because the interpretation of the person being touched will not necessarily correspond to those of the toucher.[66]

The ways in which touch can be categorised are seemingly endless. Further to the commonly cited categories of expressive/affective and instrumental/procedural, a third category of 'protective' touch has been identified in the context of nursing – a category primarily characterised as negative and as being deployed in order to control patients or create distance (Estabrooks and Morse 1992) – while another approach from nursing introduces 'accidental', 'functional' and 'therapeutic' touch **(**Gale and Hegarty 2000). In research on perceptions of touch amongst people living with AIDS, Chapman (2000) uses the categories of 'functional/professional', 'social/polite', 'friendship/warmth' and 'love/intimacy' to describe the various perceptions and understandings identified. In a critique of touch as used in conventional medicine, it is proposed that the foremost forms of touch in the context of the contemporary 'clinical encounter' are 'objectifying' or 'absent' touch (Leder and Krucoff 2008), which is contrasted against 'gestural', 'impactful' and/or 'reciprocal' forms of 'healing' touch.

All these categorisations have their uses, and they go some way to describing the many different approaches to understanding touch. However, while procedural or instrumental touch from one perspective may be seen as the converse of touch which is expressive or affective, I argue that it is it is fruitful to view touch less dichotomously. Clear-cut distinctions between these categories are difficult to maintain since the meanings attributed to touch are shaped by factors such as the toucher's expressed or perceived intention, the relationship between those touching and being touched, and the context in which the touching occurs (Stier and Hall 1984). It is crucial to look beyond dichotomous pairings, into the grey areas where they intersect, and to understand touch as a multi-dimensional field.

The 'problem' of touching (I): conceptual unpacking

Touch may be considered as a 'problem' in two senses. Firstly, this applies in the sense that touch must be problematised and unpacked in order that it may be used as a conceptual tool in application to empirical research. Secondly, touch is a 'problem' in

[66] This ties into the notion of the (un)bounded explored in Chapters Five and Six.

contemporary UK society as it relates to issues of intimacy and taboo, and in the sense that it is associated with risk. The following section addresses the first of these problems, with the latter attended to later in the chapter.

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> '…every body is tangible, i.e. perceptible by touch; hence necessarily, if an animal is to survive, its body must have tactual sensation.' (Aristotle, cited in Freeland 1995:237)

The necessity of touch in the lives of humans and animals alike, and its status in the sensory hierarchy, have been debated since antiquity. The Aristotelian approach to touch frames it as the one sense common to all animals, but also (or rather therefore) as the basest of the senses, precisely because it connects humans so closely to nature (Freeland 1995).[67] The Aristotelian view is of somewhat limited scope in that it focuses only on passive touching (Freeland 1995), rather than the inter-personal, social touching considered in this thesis. However, Aristotle's formulation does nonetheless offer a conceptual starting point when taken as representative of early western philosophical understandings of touch, and a sensuous ordering – in which touch is lowest and sight highest (Aristotle [c.350 BC] 1998) and which remains the dominant model of the senses in the contemporary west. The sight-centeredness, or 'ocularcentrism' (Howes 2005b), which dominates contemporary social and cultural forms has maintained this order (Paterson 2007; Vasseleu 1998; Jay 1994). Just as touch has a significant presence in the English language, idiomatic allusions to sight demonstrate the primacy of the visual in contemporary western culture. As Classen (2005b) notes:

> 'The proliferation of visual imagery in modernity promotes the notion that the world is, above all, something to see. This is conveyed, for example by the expression "world view", which implies that cosmologies, or systems of belief, can be visually mapped by anyone with an adequate overview.' (Classen 2005b:147)

From the scientific revolution of the sixteenth century onwards, 'rational' science and medicine have on one hand played significant roles in the valorisation of sight: an

[67] Aristotle also intimately links the sense of touch to desire, given that 'wherever [pleasure and pain] are present, there is desire, for desire is appetition of what is pleasant' (Aristotle, cited in Freeland 1995:237). This introduces the issue of physical pleasure, which is at the very root of touch and one which also devalues it, given the post-Enlightenment rationalist drive to 'master' nature and its impulses.

assigning of value which culminates in the notion of the 'gaze' (Foucault [1963]2003).[68] In gaining access to the interior of human bodies, medicine shifted away from the 'felt' knowledge of the Galenic approach – which incorporated touch in the forms of palpation, and pulse and temperature-taking (Nutton 1993) – towards a medicine based on looking, and characterised by a general absence of touch. Touch was marginalised as the work of surgeons, who at that time were little more qualified than a high street barber (and surgery was often practiced by the same). Clear parallels can be drawn with the Cartesian mind/body order, which elevates sight, alongside thought, to a higher level, while touch is equated to the lesser, bodily, animalistic side of the binary.

However, it should also be noted that Foucault's ([1963]2003) 'medical gaze', on the other hand, incorporates not only vision, but hearing and touch:

> '…the eye certainly does not have the most important function [in medicine]; what can sight cover other than "the tissue of the skin and the beginning of the membranes"? Through touch we can locate visceral tumours, scirrhous masses, swellings of the ovary, and dilations of the heart […] The medical gaze is now endowed with a plurisensorial structure' (Foucault [1963]2003: 202, my emphasis)

The primacy of vision in medicine is in this sense problematic. To say touch is entirely absent would be extreme. However, technological intermediaries such as the stethoscope, the speculum, forceps and rubber gloves certainly have a distancing or 'dematerialising' (Twigg 2000b) effect.[69]

A clear lineage of touch research can be traced from Harlow's ([1962] 1999) experiments and Jourard's investigation of 'bodily accessibility' (Jourard 1966),[70] through Montagu's often cited (1971) interdisciplinary exploration. While the developmental focus common to each of these has held prominence in the literature over the last thirty years (Field 2003; Turp 1999), interest in touch has at the same time spread to other academic areas such as

[68] The valorisation of sight continues in popular presentations of scientific knowledge as was evident in the recent BBC series 'The Wonders of the Universe'. The series concluded with a eulogy to the evolution of the eye, to which some scientists have attributed 'a fundamental role in the emergence of complex life on earth and [which] could have led to the evolution of our species' (Cox 2011).

[69] An effect which, it can be argued, is largely absent from CAM, although practices such as the wearing of latex gloves are beginning to appear, for example in Acupuncture. However, this is not at the behest of practitioners, but of licensing laws which, in health and safety terms, group Acupuncturists together with other practices which pierce the skin such as tattoo artistry. Given the need in Acupuncture for sensitive palpation, one wonders about the extent to which such legislation is complied with in practice.

[70] Which mapped male and female bodies in terms of their availability for touching (see below).

communication studies (beginning with Frank 1957). But, while the communicative aspects of physical contact are significant, it is necessary to approach touch not as an isolated means of communication, but as part of an overall cultural system (Howes 2005b, 2005c) of learning, communicating, and ultimately being. Touch is the first way in which we learn about the world after birth (Montagu 1971; Field 2003), and the means by which we enter into social life overall, as Orbach notes:

> 'We enter human culture through a relationship [i.e. between mother and baby] in which we require touch and we need to touch others. Touch in the bio-psychic means by which we feel our bodies and the bodies of others. Touch initiates our subjective bodily senses.' (Orbach 2004:23)

In this way touch is established as the most immediate means by which we continue to know of the world around us as we go through life. Without touch '…we lose all sense of being in the world, and fundamentally of being at all' (Rodway 1994:41). Having said this, it is necessary to appreciate not just the significance of touch for knowing about and being-in-the-world, but also the ways in which touch is shaped by spatial, cultural and gendered factors.

Ordering the senses: culture, gender, space

> '…perception is a shared social phenomenon – and as a social phenomenon it has a history and a politics that can only be comprehended within its cultural setting.' (Howes 2005b:5, my emphasis)

Approaching touch as a primary mode of perception, a way of being-in-the-world, situates touch as 'the existential ground of culture and self' (Csordas 1994). The hierarchy of the senses which applies to 'western' epistemological tradition does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is shaped or constructed by cultural and social factors which, I have proposed, orders sight above touch. Hence the interplay between touching and the context in which it occurs must be examined. The contextual factors addressed here are culture, gender and space. 'Culture' is approached as signifying the predominant way of being in any given place and point in time; gender as a shaping factor in relation to embodied interactions; and space as having an organising influence, particularly in relation to ideas of appropriate behaviour, and concerning where touch may acceptably occur.

The historical and cultural specifity of touch is demonstrated nowhere more clearly than in the privatisation of bodies and their functions constitutive of the 'civilizing process' (Elias [1939] 2000). The examination of rules of etiquette vis-à-vis social norms of a given time shows that the ideas which surround touch are normative. That is, they are constructed alongside and through associated notions of appropriateness, decency and wider ideas about the body. These norms and practices are fluid, changing over time, and public discourse such as the etiquette guides cited by Elias reinforce and disseminate these ideas. While not about interpersonal touching per se, Elias' history of manners demonstrates that ways of consuming food 'are a segment – a very characteristic one – of the totality of socially instilled forms of conduct' (Elias [1939]2000:51). Further examples of the instruction offered by Erasmus are given with regards to touching food:

> 'Leave dipping your fingers in the broth to the peasants. Do not poke around in the dish but take the first piece that presents itself. And just as it shows a want of forbearance to search the whole dish with one's hand… neither is it very polite to turn the dish round so that a better piece comes to you.' (Elias [1939] 2000: 50)

The introduction of cutlery as technological intermediaries to touch – on a par with the medical technologies noted above – may be seen as indicative of the distancing of people from the sensory immediacy of touching food. Given the often substantial gaps between 'officially' propounded knowledge and everyday practice, instances such as this may not illustrate everyday touching rules as practiced: however, they do at least present ideals, typifications of how people should behave. Taken as indicative of wider social norms, it might be reasonable to expect from commands such as the example above, that the social, interactive touching of bodies was likewise governed by specific rules. As well as the ways in which food travelled from plate to mouth, examples of the communality of eating and living at a time prior to the 'civilisation'/privatisation of physical contact are worth noting, for the absence of the:

> 'invisible wall of affects which seems now to rise between one human body and another, repelling and separating, the wall which is often perceptible today at the mere approach of something that has been in contact with the mouth or hands of someone else' (Elias [1939] 2000: 60)

In this way Elias documents the process by which feelings of disgust and shame develop and become normative via controls imposed on the individual from outside: tropes of 'purity' and 'danger' (Douglas [1966]2002) produce taboos which are eventually

embodied and reproduced in such a way that bodily ways of being reflect entrenched cultural norms (as discussed further below).

Where such norms vary, so do assumptions about touch, as Ting-Toomey illustrates:

> 'while Chinese view opposite-sex handshakes as acceptable, Malays and Arabs view contact by opposite-sex handshakes as taboo. […] The friendly full embrace between males is much more acceptable in many Latin American cultures than in Britain or the United States. Likewise, the friendly arm link pattern between two males in Arab and Latin American cultures is a commonplace practice.' (Ting-Toomey 1999: 130)

In any society at any given time, whether sixteenth century Europe or contemporary Latin America, culture-bound nuances are found in the rules which regulate when, where and with whom touch is appropriate. In a cross-cultural context, Classen (2005b) emphasises the way in which cultural assumptions shape perception, and the futility of attempts at abstraction. In relation to three different examples of 'non-literate' societies that give sensory primacy respectively to heat, colour and odour,[71] Classen notes that this ordering must be '…understood within the context of a particular culture and not through generalized external sensory paradigms' (Classen 2005b:160), that is, the ways in which sensory perceptions are invested with social-contextual meaning and accordingly regulated. These differences are not superficial, but rather indicate different ways of being embodied (cf. Crossley 1998 on Merleau-Ponty and the embodiment of emotions).

Although interesting and illustrative, cross-cultural generalisations are of limited applicability since the shaping of touch is never mono-causal, and local cultural norms will always interact with other social factors such as age, gender and status. However, examples such as those given above are useful in underlining context-specific interpretations and variations of touch, and reasons why attention to these are useful for understanding one person's perception of another (Dibiase and Gunnoe 2004).

I want to briefly raise two further examples of touching in which western cultural and social influences are clear: first in relation to children, and then to people with learning disabilities. Attitudes toward touch between children and adults range from the prohibitive – as in the parenting manuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

[71] Namely the Tzotzil of Mexico, the Desana of Colombia and the Ongee of Little Andaman Island (Classen 2005b).

centuries – to the strong encouragement of, for example, La Leche League (Halley 2007), who advocate extensive parent-child physical contact in relation to breastfeeding.[72] Significantly, Halley not only identifies the essentialism inherent in views propounded by the latter organisation (who present women solely as mothers), but also the lacuna in feminist positions on touch. In this regard, third wave feminist orientations to sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse have tended to eclipse any positive feminist perspectives on touch (Halley 2007).

Touch in education, particularly in the so-called 'early years', is also a source of constant debate. This relates not so much to what kinds of touch to use, but whether touching children is in fact appropriate at all (see Lipsett 2008), and strictures on how children may be touched in educational settings are perceived to be ever-increasing (Field 2003). A recent survey of English schools and nurseries highlighted the caution towards touch which has now been normalised within nursery and primary schooling, in which the rule now tends towards 'no touching' (Stronach and Piper 2008). This rule (found by Stronach and Piper to be of particular pertinence in state-governed education) is held by many teachers to be a necessary, if unfortunate, response to increasing restrictions within education policy (Piper and Stronach 2008). Those areas of education where touch is freely allowed or encouraged tend be 'alternative' educational formats such as Summerhill School in East Anglia (Stronach and Piper 2008).[73]

Touching can also be a major consideration for those working with people with learning disabilities, where touch is usually couched in terms of its significance either for an individual's development or as a therapeutic measure (see Dobson et al 2002). Interpretations of touch in this context may be problematic due to potentially marked differences in understanding and intention of the toucher and the person touched. For example, some types of autism involve a quite different perception of touch to what is considered 'normal' (Diamond 2006), and touch may not in some instances be tolerated at all (Cullen and Barlow 2002), or may be responded to with other more 'aggressive'

[72] The pro-touch position of this Christian-based group is somewhat ironic, given the more generally anti-touch imperative of the Christian faith.

[73] Stronach and Piper (2008) note interesting practical issues in relation to the difficulties of talking about touch without sexualising it, which they had to overcome in their research, and which is once again indicative of the common-sense meanings assigned to touch and its associated vocabulary.

forms of touch such as hitting or pushing.[74] Such conflicts demonstrate ways in which perceptions of touch are shaped by factors such as 'age, gender, attitude, personality, education, and value systems' (Dobson et al 2002:353). Touching in this instance is also framed by the extent to which those involved understand the communicative ability of the person with whom they are working; and in this sense their ability to recognise when touching is not appropriate (cf. Davidhizar and Giger 1997 on nursing care). New staff in care situations are in some cases disinclined to touch those they are caring for in the initial stages of their employment, but usually come to develop their own way of using touch (Dobson et al 2004). In this sense the context of learning disability is an area where the correspondence between intention and perception of touch are challenged.[75] Both this and the example of 'early years' education are contexts where touching may thus be particularly risky. Given the characterisation of contemporary society as a 'risk society' (Beck 1992), this is telling of broader understandings of touch. Many of these normative ideas about touch as risky were alluded to in the interviews I conducted, as drawn on in Chapters Three to Six.

Gender is another significant factor in interpreting the social construction of touch. Challenging the binary thinking of the Cartesian dualism, feminist critiques have highlighted ways in which men are aligned with ('rational') mind and thought, and women with ('instinctual') body and feeling (see Grosz 1995; Merchant 1980 amongst many others). Hence women are presented as 'naturally' more available to both touch and be touched: a conjecture which early touch research supported. By way of experimental research, Jourard (1966) subdivided the body into regions depending on their availability to touch, with the head found to be the most 'touchable', and the 'areas most obviously linked with sexuality' least so (Jourard 1966:229). This 'touchability' is also clearly gendered, with more areas of women's than men's bodies being touched, and more often. Field (2003) cites a medical study where the women involved 'felt that any touch on their thighs, lips and chest was sexual', whereas male participants 'perceived touching those parts of the body as friendly, warm and affectionate' (Field 2003:27).[76] This may be compared with essentialised notions of masculinity which see men as

[74] Indeed these 'abnormal' responses to touch are one of the indicators that a child's behaviour lies on the 'autism spectrum' in the first place.
[75] See also Akerstrom (2002) on elderly care, in which violent touch of carers by residents is reframed as non-violent in order to 'downplay' its implications.
[76] This mapping of bodies is interesting in light of what Kath in particular had to say in her in interview about 'sexuality' (see Chapter Five).

generally 'predatory', meaning their access to bodies needing to be restricted (Connell 1995). In a similar vein, Henley identified a 'touching privilege' as being held by those of high status (usually men), giving them license to touch those of lower status, particularly women (Henley 1973; 1977). This position has been challenged in favour of the possibility that touch can be used not only by those with power and status; but also actively by those with lesser power, as a status-gaining device (Stier and Hall 1984). Henley's research has nonetheless played a significant role in shaping understandings of the gendered aspects of touch, and continues to offer a basis from which to understand touch in relation to gender and power.

A consideration of spatial factors in relation to touch is also relevant here. As well as being the primary way in which children learn about, interact with and locate themselves in space, space/place shapes the types of physical contact that can and do happen. Touch between people requires a spatial relationship of proximity.[77] While sights, sounds, smells and tastes can, to different degrees, travel through space, interpersonal touch requires the two touchers to physically meet. On a wider scale, the spatial organisation of touch also relates to public and private spaces, and the norms and expectations which govern touching in each. And, while going somewhat beyond the focus of this argument, ways of touching can even be viewed on a 'macro' scale, as being shaped and ordered along (generalised) national, continental or even global lines.

Despite interpretations to the contrary (Shilling 1993), Goffman offers a decidedly corporeal sociology (Crossley 1995a), and his dramaturgical metaphor (1959) is useful for understanding the interplay between touching and space. This approach sees action as being dependent on place – as well as on who one's audience might be – and divides behaviour according to that which might be performed 'front stage' and 'back stage'. It is easy to imagine the ways in which this might be applied descriptively to touching, in terms of contact which might be done publicly in front of an audience, and that which would be conducted behind the scenes. In the case of Lawler's (1991) account of nursing, this (dirty) touching work takes place 'behind the screens', an allusion which foregrounds the interactional context of touch, rather than its root 'causes'. Goffman is also useful in elucidating the need for shared meanings, and congruent intentions and expectations on

[77] The need for co-presence is thus a distinguishing characteristic of touching work, as noted below.

either side of an interaction for the organisation of touch. Embarrassment is felt when there is inconsistency between what a person is expected to do and what they actually do (Goffman 1967).[78] A mismatch between intention, perception and meaning may be caused by variations in those individuals' prior experience of a given situation, or a misunderstanding of the obligations or expectations which sit upon them. Of this touch is a clear example: indeed, touching interactions, when they go wrong, may have consequences even more severe for the 'normative order' than in the face-to-face communication Goffman describes. Many of the above tropes were drawn on in the interviews, but the notion of embarrassment in particular raises questions about reciprocity and intimacy, to which this chapter now turns its attention, and about the interrelated theme of taboo, a discussion of which follows the next section.

The 'problem' of touching (II): reciprocity and intimacy

There are a number of assumptions which underpin touch in general, and work which revolves around touching in particular. Amongst these may be numbered 'intention', 'context', 'expectation', and 'previous experience' (Hunter and Struve 1998:96-100).[79] In the specific context of massage these can be detailed further to include the suppositions that: '[p]eople are comfortable removing their clothes to be touched'; '[p]eople are comfortable lying on their back or facedown'; '[t]ouch is inherently relaxing'; and [p]assively receiving touch is comforting' (Bailey cited in Hunter and Struve 1998:225). As will be discussed in Chapter Four, these assumptions were for the most part borne out by my participants (with significant exceptions where they talked about, for example, survivors of abuse or torture).

In general, it is suggested that in a therapeutic context, '…touch unfolds through an impactful, expressive, reciprocity between the toucher and the touched' (Leder and Krucoff 2008:321). Leder and Krucoff's assertion raises the significant issue of reciprocity, and the extent to which touch is reciprocal must be problematised to be more fully understood here. The perspective cited earlier which identifies touch as gendered (Henley 1977) refers to a particular type of 'non-reciprocal' touch, that is to say touch which is understood as active only on one side, conveying power over a passive

[78] A question also taken up in relation to the work of Schutz's concept of 'motives' in Chapter Two.
[79] There are echoes here, as elsewhere in this discussion, of the Schutzian perspective outlined in Chapter Two.

recipient. As stated earlier, the form of touch under consideration here is interpersonal and thus largely interactive. While the issue of consent clearly has a part to play here (and I will say more on this in a moment), to say that in any given touching interaction, one person is wholly active, and the other entirely passive, is to deny the agency of the supposedly 'passive' individual. Rather, understanding touching as reflexive (Merleau-Ponty 1962) or bi-directional (Leder and Krucoff 2008) – that is to say, when I touch you, you also touch me – is more appropriate to appreciating the multi-dimensional form of this type of social interaction, particularly in the context of 'touching work'.[80]

The 'impactful, expressive reciprocity' of touch suggested by Leder and Krucoff (2008) implies a level of intimacy between those involved in the interaction. Just as it necessitates physical proximity, '…touch is almost literally defined by the surrender of boundaries and the adoption of relational intimacy' (Leder and Krucoff 2008:324); a point which Twigg has also argued in relation to bathing work (Twigg 2000b). Its potential to create intimacy could be a significant reason for touch being 'the most carefully guarded and monitored of all social behaviours' (Thayer 1986:13). Since some conceptual ambiguity exists in common-sense understandings of 'intimacy' – as, on the one hand a detailed knowledge of or close relationship with something or someone, and, on the other, as a euphemism for sexual activity – this term needs further clarification. In the first sense, 'disclosing intimacy' has been identified as 'the centre of meaningful personal life in contemporary societies' (Jamieson 1998:1). This type of intimacy, Jamieson suggests, 'must include close association, privileged knowledge, deep knowing and understanding and some form of love, but it need not include practical caring and sharing' (Jamieson 1998:13). So here on the one hand is an intimacy which relies on knowledge but not care-taking. On the other hand – and taking understandings of intimacy as inextricably tied to social change as well as to notions of 'romantic love' and the 'democratisation' of interpersonal relationships – Giddens' conceptualisation picks up on the second sense, of intimacy as emotional and/or physical closeness. In this case intimacy is 'above all a matter of emotional communication, with others and with the self, in a context of interpersonal equality' (Giddens 1992: 130). This type of intimacy, or 'closeness' has been directly linked to touch and physical interaction in nursing

[80] This is proposed as a general rule and there are important caveats to this, primarily that there are instances where to understand touching interactions as agentic on both sides would clearly be dangerous.

(Savage 1995), and care work (Twigg 2000a). Here it is an issue especially given the levels of nakedness and direct skin-to-skin contact involved, as Twigg has observed:

> 'The social meaning of nakedness is closely associated with intimacy, and in modern western culture particularly with sexual intimacy. The link between nakedness and closeness is both a direct one, in that nakedness permits actual physical touch and closeness; and a metaphorical one, in that to be naked is to divest oneself of protection and disguise' (Twigg 2000a:46, my emphasis)

This perspective underlines the context-specifity of meaning and points to intimacy in a third sense, as a synonym for sexual relationships. A conflation of these two has resulted not least due to the influence of psychoanalytic theory, and the rise in popularity of the notion that it is only through sex that we can truly 'know' ourselves and others (Plummer 1995). On the whole, the significance of touch here is in its role as non-verbal behaviour in the 'balance of intimacy' in close relationships (Thayer 1986:14), a balance which is of particular relevance in situations which involve a paid interaction. When people are paid to touch (as in Holistic Massage) a particular 'negotiation' of intimacy is required (Paterson 2007). In this interaction, not only touch, but also intimacy, becomes commodified (Hochschild 2003). The implications of this are returned to later in the chapter and permeate my analysis.

Leder and Krucoff's (2008) assertion that a touching interaction involves a 'surrender of boundaries' is problematic, however, in that many instances of touch and the boundary-crossing this entails are not welcomed, and may contrarily result not in intimacy (in any positive sense) but rather in aggression. This is the case when touch constitutes a perceived 'invasion' of personal space (Finnegan 2005), which illustrates the immediacy of touch as action:

> 'In the "bubble" of privacy that people maintain around themselves, touch perhaps represents the most direct invasion […] Thus we follow agreed (or relatively agreed) conventions when we accord people the right to touch us in specific ways and interpret our and their actions accordingly.' (Finnegan 2005:18)

It is possible to look at a typified example of such an 'invasion' – for argument's sake a punch – in juxtaposition with another kind of touch which might be suppose to be generally characteristic of intimacy, a kiss. Of these two forms of touch, one typically expresses love and care and may indicate some level of physical intimacy (at least in the UK), while the other usually expresses anger or aggression. But rather than polarising

these two, it is the instantaneous effect which both forms of touch have simultaneously on the person that is actively doing the kissing or punching, and the person who receives it, which is of interest here. Touch as a mode of interaction is powerful in its immediacy (Thayer 1982; 1986), which is perhaps another reason for its strict control via the social rules and taboos discussed in the next section.

Touching taboos

As with concepts of intimacy and sexuality, Freudian psychoanalytic theory has had considerable influence on the notion of 'taboo', Freud framed the originally Polynesian term as the conceptual opposite of 'accessible' or 'common' (Freud 1919). In relation to touch, particularly in child development, both psychoanalysts and psychologists have suggested that the shift from a young child being encouraged to explore and learn via touching, to the prohibitive 'don't touch!' command, plays a substantial part in the instilling of touching taboos at an individual level (Bosanquet 2006). In order to address the role that such taboos play at a broader societal level, however, it is fruitful to look to anthropological understandings. As structures necessary to justify and maintain social order, taboos are understood as playing a significant role in social control, as exemplified in the 'incest taboo', the existence of which has been posed as necessary for the very 'birth of culture' (Levi-Strauss [1949]1969).[81] The symbolic boundaries of social order are maintained through the normative behaviour enforced by taboos, via the fear of contagion or pollution. Douglas echoes Elias here:

> 'The whole universe is harnessed to men's [sic] attempts to force one another into good citizenship. Thus we find that certain moral values are upheld and certain social rules defined by beliefs in dangerous contagion, as when the hand or touch of the adulterer is held to bring illness to his neighbours or his children.' (Douglas 1966:4)

It was proposed earlier that touch is more closely constrained and monitored than many other kinds of human behaviour (Thayer 1982, 1986): perhaps increasingly so in the contemporary west. This is so not only due to the level of intimacy that it might introduce, but because of its power to pollute, symbolically or literally: touching is implicated in the construction and maintenance of social order. Taboos and notions of pollution have been instrumental in maintaining the stigmatisation of certain social

[81] Malinowski's ([1932] 1968) account of the attitude to incest in the society of the Trobriand Islanders underlines the fact that taboo is socially constructed and culturally specific.

groups, a prominent example being mutual 'untouchability' within the Indian caste system (see Michael 1999; Gorringe 2004).[82] In the UK and elsewhere, a similar categorisation of 'untouchable' has more recently been applied to people with HIV/AIDS, and throughout history has been applied to those with the socially unacceptable contagion of the time, be it TB, cancer or syphilis (see Sontag 1978; 1990; Gilman 1993). The very fact that HIV/AIDS in particular is given consideration in so much of the literature on touch produced in the 1990s and early 2000s now seems somewhat peculiar, but was a response to a misguided belief (and fear) that the illness could be transmitted via skin-to-skin contact.[83] But it also reflects the social and cultural preoccupation at the time when touch and the senses were beginning to gain greater attention in the social sciences and humanities. The fact that people with AIDS have to manage a 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1968) and, due to the associated stigma and fear of pollution or contamination, are left to experience a 'tactile hunger' (Chapman 2000) at the time when they are most vulnerable, exemplifies the persistence and power of such discourse once firmly established as shared belief.

In the context of healthcare, the taboos which control touch are particularly stark in medicine and the doctor-patient relationship. Hence it is interesting to look at the either outright avoidance or at least strong boundaries around touch in both the 'body' and 'mind' branches of conventional medicine. A quarter of a century ago psychoanalysts Burton and Heller inquired of their colleagues 'Has medicine dichotomized itself into those who "touch the body" and those who do not?' (Burton and Heller 1963). For the most part, the answer is an overwhelming 'yes'. The discouraging of touch within the psychoanalytic relationship can be traced back to Freud's introduction of the notion of 'abstinence' (Brafman 2006),[84] and has received substantial and hotly debated attention in the discipline more recently. The point of contention lies in the beliefs underlying this debate, outlined here by Orbach:

> 'Several assumptions dominate the discourse on touch in psychoanalysis. The first is that it is wrong, inappropriate, and unsafe: touch initiated by the therapist is invasive, potentially transgressive, and may bypass important

[82] The polluting capacity of touch, and the power this rhetoric held until relatively recently, is portrayed in Anand's (1940) compelling fictional description of a day in the life of an Indian 'sweeper' in the 1930s, in which an act of unwarranted touching is the pivotal point in the story.
[83] The controversy in the 1980s over film footage of Princess Diana touching/hugging people with HIV/AIDS was a very public testament to this.
[84] In line with his belief that touching interfered with the process of analysis.

> psychic material…[A]nother assumption is to see touch as a one-off occurrence that was either unfortunate, that worked in this particular instance, or was a close shave.' (Orbach 2006:xiii)

This ambivalence toward touch in a (relatively) mainstream healthcare interaction has implications for how touch is understood more broadly. As Porter has noted, '[i]t is the threat of the surreptitious slippage from one code [of touching] to another [ie. professional to sexual] that leaves clinical practice so subject to the anarchy of the double entendre' (Porter 1993:196).[85] For this reason, health care workers have been found to regularly employ a range of situation-defining 'desexualisation' strategies, for example in physical examinations, and are socialised to do so through their training, using both physical and verbal techniques in order to 'diffuse the [potentially] sexual meanings of the physical exam' (Giuffre and Williams 2000:470). Some strategies, such as the use of chaperones, are dependent on the gender dynamic of the interaction: a gendering shaped both by social perceptions of women as 'victims' and (hetero)normative assumptions which see sexual impropriety most often framed in male/female terms (Giuffre and Williams 2000).

The maintenance of boundaries between patients and practitioners is discussed extensively in the context of medical ethics and medical discourses of objectivity. Some recommend awareness of gender-specific issues, sexual abuse and the need for explicit education on boundary maintenance in medical training (Nadelson and Notman 2002). Others advocate attention to 'relationships rather than boundaries' (Combs and Freedman 2002) in the context of 'narrative therapy' (a form of psychotherapy). The question of boundaries is present in this literature for a number of reasons, not least the perceived need to prevent physical manifestations of the slippage between 'codes' Porter describes. The focus on boundaries highlights an issue specific to 'body work' – work which is located at the interface between the bodies of the practitioner and patient – which is the fact that special consideration is made in this type of work of what the interaction means to those involved and/or how it may be interpreted. But just as this 'slippage' is indubitable, it applies potentially not only to 'clinical practice', but to touch in any context where there is an aim to avoid litigation or to maintain a professional position. The ambiguity and ambivalence associated with touching is precisely what

[85] The idea of such 'codes' is comparable to what (Hochschild 1983) conceptualises as 'feeling rules' appropriate to different situations (see below).

makes it an issue. Just as this is the case for medical practitioners, so it is for other touching workers, including those who do Holistic Massage. Given the apparent readiness to slip between codes, the need for strong clear definitions of touch and touching work becomes apparent, be they social taboos, professional boundaries, or a broadly recognisable stock of knowledge. How this is and might be done is a theme of later chapters, especially Chapter Five.

This chapter now moves on to a tangible bodily boundary. Given its significance for the experience of tactual perception, this examination of touch concludes with a consideration of human skin not only as an organ of touch, but as a symbolic surface, a factor in identity, and the location of social interaction.

Within our own skins

The skin can be described as a 'symbolic surface' (Benthien 2002): either a canvas available for modification in order to express the 'true self', or an involuntary signifier of what lies beneath. It can also be thought of as a 'container' for human emotions, holding in 'hot-blooded' feelings which may be 'bottled up' or vented by 'letting off steam' (Lupton 1998). Skin has had a significant presence as a metaphor throughout western literature: for example, the dénouement of Choderlos de Laclos' Les Liaisons Dangereuses (1782) sees the face of the morally bankrupt Merteuil horrifically deformed by the scars of smallpox; and the severe scars which mark the protagonist of Morrison's Beloved (1987) are symbolic of her experience of slavery. In conventional medicine skin has, since the 19th Century, had its own speciality in dermatology,[86] while in 'holistic' healthcare practices such as Medical Herbalism and Homeopathy, skin problems are discursively framed as outward expressions of inner illness or imbalance.

Skin may be tattooed, stretched, pierced or painted. In accordance with contemporary western ideals where beauty is equated with youth, it may be injected with poison in order to address the 'problem' of wrinkles, or treated with intense light in order to keep it free of hair and blemishes. Decorating bodies with cosmetics is certainly not a new phenomenon, nor an exclusively western one. But the obsession with procedures ranging from basic

[86] As Cook notes in a review of a recent exhibition on skin at the Wellcome Trust, skin had until the 19th Century been 'viewed merely as a barrier to the internal organs that so intrigued the early anatomists. This view is depicted in many of the Renaissance écorché drawings, in which the subjects can be seen flaying the skin from their bodies like a gown' (Cook 2010:1420).

exfoliating creams to more brutal chemical peels – which involve burning off the epidermis with acid, and can leave the skin raw for months[87] – is symptomatic of the dual issue of the valorisation of youthful skin covering young bodies (and the pathologising of the opposite) and the distancing from or denial of death which marks contemporary western culture (Lasch 1991). The contradiction inherent in the notion of skin-as-canvas is that it is a surface capable of displaying both past – as 'the body's memory of our lives' (Prosser 2001:52) – and future, in that its decay indicates mortality (Farber 2006). The unique capability of cosmetic surgery and the numerous non-surgical 'treatments' on the market is that they can (or at least promise, and attempt, to) negate this, by eliminating the skin's capacity to show anything at all.[88] Hierarchical social orders based almost exclusively on the supposed 'superiority' of one skin colour over another are common to a range of cultures and time periods, and skin tone continues to be a significant marker of class and status.[89] This issue is too vast to be fully unpacked here, however. I therefore turn now to the role in plays in identity, as a surface and as a boundary.

The notion of bodily integrity has strengthened in western history (see, for example, Bakhtin 1984; Elias [1939]2000; Lacquer 1987; Martin 1987): and where bodies were once considered to be 'open' and unfinished, dominant bodily discourse has shifted toward the portrayal of 'closed', bounded, discrete units. As noted earlier, this characterisation is highly gendered, however, and feminist critiques have challenged this by drawing attention to the inherent 'leakiness' of bodies (Shildrick 1997). Shildrick has also addressed the notion of bodies as exclusively 'ours':

> 'Within conventional western discourse, to be a self is above all to be distinguished from the other, to be ordered and discrete secure within the well-defined boundaries of the body rather than actually being the body. We

[87] Despite this, peels are allegedly the 'fastest growing non-surgical cosmetic procedure in the US' (see http://www.transforminglives.co.uk/non-surgical/facial_peels.aspx, last accessed 14/6/11).
[88] The possibilities of cosmetic treatments seem to some extent to nullify Larkin's suggestion in his ode to skin ([1955]2011) that one 'cannot always keep/ that unfakable young surface'.
[89] One example of this is the skin-lightening practices common in South and East Asia, Latin America and elsewhere, which are capitalised on both by multi-national and small scale, local cosmetics producers (Glenn 2008). In each of the ethnic groupings cited by Glenn, skin tone is seen as a status signifier and, despite the associated health risks, bleaching products are used in attempts to keep up with ideals of 'youthful, attractive, modern and affluent' appearance (Glenn 2008:299). From personal observation, the ubiquity of advertising of skin lighteners on billboards and television in, for example, Hong Kong and the Philippines far exceeds any equivalent advertising in the UK of what might in some ways be seen as its converse, skin colouring products such as 'fake tan', despite the contemporary popularity of the latter. Interestingly, these issues pertain primarily to visual perception, once more underscoring the primacy of vision in the sensual hierarchy.

> live, as sovereign selves, within our own skins, where to imagine inhabiting the body of another would be a special kind of madness, or to find our own bodies shared by another would constitute an invasion.' (Shildrick 2001:161, original emphasis)

So, while perhaps not hermetically sealed, an idea of a whole encased in skin dominates, and illnesses which compromise the integrity of the skin have been identified as particularly difficult to deal with, emotionally, physically and ontologically. Tumours which break down the barrier of the skin evoke shame and disgust in both the person experiencing this and in others around them, which can result in an unbearable loss of selfhood and a horrifically distressing end of life (Lawton 1998). The persistent notion of the skin as the boundary of the individual is established in infancy, when it 'is through the skin that the newborn learns where she begins and ends, where the boundaries of her self are' (Benthien 2002:7). The challenge presented by the loss of this boundary is vast: given such long-standing, embodied assumptions, it is understandable that a person may struggle to comprehend who they 'are' or what they have become when the boundary between inside and outside, self and other, is breached.

The skin can be viewed not only as a boundary but also as an 'interface' (Stacey 1997; Prosser 2001) between self and society. As the 'site of encounter' (MacCormack 2006), where 'the self enters the world and the world enters the self' (MacCormack 2006), the skin becomes the very location of social interaction: the location of inter-embodied social interaction.[90] All of the preceding factors – the appearance of the skin, its age, its integrity – converge to shape this interaction. Moreover, framing the skin as highly significant in this way again confirms the point touched on earlier in relation to boundaries and intimacy. Interactions where one person's skin touches other's have a particular social significance and are therefore tightly, normatively regulated.

As is evident in the preceding discussion, the factors which influence touch and touching are numerous, and each plays a part in shaping something which is pertinent to all social life either by its presence or absence. The diverse but interrelated strands outlined above indicate the potential ambiguities in touch(ing) and as an inter-embodied relationship. The latter part of this discussion has been somewhat abstract, but in order to more fully examine how touch is experienced, used and understood, it is necessary to look at

[90] Trinh uses skin as a metaphor, referring to language as 'a skin with which I caress and feel the other' (1989:42).

concrete examples, especially those that relate to Holistic Massage. Massage is understood as a form of body work, or more specifically, 'touching work': in other words, body work in which touch is its primary way of 'doing'. To set the scene for the discussion of Holistic Massage in Chapters Three to Six, the concepts of body work, emotional labour, and ultimately 'touching work' are the focus of the last section of this first chapter.

Touching work = body work + emotional labour[91]

This section unpacks the distinct but closely linked concepts of emotional labour and body work and considers whether – for the purposes of this thesis and other similar research – work located at the point where bodies and emotions intersect might not be more appropriately re-conceptualised as 'touching work'. The established concept of 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983), and the less widely explored notion of 'body work' (Shilling 1993; Wolkowitz 2002, 2006),[92] are in turn discussed here, before the possibilities of 'touching work' as an analytical tool which brings the two together are considered. Since all three of these concepts focus on work, it is first necessary to clarify what is meant by this term.

As an area of study, work has been fundamental to the development of the discipline of sociology and has had a significant presence in sociological research and teaching, at least until relatively recently (see Halford and Strangleman 2009; Strangleman 2005). Yet, what work is often remains poorly defined (MacInnes 2008). The problem of the conceptualisation of work solely as paid employment was foregrounded by feminist scholars and others from the late 1960s onwards that drew attention to unpaid work of many kinds, and specifically to domestic labour (Hochschild [1983]2003, [1989]2003; James 1972; Oakley 1974). While work and employment are now acknowledged as separate although overlapping categories (Pahl 1988), paid and unpaid labour are frequently maintained as two distinct sides of a dichotomy (Taylor 2004) which has the effect of inhibiting clearer understandings in this area. Rather than dichotomising paid

[91] This heading invokes James' (1992) 'Care = organisation + physical labour + emotional labour'. While James' 'formula' can be seen as useful in highlighting the different components in care work, it has also been criticised for 'inadvertently replicat[ing] the Cartesian mind-body dualism' (Wolkowitz 2002:499). My own approach to 'touching work' aims to be less divisive.

[92] Although it has become significantly more well-established over the time of my writing this thesis. For example, February 2011 saw the publication of a special issue of Sociology of Health and Illness dedicated to 'Body Work'.

and unpaid employment, it is more fruitful to think of work as something which 'involves the provision of a service to others or the production of goods for the consumption of others' (Taylor 2004:38).[93] This allows for the 'extending [of] conceptual boundaries' around work is allowed for (Taylor 2004), making it possible to think of work as a more complex field.

A range of significant changes have occurred in the sphere of work in recent years in the UK and elsewhere which have particular resonance with Holistic Massage. Not least of these has been the 'feminisation' of employment, which has accompanied women's increased participation in the labour market and a substantial growth in the service sector, and which has involved a move toward part-time working and flexible hours (McDowell 2009). Such shifts have proved difficult for some more 'traditional' sociologists of work to fathom, since it has appeared to them:

> 'almost inconceivable that working in shops or cafes, providing massages, cleaning houses and teaching children was "work" in the old sense of producing material products through the application of brute strength and heroic effort, typically by men.' (McDowell 2009:2-3)

This may be especially acute in work that can be deemed 'sensuous', given the stronger association of the latter with 'play' than 'work' (Scarry 1985).[94] Nonetheless, these practices and many others are considered work in a very clear sense by the growing number of people who do them, including my interviewees. Moreover, the significant increase in occupations focusing on the body means that the number of people employed in this field has grown to a substantial level:

> 'It can be argued that in the affluent OECD economies […] the provision of mundane paid body work services has become a vital replacement for the production of objects as a source of profit and employment' (Wolkowitz 2002:499)[95]

This increase ties in closely to what Hochschild (2003) has called the 'commercialisation of intimate life', in which work previously done by wives and mothers is increasingly outsourced to other individuals operating in the marketplace. What is needed are more

[93] This is an approach which is congruent with the conceptualisation of 'body work' as work done on or to the body of others, a discussion of which follows shortly.
[94] Foucault (1979) has also noted the separation of work and pleasure which accompanied the development of capitalism.
[95] And it is not only these countries which have seen an increase in 'body work', since 'for the poorer countries tourism, including sex tourism, is a key economic activity' (Wolkowitz 2002:499).

ways of knowing about and understanding these newer forms of work in/on workers' terms.

An in-depth discussion of the sociology of work is not the main concern here. Rather, the aim is to highlight three key points. One is that work is significant, in the current thesis and for sociological inquiry, because it plays a highly significant part in most people's lives (McDowell 2009). Whether in domestic labour, the service sector, industry, the knowledge economy or anywhere else, work has an important role in individuals' embodied experience of being-in-the-world (Wolkowitz 2006). What is more, it has been suggested that individuals in contemporary society increasingly seek 'self-fulfilment' via the work they do (Yankelovich 1981). In a practice such as Holistic Massage, these factors may be particularly acute. The second point to note is that the shift of many of the occupations which can be termed 'body work' out of the private and into the public (and thus waged) sector makes them particularly interesting (see below in relation to touching work). Lastly, there is a clear need for different ways of conceptualising the competencies or skills involved in this kind of work. As feminist critiques of Braverman's (1974) 'deskilling hypothesis' have highlighted:

> 'Hegemonic notions of skill have relied on increasingly outdated assumptions about work based on nineteenth and early-twentieth century craft and manufacturing work. Yet the expansion of the service sector has intensified the necessity of expanding the definitions of skill to include emotional labour.' (Steinberg and Figart 1999:14)

Sociologists of emotion have proposed emotions as the critical link between mind and body, which challenges Cartesian dualism (Bendelow 2009; Crossley 1998; Freund 1990; Hochschild 1983; Shilling 1993; Williams and Bendelow 1998),[96] and nowhere has this been more influential than in Hochschild's (1983) concept of 'emotional labour'. Emotional labour refers to labour which 'requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others', and thus requires a deliberate and conscious 'coordination of mind and feeling' (Hochschild 1983:7).[97] Since its original conceptualisation in relation to air

[96] Also Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) from an anthropological perspective.

[97] Hochschild suggests a distinction between emotional labour and the more everyday 'emotion work' undertaken to allow the smooth functioning of social interaction, in that the former has 'exchange value' and is sold for a wage, rather than having private 'use value'. However, this distinction becomes problematic when considering the self employed (such as my interviewees) While they do not sell their labour to an employer as such, they do nonetheless sell it in the marketplace, and may

stewardesses, the idea of emotional labour has been applied to a range of occupations. The majority of this work has been directed toward 'traditionally' female fields such as nursing (Meerabeau and Page 1998), hairdressing (Cohen 2010, 2011) and beauty therapy (Kang 2003; Sharma and Black 2001). It has also been applied to other areas such as mainstream medicine (Nettleton et al 2008); the television industry (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008); image consultancy (Wellington and Bryson 2001); and to sociological researchers themselves (Sampson et al 2008).

Emotional labour is clearly embodied, given the 'publicly observable facial and bodily display', which is the means by which it is deployed (Hochschild 1983). Moreover, emotions in general are, from a sociological perspective, best understood as 'embodied existential modes of being' (Williams and Bendelow 1998:138). As such, emotional labour plays a major role in innumerable forms of employment, including but not limited to those classed as body work, and has a particular value regarding those in which 'caring' is a significant feature. Emotional labour can be approached as a performance, and Hochschild's conception of 'surface' and 'deep' acting draw on Goffman's (1959, 1967) 'self presentation' and 'face-work', and the rules of social interaction which govern these. Although less developed in its original context, Hochschild emphasises the necessity of deep (rather than surface) acting in the 'genuine' manipulation of feeling. Both are relevant to the exploration of Holistic Massage, particularly in the analysis of embodied competencies presented in Chapter Four, since the 'manipulation of feeling' takes place superficially and – for a fully 'aware' and competent practitioner – at a deeper level also. The questions this raises vis-à-vis Holistic Massage are addressed in Chapter Four.

Despite Hochschild's original focus on the element of 'publicly observable facial and bodily display' (Hochschild 1983:7), emotional labour has been criticised as being sometimes 'disembodied' (Wolkowitz 2002).[98] The concept of body work – which runs

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have to perform emotional labour to varying degrees in order to be paid. Hence the two terms are used interchangeably in this thesis to refer to the work done by practitioners with regard to their own emotions and those of their clients.

[98] It is clear, however, that Hochschild acknowledges the embodied dimension of emotion work/labour (though it may not be her central concern). She explicitly says: 'There are various techniques of emotion work. One is cognitive: the attempt to change images, ideas or thoughts in the service of changing the feelings associated with them. A second is bodily: the attempt to change somatic or other physical symptoms of emotion (eg. trying to breathe slower, trying not

parallel to, but occupies a slightly different analytical space from emotional labour – has been proposed to address this gap by looking at the material reality of work on bodies (Wolkowitz 2006).[99] Body work was also initially developed from Goffman's 'face work',[100] and formulated by Shilling (1993) in relation to work done on one's own body in order to produce a normatively appropriate appearance (see also Crossley (2005, 2006) on 'reflexive embodiment' and body maintenance). 'Body work' has more recently been further re-conceptualised to focus on paid employment performed on or around bodies, and primarily the bodies of others (see Gimlin 2007; Twigg et al 2011; Wolkowitz 2002, 2006). The most useful definition of 'body work' comes from Wolkowitz, whose rendering highlights its relevance to research on Holistic Massage work:

> '[Body work is] employment that takes the body as its immediate site of labour, involving intimate, messy contact with the (frequently supine or naked) body, its orifices or products, through touch or close proximity' (Wolkowitz 2006:147)

While not the first to use the term in relation to labour, Wolkowitz's conceptualisation of body work as both a form or feature of work and a social relation highlights the significance of work which is primarily an interaction between two bodies.

This perspective has particular implications in relation to the field of healthcare since, as Twigg et al note:

> 'by acknowledging the particular character of body work, we are better able to understand the micro-political relations between practitioners and patients and clients, how difficult these are to alter, and how these are shaped by the wider social and economic context.' (Twigg et al 2011:172)

Moreover, the lens of body work foregrounds key commonalities and divergences with other types of work which are also 'ambivalent' and which 'may violate the norms of the management of the body, particularly in terms of touch, smell or sight' (Twigg et al

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to shake). Third, there is expressive emotion work: trying to change expressive gestures in the service of changing inner feeling (eg. trying to smile or cry)' (Hochschild 2003:96).

[99] For the sake of clarity, it is important to note that 'body work' in this thesis refers to a sociological concept of work, and not to the various manual therapies for which 'bodywork' is often used as a catch-all term. Where necessary, the term 'body therapies' has been used instead of the latter, although every attempt has been made to refer to practices more specifically, for example as Holistic Massage.

[100] As with emotional labour, the concept of 'body work' also has its roots in Goffman's (1967) 'face work', which was understood as 'the actions taken by a person to make whatever he [sic] is doing consistent with face', with face in turn explained as 'an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes' (Goffman 1967:5).

2011:172).[101] Strong discursive links can be drawn out for analysis between, for example, sex work and massage – as well as other types of body work involving touch, such as domestic labour and care work – which is indicative of the conceptual slippage between forms of work which involve interpersonal touch. As argued above, some of the primary characteristics of touch are its ambivalence and the gendered and sexualised assumptions in which it is enmeshed.[102] Since this applies to social touching, it also applies to work which takes the body as its primary location and touch as its primary way of working. An example which illustrates this particularly well is the conflation of massage and sex work, which presents a very tangible issue for those who do massage.

In framing sex work as 'body work', O'Connell Davidson (2008) has suggested that the former differs from most forms of the latter, given the 'simultaneity of production and consumption' in sex work. An end product with some use value is not taken away and utilised elsewhere: rather the value of the work is used instantly, in the interaction itself. Of particular significance to the empirical focus of this thesis, O'Connell Davidson draws a parallel with massage, arguing that the two may be seen as similar since it is the bodily experience of the client which is paid for. It should also be noted, however, that they are not entirely congruent, since the value of greater 'wellbeing' or the absence of pain could be taken as a 'use value' which is taken away from massage and applied elsewhere: that is, it allows the person to 'function' better, physically and/or emotionally. Hence, the use value is not entirely used up at the time of the touching interaction.

There are comparison to be made all the same. Existing research which has drawn parallels between massage and sex work has done so on the grounds that these occupations operate via 'touch and the manipulation of the body' and share an overall concern 'with the body's potential for well-being, satisfaction and pleasure' (Oerton and Phoenix 2001:394, note 9). Oerton pursues this line of comparison elsewhere, suggesting that:

> 'Because of the widespread popular elisions between massage and sex work, may of the discursive formations and practices deployed by women therapeutic massage practitioners in terms of setting and maintaining professional boundaries [in interactions with clients] act to distance them from

[101] In their most recent contribution to the debate, Twigg et al in fact expressly focus on touch, suggesting that 'occupations that require touching the patient or client's body […] are characterised by particular challenges and dilemmas' which need to be drawn out (2011:174).
[102] Twigg et al suggest that body work 'lies at the borders of the erotic, its interventions paralleling and mimicking those of sexuality; and this further reinforces its ambiguous character' (2011: 172).

> imputations that their work is akin to that of the "sexual services" offered by sex workers.' (Oerton 2004a:550)

In part, such elisions arise out of actual similarities in working conditions. As with sex work, massage encounters tend to be 'episodic, exclusive, secluded and relatively unsupervised activities conducted between two people in the intimate surroundings of private houses, health and healing centres, clinics and saunas' (Oerton 2004a:550). Moreover, and as with other forms of body work:

> 'Not only are the professional identifications [used by massage practitioners] marked by assumed "feminine attributes" such as care for others, cleanliness, purity and so on, but there are also powerful cultural traditions which link women with emotion, sensitivity and empathy and which thereby naturalize and normalize hands-on bodywork as "women's work".' (Oerton 2004a: 558)[103]

Oerton's (2004a) account of massage practice is a compelling one, in which practitioners are caught in a paradox between the holistic, mind-body-spirit as a value of their practice and the reality in which professional organisation seems most likely to be falling in line with the models of mainstream, conventional healthcare. This is especially problematic for a practice which in general sees greater value in embodied knowledge learned over time than it does of more abstract knowledge forms.[104] As is explored in the following chapters, I found definite correlations as well as divergences with Oerton's argument. While the various assertions from Oerton (and Oerton and Phoenix) on the relationship between massage and sex work certainly present a useful analytical comparison and tap into the slippage which occurs in everyday contexts between massage and sex, doing so also begs the question of the views of workers themselves on this point.[105] Links between the two practices are explored in Chapter Five. For the moment the point to note here is that connections are made most fruitful by framing these practices as 'body work'.

[103] There are also 'powerful cultural traditions' which have tied women's abilities in relation to healthcare closely to their sexuality. As Ehrenreich and English have noted, the main accusations made against the wisewoman/witch/midwife were 'of every conceivable sexual crime against men'; that is to say they were '[q]uite simply […] "accused" of female sexuality' ([1973]2010:39).

[104] My own understanding of what constitutes massage knowledge departs from Oerton's here in that she characterises it as a 'claim to an esoteric magic or mystery'. While the stock of Holistic Massage knowledge at times takes an unconventional form, I interpret it in a more physical, practical and embodied way. See Chapters Four to Six.

[105] Oerton and Phoenix compare two individual studies which were not originally geared for such comparison and therefore did not seek participants' views on the similarities and differences between the two.

Another example of a way in which the concept of body work is useful is in locating particular kinds of work in relation to their 'value', both economically and socially. A noticeable commonality here is that many of the practices Wolkowitz (2006) and others address are discursively framed as 'female': either in the sense of them being practices that women are seen as 'naturally' suited to; or in them being female-dominated occupations; or both. The social value of 'women's work' is consistently lower than other forms of work, as organised in and reflected by, the interaction of status, pay and working relations. This can be linked to the shift in the mode of production out of the home into the public sphere, which has conversely been accompanied by the devaluation of housework and the status of 'housewife' (Hochschild 2003).

In specific relation to healthcare practices this is tied to the shift in the hierarchy from female-led to male-dominated medicine particularly, although not exclusively, in relation to childbirth. As noted earlier, the professionalisation of medicine entailed a form of exclusionary closure which kept women out of professional practice (Saks 2002). The repercussions of this have been enormous, as Ehrenreich and English note of women healers and midwives:

> 'what could have been a proud occupation for women and a field for lively intellectual inquiry was discredited when not actually obliterated, so that later, when members of the educated elite sought to recapture some of the lost knowledge of the natural world, they had to turn to fairly marginal remnants of the old healing tradition.' (Ehrenreich and English [1973] 2010:21)

Not only were many women who attempted to continue with the healing practices they knew – passed on through embodied, tacit knowledge – deemed witches, where their practices were tolerated they were allocated no space in mainstream healthcare.[106] All of this resulted in the repression and subjugation of a range of feminine knowledge forms.

Status in body work may also be reflected in a 'dematerialising tendency', meaning that increased occupational status is twinned with an increasing distance from actual bodies, and thus also less touching (Twigg 2000a, 2000b). This tendency can be read into any form of body work where some kind of career progression is possible, although it is as

[106] Especially pertinent to the sensory theme of this chapter, Ehrenreich and English, who situate the witch-healer as the 'scientists of their time', highlight that 'she relied on her senses rather than faith or doctrine, she believed in trial and error, cause and effect', in contrast to the dominant power of the Church, which 'discredit the value of the material world, and had a profound distrust of the senses' ([1973]2010:48).

Twigg presents it particularly relevant when this work is being done by 'high status individuals'. In this sense it is most pronounced in the hierarchy of mainstream medicine, where doctors do relatively little touching (and even less so as they become more senior) compared with nurses or auxiliary staff. Nursing in turn has a distinct hierarchy, as Twigg notes, in that:

> 'as staff progress, they move away from the basic body work of bedpans and sponge baths towards high-tech, skilled interventions; progressing from dirty work on bodies to clean work in machines.' (Twigg 2000a:390)

As with body work overall, this tendency is clearly gendered – with women proliferating in at the low-status/high touch end of the scale – reflecting the associated value of work involving bodies versus work involving minds (Twigg 2000a). The applicability of the dematerialising tendency to Holistic Massage is considered later in the thesis.

As I have already suggested, a significant advantage offered by thinking of Holistic Massage as body work is that it offers the possibility of comparisons, and these highlight not only gender but class as it relates to the social value of this work. Recognising patterns of class across body work practices underlines the fact that:

> '[w]orking class employees in these low-wage "servicing" jobs increasingly work in intimate contact with the bodies of the middle class in ways that are more reminiscent of earlier periods of industrial history than the immediate Fordist past' (McDowell 2009:5)

This particular example suggests there is in fact more continuity between these supposedly 'new' occupations and earlier periods rather than any kind of revolution occurring in forms of work. Another focus highlighted by the body/work nexus concerns work relations. Cohen's (2010, 2011) research on hairdressing, for example, highlights the impact of relationships 'to place, others and capital'. These have significant impact on the shape of work, which can involve a range of working relations from waged to self-employment, and from working in a communal setting to working from home.

The inextricable link between touch and emotion, exemplified by the conceptual slippage between 'touching' and 'feeling', has already been noted. In thinking about Holistic Massage and other work which focuses on touch, separating out body work and emotional labour therefore seems overly dichotomous. Gimlin (2007) offers a four-point

typology of 'body work' which includes: 'body/appearance work' (the 'management and modification of one's own looks and physical wellness'); 'body work/labour' (that is, 'labour performed on behalf of or directly on other people's bodies'; 'body/emotion management' ('efforts to display and/or experience emotions deemed socially appropriate'; and 'body-making at work' (the production of bodies through the work that they do'). While Gimlin's aim in setting out the field in this way is to identify the possible options of what might be meant by body work (which are clearly diverse and sometimes overlapping), I suggest that by taking these together, and focusing them through touch, a more fruitful and less binary conceptualisation of 'touching work' can be arrived at.

Twigg (2000a; 2000b) has referred to 'touching work' as both a feature of and perspective on body work. To go a step further than this, it seems to me that the dual ways in which 'touching' can be interpreted pulls together physical action and affect/emotions. This allows for the analysis of various types of work which sits at the nexus of body work and emotional labour. Moreover, it bridges the affective/instrumental distinction which (although the may be relevant in other contexts) is somewhat inappropriate to research on Holistic Massage, a practice which utilises both these aspects of touch. Examples of a similar analysis to what I propose can be found in research on beauty work from Kang (2003), Gimlin (1996), Sharma and Black (2001) and Black (2004). Although Kang does not explicitly label it 'touching work', her distinction between 'body labour' and 'body work' (paralleling Hochschild's distinction) is a means to the same end of bringing together the threads of corporeality and emotion. Kang's research on the nail salon industry, addresses the 'neglected embodied dimensions' of emotional labour, as well as integrating gender, race and class. In particular, Kang focuses on the dual nature of workers' labour on their own bodies on the one hand, and the need to 'induce customers' positive feelings about their own bodies' (Kang 2003:823) on the other.

Hair and beauty work has been similarly found to incorporate a strong component of emotional labour intertwined with the physical aspects of this work (Gimlin 1996; Sharma and Black 2001; Black 2004). This applies equally to the emotions of the client – the aim for many of the therapists in Sharma and Black's study was to make their clients 'feel better about themselves' – and to the worker's own emotions, as for example

when having to control their annoyance at comments or views expressed by clients. Sharma and Black also suggest that emotion work may be cited as something a beauty worker does is an act of self-presentation: 'to present herself as an active and knowledgeable agent' (Sharma and Black 2001: 921). Sharma and Black in fact suggest that '[e]motional labour is precisely what we should expect to be required of any group of workers who '"process" other people's bodies' (2001:925). The implications of these points vis-à-vis Holistic Massage are significant and have particular relevance to the embodied competencies described by my interviewees (see Chapter Four in particular, as well as Chapters Five and Six).

Thinking of body workers as also doing emotional labour is not an entirely new proposition. What is suggested here are the fresh analytical possibilities made accessible by bringing together the potentially dichotomous analytical tools of 'body work' and 'emotional labour', and re-examining the area of their conceptual overlap through the lens of 'touching work'. The linguistic implications of 'touching' accommodate physical and affective/emotional interpretations, and hence such an approach allows for a rich analysis of touch, intimacy, emotions, boundaries and so on which make up the embodied reality of this work. A particularly potent theme to be drawn out of the preceding discussion is that more attention needs to be paid to how the senses are used in different kinds of work and how it feels to do it. This area, and the advantages offered by a phenomenological perspective on work have been largely neglected (Wolkowitz 2006). What remains now is to look at a wider theoretical framework which uses such a perspective, and which is therefore appropriate for my research.

Getting in(to) touch

Taken together, key elements from the sociological fields of CAM and touching work, considered in relation to some more interdisciplinary perspectives on touch, and pulled together around a broad concern with embodiment, provide a strong conceptual framework for the analysis of Holistic Massage work. The notion of 'touching work' draws together the valuable insights offered by the conceptual tools of emotional labour and body work, and re-formulates them in a way which is most appropriate for looking at work which focuses on touch. The existing literature on CAM has served to sociologically situate Holistic Massage as part of this field, and the exploration of touch highlights one of the many directions in which an embodied, sensual sociology might go.

With the questions and concerns raised in this chapter in mind, Holistic Massage is unpacked in this thesis in relation to the understandings of its practitioners: through talk which comes from, and is often about, their bodies. Chapter Two builds on this first chapter by introducing the narrative inquiry and phenomenological-sociological underpinnings of my overall methodology which have, together with the concepts outlined here, enabled the exploration of touch through talk presented in this thesis.

Chapter Two
Forming a Narrative Inquiry: A Methodological Framework

Introduction

My wish to contribute to an embodied sociology was noted in Chapter One. A significant methodological challenge raised by this is that bodies in everyday life tend to be 'absent' (Crossley 2007; Leder 1990; Williams and Bendelow 1998), in that they are so taken-for-granted that we tend not to think about them. This is not always so, and circumstances such as pain tend to make the body very much apparent: through the sensory the body becomes central to consciousness. Contrary to the 'dys-appearance' of bodies in pain, however, bodies in touching work do not appear as a 'problem' per se. In fact, and as will become clear in subsequent chapters, it is practitioners' ability to be aware of their bodies and thus to use them, that enables them to do their work effectively. To understand this requires a sociological account of touching work, but the ways in which touching work might be made available to sociological inquiry have to be established. Since my aim is to make visible what touching workers do, a key concern lies in the development of 'conceptual tools that would enable the articulation of lay ideas about and experiences of the body that have previously been treated as inexpressible' (Watson et al 2000:8). Moreover, doing this by way of a phenomenological methodology facilitates the 'discussion of feelings and emotions' (Bendelow 2000:40), which form a key component of the analysis presented in this thesis.

In order to do this I will first set out and justify the methodological choices I have made through the research process. Before proceeding any further I should clarify that I use the term 'methodology':

> 'not in the narrow sense of "a method" or specific technique, but in the wider one of a broad approach to inquiry that brings together and ensures reasonable fit between conceptual framework, epistemological underpinnings, theory, method, substantive concerns, the analysis of data and the drawing of appropriate conclusions from this.' (Stanley and Temple 2008:277)

Having outlined the beginnings of my conceptual framework in Chapter One, it is the 'bringing together' and 'ensuring fit' that the present chapter is concerned with. In the course of this research I have grappled with assembling and implementing a 'narrative inquiry', in order to best address my analytical concerns and my substantive focus on

Holistic Massage.[107] My orientation to these methodology issues as a researcher are outlined first, before the chapter then moves on to a discussion of the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz, considering a number of key points from his ideas in relation to my research. This is followed by an exploration of narrative inquiry and the ways in which this approach is actually utilised in this thesis, with particular attention to the narrative work of Catherine Kohler Riessman. While a range of work is relevant here, Riessman's 1990 book Divorce Talk provides the primary influence on the narrative aspect of my methodological framework, as it effectively brings together individually expressed meanings and experiences with wider social formations, or what I term, following Schutz, 'stocks of knowledge' (see below). Finally, in considering existing methodological perspectives on researching tacit, embodied facets of everyday life, this chapter then considers the question of how touch may be explored through talk. This provided a significant challenge in the course of my fieldwork and analysis, and my focus on touch has produced some interesting results regarding the relationship between touching and talking.

Phenomenological sociology

To approach touch as I did in the last chapter – as a primary way of knowing about and being in the world – immediately suggests a phenomenological perspective, and it is this perspective which underpins my approach to researching Holistic Massage. Such a view 'alerts us to the body's own, inside-out perspective' and understands bodies as 'both perceptible and perceiving, sensible and sentient.' (Crossley 2007:82) What is more, methods rooted in phenomenology have been proposed more widely as the most appropriate to exploring touch since they offer the opportunity to gather:

> '…rich descriptions of the manifold contents of sensory experience, and the different senses of touch… [and] provide a framework and a language through which the immediacy of embodied sensations may be articulated in their presence and absence, described and analysed' (Paterson 2007:22-23)

Despite the abstraction of his phenomenology of the body, Merleau-Ponty's work is commonly used as a theoretical starting point for body-oriented social science (see, for example, Crossley 1994, 1996, 2001, 2007; Csordas 1994; Leder 1990; Paterson 2007). Using a primarily philosophically-oriented phenomenology as a basis for sociological

[107] Bearing in mind Mills' (1959) advice that it is better to find a methodology appropriate to the inquiry than to follow pre-determined instructions.

understandings of the body has been criticised on the grounds that the overall orientations of the two disciplines are not congruent, and sociological investigators should not reduce sociological concerns to philosophical ones (Howson and Inglis 2001).[108] Howson and Inglis suggest that sociology is better understood:

> 'as a field of thought broadly concerned with the issues of subject/object relations, but one in which such issues take on a particularity and concreteness when formulated sociologically' (2001:306)

Crossley (2001) counters the argument that such 'particularity and concreteness' is not found in Merleau-Ponty and, where there are 'inadequacies' in his work, Bourdieu can be used as a valuable 'corrective' in this respect. However, while I acknowledge the relevance of Merleau-Ponty to the substantive concerns of this thesis, rather than attempting to 'reformulate' a philosophical position to suit sociological ends, I instead propose the use of an already sociological phenomenology, which will not only be appropriate to investigating touch, but which also offers the potential to draw out the often tacit grounding of sociology itself (Watson 2006). In this section I therefore outline the foundations to my methodological position with reference of the work of Alfred Schutz.

Schutz ([1932]1967, 1964, 1966, 1967; with Luckmann 1974) has been largely overlooked in recent mainstream sociology and often seems to be regarded with suspicion or discounted altogether. Phenomenological sociology is often (and mistakenly) equated entirely with Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology.[109] Alternatively, Schutz is considered solely for the hook he provided Berger and Luckmann on which to hang their influential 1967 treatise on the sociology of knowledge. By introducing phenomenology to (American) sociology, Schutz brought about a substantial shift in sociological thinking, as Bauman has noted:

> 'The effect of the exposure to phenomenology was to shift interest from external, extra-subjective structural constraints to the interpretation of the subjective experience of actors; and from the determination to arbitrate between objective truth and prejudiced opinion to the effort to reveal the

[108] Furthermore, '[t]he fundamental action/structure problem of sociology should be seen as a distinctive problem, rather than a mere offshoot of the philosophical one of subject/object to which it bears certain family resemblances' (Howson and Inglis 2001:307).

[109] Garfinkel drew heavily on Schutz's phenomenology (Cuff and Payne 1979; Psathas 2004). However, while ethnomethodology is characterised by some as a sociological application of phenomenology (for example, see Overgaard and Zahavi 2009), I argue that the former is best seen as a distinct category of inquiry and is therefore not addressed in depth here.

> conditions of knowledge rooted in communally transmitted traditions' (Bauman 1996:826)

Despite the insightfulness of Schutz's work, he is afforded minimal direct attention in contemporary sociology, at least in the UK.[110] Moreover, while phenomenological perspectives have remained something of a 'flickering light in sociology' (Katz and Csordas 2003:282), the impact of Schutz's work is seemingly so diffuse that it often goes unacknowledged (see Kim and Berard 2009; Psathas 2004). Others dismiss the American tradition of phenomenological thought which Schutz largely instigated in favour of its continental European counterpart, even when they have the project of synthesising philosophical and sociological concerns in mind (see, for example, Ferguson 2006).[111] In sidelining such phenomenological-sociological understanding, however, sociology:

> '…not only fails to display any interest in understanding the taken-for-granted cultural presuppositions and knowledge upon which it rests, but it also uses and builds upon and therefore further obscures its foundations. In a sense conventional social science sits on an archaeological site and endeavours to build up rather than excavate, using materials and tools it doesn't understand to build structures on a foundation of unknown composition, which becomes harder to access and understand the more it is buried by the invented structures built over [the] top.' (Kim and Berard 2009:272)[112]

As a remedy to this, Kim and Berard (2009) put forward Schutz work as indispensable in elucidating the structures underpinning the knowledge which forms the basis of everyday social life and sociological understandings thereof. It is with this in mind that I discuss the relevant aspects of Schutz's phenomenological sociology. These points are drawn out because I find this version of phenomenology a rich source for a sociological imagination and because Schutzian sociology has had a considerable influence on my methodology as a whole.

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[110] Schutz seems to be given more credit in certain academic circles in the USA and Canada, exemplified by the work of those associated with the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (see http://pages.slu.edu/faculty/ harriss3/SPHS/).

[111] Ferguson attributes the relative unpopularity of American phenomenologists to their having 'become exclusively associated with a relatively brief period (late 1960s and early 1970s) whose central sociological ideas have gone out of fashion' (2006: 244).

[112] While this may verge on overstatement – in that it does not acknowledge the many sociologists who have dedicated their work to such excavations – it is effective in emphasising the fundamental value of a Schutzian perspective.

Schutz's phenomenological sociology

> '… the world is from the outset not the private world of the single individual but an intersubjective world, common to all of us, in which we have not a theoretical but an eminently practical interest.' (Schutz 1967:208)

Schutz's phenomenological sociology covers a wide array of topics, and I do not attempt to summarise these, but instead focus on the four aspects of most relevance to my aims and interests. Separating out these four key features is difficult since they are very much intertwined, but I have nonetheless done so for the purposes of explication. Firstly, as suggested by the quote with which this section opened, Schutz offers a re-formulation of phenomenological thought which – while maintaining central concerns with consciousness, perception and being – suggests a more practically-oriented, sociological framing of phenomenological questions. Secondly, Schutz provides a more embodied – or certainly body-oriented – sociology than we might be led to believe, particularly given the tendency of sociologists to favour Merleau-Ponty (1962) when considering phenomenologies of embodiment, the senses and perception. The third way in which Schutz is useful is in his development of the idea of a 'stock of knowledge' which is available to people in order that they can make sense of their experiences. The stock of knowledge is a shared resource, built of typifications, which those with common experience understand similarly. In this way Schutz allows for connections to be made between the local/individual and the shared/social. Fourthly, a Schutzian approach complements my orientation to narrative inquiry. In particular, it acknowledges the importance of context and of language, which are both crucial components of the analysis presented here. Each of these points inform my research and general approach and are now explored in turn.

A practically-oriented phenomenology

In relation to the four features highlighted here, it should first be clarified that my use of phenomenologically-informed sociological theory does not imply the conventional phenomenological method of 'bracketing', in the Husserlian (1960) sense of the suspension of the 'real world'. Indeed, one of the most valuable contributions of Schutz's phenomenological sociology is to turn Husserl's epoché on its head. With his alternative 'epoché of the natural attitude' (Schutz 1967:229), Schutz proposes that rather than bracketing out belief in the world, people in day-to-day life in fact bracket

out any doubt in the existence of that world and its inhabitants, in order to go about their everyday lives. Hence, in specific regard to sociology:

> 'We [sociological inquirers] shall start out by simply accepting the existence of the social world as it is always accepted in the attitude of the natural standpoint, whether in everyday life or in sociological observation.' (Schutz [1932]1967: 97)

Thus, Schutz shifts the focus away from an abstract reduction and onto the taken-for-grantedness of the 'everyday world' and, crucially, what it is that is taken for granted and how these phenomena are invested with meaning. While features of this everyday world might be interpreted and understood differently by different participants in it, depending on their individual 'biography', this 'real' everyday world is the basic assumptions on which all experience is formed, and so it must also form the basis for sociological inquiry. In setting aside the problematic of existence or reality which is inherent to transcendental phenomenology, Schutz's approach is free from the methodological knots of Husserlian philosophy and is deliberately more practicable for sociological inquiry.

Further to this practicality is the relevance of Schutz's phenomenological sociology for understanding human social life as embodied. Building on Mead's (1938) proposition that it is the '"manipulatory area" which constitutes the core of reality' (Schutz 1967:223), Schutz posits 'that the world of our working, of bodily movements, of manipulating objects and handling things and men [sic] constitutes the specific reality of everyday life' (Schutz 1967:223).[113] This reality is constituted by ongoing, active and wholly embodied engagement in the lifeworld, rather than knowing that world via a narrower way associated with one particular sense or another (see Langsdorf 1991).[114] The sphere of embodied interaction is thus presented by Schutz as 'a privileged location of everyday reality, the centre of vital interests and the focus of conscious and deliberative social action' (Ferguson 2006:94). This realm is one sub-set of the 'reality of the world of daily life' (Schutz 1967:208), but a highly significant one, precisely because of its physicality:

[113] To avoid confusion, note that Schutz's notion of 'working' refers not to employment, but to a more generalised 'action in the outer world, based upon a project and characterized by the intention to bring about the projected state of affairs by bodily movements', as contrasted with 'the (covert) performances of mere thinking' (Schutz 1967:212).

[114] Langsdorf highlights an interesting distinction between Schutz's orientation, which verges at times on the performative (see Schutz 1967:209-12) and that of Descartes' sight-based and linguist B.L. Whorf's speech-based understandings of 'self' (Langsdorf 1991).

> ‘The world of working as a whole stands out as paramount over [and] against the many other sub-universes of reality. It is the world of physical things, including my body; it is the realm of my locomotions and bodily operations; it offers resistances which require effort to overcome; it places tasks before me, permits me to carry through my plans, and enables me to succeed or fail in my attempt to attain my purposes.’ (Schutz 1967:226-7)

In this way, an individual’s immediate embodied, sensory interaction with the world is the most significant ‘reality’ on which understanding of that world is based. It follows, then, that the understanding by one individual of another is framed as an understanding of their bodily movement and of changes in their bodies. Moreover, a person’s bodily movements can be read as representative of their ‘lived experiences’ (Schutz [1932]1967:111) which the observer interprets according to their own stock of embodied knowledge, informed by their experience and understanding. These are ‘indications’ rather than the totality of a person, but still in building up a collection of these we can come to understand more about that person:

> ‘The whole stock of my experience […] of another from within the natural attitude consists of my own lived experiences […] of his [sic] body, of his behaviour, of the course of his actions, and of the artefacts he has produced […]. My lived experiences of another’s acts consist in my perceptions of his body in motion.’ (Schutz [1932]1967:100-1)

What is key here is that, for Schutz, my understanding of an ‘other’ is inseparable from my embodied, physical experience of them. This understanding, rooted in the world of everyday life, in turn governs my behaviour toward them, and this is conveyed by Schutz as a dynamism with which it is essential to behave and work in the social world in particular ways.[115]

Holistic Massage offers particularly appropriate grounds for interrogating such ideas, since knowing via embodied, physical interaction – recognising changes in the bodies of others – is the chief means by which Holistic Massage is accomplished. Furthermore, this perspective on embodiment is applied also in the interactions between myself and the research participants. In the course of the interview and analytical process, attention was expressly paid to the overall embodied interaction between the interviewees and I,

[115] Moreover, Schutz recognises ‘that the embodiment of human intersubjectivity extends beyond the expressiveness of the human body into its transformed physical environments, that we engage with the meanings of our contemporaries and predecessors every time we walk into a house or drink from a cup’ (Crossley 1996a:97).

with a Schutzian perspective orienting me to the significance of not only the talk which occurred, but also movements, gestures, moments of bodily contact and emotional responses to these.[116] It is neither practical nor necessary to my central analytical interests (nor, it could be argued, possible) to discuss every aspect of this in detail. It should also be noted that this feature of my analysis is based on what was noted during or immediately after interviews, since audio (not video) recording was used. However, these observations were at times significant and, where I have interpreted such features to be particularly relevant or interesting, I have explicitly said so in the analysis presented in Chapters Three to Five. In a wider sense, I argue that building up a collection of accounts of embodied knowledge created via the embodied interactions of practitioners and researcher allows for better understanding of the embodied experience of doing 'touching work' more broadly and Holistic Massage in particular.

Typification and the stock of knowledge

A key concern of Schutz's phenomenological sociology is to develop an understanding of the ways in which the everyday world, though human action, is intersubjectively and socially constituted. For Schutz, the way in which this is achieved is through the sum of an individual's stock of experiences, which are continuously drawn upon as that individual goes about her/his life (Schutz 1967; see also Schutz and Luckmann 1974). Drawing on Weber, Schutz positions typifications as the necessary building-blocks of social interaction: the background, taken-for-granted assumptions which allow us to make our way though the social world relatively smoothly. These typifications are based on an individual's own prior experiences, as well as those passed on from others such as parents or teachers (Schutz 1967:7). These in turn accumulate to form a stock of '"knowledge at hand" [which] function[s] as a scheme of reference' used on an everyday basis (Schutz 1967:7) .[117] Thus:

> 'The actual stock of knowledge is nothing but the sedimentation of all our experiences of former definitions of previous situations, experiences which

[116] This ties into questions of reflexivity and emotional labour in research, which are discussed later in this chapter.

[117] Schutz's term is variously – and somewhat inconsistently – translated as the stock of knowledge 'to hand', 'at hand' or 'on hand', and some authors have used these various suffixes to distinguish between the different levels of this stock which they have drawn out in critiques of Schutz (for example, see Rogers 1983). It is beyond the remit of this thesis to dissect Schutz's work in its entirety and to engage with theses potential micro-distinctions. For the sake of simplicity I therefore refer generally to a stock or stocks of knowledge.

> might refer to our own world in previously actual, restorable, or obtainable reach or else to fellow-men [sic], contemporaries or predecessors. In light of our foreknowledge the situation to be defined may appear as typically alike, typically similar to a situation previously defined, as a modification or variation of the latter or else entirely novel' (Schutz 1966:123)

What is more, this 'scheme of reference' allows people to make decisions regarding others without having to know the minutiae of their experience:[118] they use typifications 'as a means of comparing and contrasting 'similar' experiences' (Stanley and Wise 1993:215) on which judgements may then be based.

This stock of knowledge functions both at a local, personal level – that is, through context-specific experience of particular situations which people collate throughout their lives – and at the level of 'taken-for-granted know-hows that the individual applies pre-reflectively' (Rogers 1983:55). While aspects of this stock become routinised and run in the background to allow individuals to function 'normally',[119] other aspects are more consciously available for active selection. To restate part of a quote provided earlier, what is crucial for understanding Schutz's perspective here is that 'the world is from the outset not the private world of the single individual but an intersubjective world' (Schutz 1967:208, my emphasis). That is, although this stock of knowledge is interpreted on an individual basis, these interpretations are influenced by intersubjectively-shared knowledge and experience.[120]

If the implementation of an embodied stock of knowledge is taken as 'a basic feature of people's sense-making procedures' (Stanley and Wise 1993:215), it is surely essential to examine how and of what these stocks are comprised, perhaps especially and most tellingly so in the case of a stock which is less than tightly, formally bound. In fact, an

[118] As with other aspects of Schutz's theory discussed here, resonances with the ways in which my participants talked about their work and what it involves are discernable here (see, for example, Chapter Four on the extent to which practitioners can and do understand the embodied experience of their clients). Such resonances add to the 'overall fit' suggested in the opening quote of this chapter.

[119] Cf. Garfinkel's (1967) concept of 'background expectancies'. There are also significant 'affinities' here between Schutz's practical formulation of the stock of knowledge and Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' (Crossley 1996a), just as there are similarities in other areas, despite the latter's criticism of phenomenological approaches (see below; also Endress 2005).

[120] It is this process by which knowledge becomes shared rather than exclusively individual which is the social construction of (everyday) knowledge, as Berger and Luckman (1967) would later come to call it. Although it has in some cases been distorted, Berger and Luckmann's original proposal was that 'The sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people "know" as "reality" in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, common sense "knowledge" […] It is precisely this knowledge that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist' (1967: 15).

indispensible means by which a sociologist can come to a better understanding of a given situation, practice or individual is to examine the relevant stock(s) of knowledge, how they are acquired and how they are constituted. Hence, as should by now be clear, the import which the 'stock of knowledge' concept has for my methodology is that I interrogate those constituted and operationalised by my participants. In Chapter Three, I begin to identify aspects of a shared stock upon which participants draw to a greater or lesser degree, and the practical ways in which they draw upon it form a significant aspect of the analysis. Chapter Four sees my analysis draw out a number of embodied competencies as components of the stock of Holistic Massage knowledge, components which were significant common threads in what the participants said about their work. In Chapter Five I examine the ways in which a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge is (un)bounded as a practice and the practical implications of this. Each of these analyses is built upon in Chapter Six.

A particularly interesting feature of what my participants said about Holistic Massage involves what might be interpreted as resistance to typification and thus, ultimately, to the formalisation or schematisation of a stock of knowledge for Holistic Massage. That is to say, my interviewees were not always eager to explain in concrete terms what they do, and frequently resorted to characterisations of touch as 'something more' than that which can be easily explained, or at least conveyed verbally.[121] Moreover, an emphasis on Holistic Massage being 'different every time' was common, thus rendering a 'typical Holistic Massage' an oxymoron. A relatively 'formal' stock of knowledge in relation to Holistic Massage can nevertheless be seen to exist, given that not only is the practice taught by massage schools across the UK, but also that practitioners draw on common, shared knowledge when talking about what they do. Nonetheless, the ways in which Holistic Massage appears to be (un)bounded as a practice, alongside participants' resistance to typification (and thus to standardisation or codification), have important implications for the extent to which Holistic Massage specifically can become a more widely accepted or mainstreamed practice relative to other CAM or to healthcare more broadly (a question which is returned to toward the end of Chapter Five and in Chapter Six).

[121] There are of course alternative ways in which this can be interpreted, other than as resistance to typification and these are addressed in greater depth in the course of the following chapters.

Language, meanings and motives

As discussed above, intersubjective understanding – the sharing of stocks of knowledge – is integral to Schutz's formulation of the social sciences. Moreover, since it is through conversation with others that individuals operationalise the 'communicative resources' of their particular culture (Crossley 1996a), language is central to the way intersubjectivity (intercorporeality) is achieved (Crossley 1995b).[122] A Schutzian perspective on this point highlights a typically phenomenological concern with understanding the language of the group which is the focus of research. Pulled together from a collection of experiences on which individuals base their expectations and responses to future situations, the typifications which constitute the stock of knowledge are transmitted for the most part through quotidian talk. This is because, for Schutz, 'everyday language' is the 'typifying medium par excellence by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted' (Schutz 1967:14). Individuals bring a stock of knowledge to face-to-face interactions with 'consociates',[123] stocks which are compiled of both general knowledge and knowledge specific to that particular consociate (Schutz [1932]1967:169). This knowledge consequently provides a context for judgements to be made; that is to say:

> '...all previous knowledge of the other person belongs to the interpreter's total configuration of experience, which is the context from whose point of view the interpretation is being made.' (Schutz [1932]1967:112)

This flagging of the relevance of context can be taken in a two ways. In an immediate sense, the local context in which something is said must be considered. This includes the setting in which an interview takes place, as well as any prior relationship or knowledge which interviewer and interviewee may have of each other, and so on. In a broader sense, this also means that the researcher must take into account the way in which they hear and interpret what is said, as a result of all of their preceding experience – for example, of the topic or of interviewing[124] – which comprises their milieu. In interpreting the meaning of talk it is crucial, therefore, to note not only that 'the speaker

[122] Following Merleau-Ponty, Crossley emphasises the embodied character of language, noting that '[l]anguages […] consist in shared rules and resources but the existence of these rules and resources is dependent upon bodies which take them up and use them: bodies which can emit and perceive culturally coded, sense-perceptible, embodied signs. Linguistic communication consists in an intertwining of sensible-sentient bodies (speaker and listener, writer and reader), an intercorporeality' (1995b:50).

[123] Schutz's term for those with whom we share direct experience.

[124] See Atkinson and Silverman (1997) and Furedi (2004) for some of the implications of the prevalence of interviews in contemporary society.

always chooses his [sic] words with the listener's interpretation in mind', but also that 'the listener always interprets with the speaker's subjective meaning in mind'. Hence, the individual's choice of words 'depends partly upon the way he himself [sic] usually interprets words and partly upon his knowledge of his listener's interpretive habits' (Schutz [1932]1967:128). This highlights that there are always gaps in what can be known of others so that, in research as in everyday life, assumptions have to be made. It is this (assumed) knowledge which has a significant impact on what either party in a dialogue will say and how they will interpret what the other has said.

It is also important to consider the larger-scale context in which research is conducted. This pertains to societal features which have contributed to a piece of research being done at a given time, which make it possible and relevant for a particular topic to be written about. It also relates to what can be taken to be the wider societal implications of a piece of research. That is to say, while claims to generalisation from a small-scale inquiry such as mine are usually minimal (and are in any case not taken as a measure of its social scientific value), it does not follow that nothing of wider significance can be gleaned from that research. What this might mean in relation to a narrative inquiry is more specifically unpacked below with reference to Riessman (1990) and others, who have used narrative methods to draw connections and inferences between the small-scale and the societal in a way that speaks to the fundaments of sociological inquiry (see Mills 1959).

A critic of Schutz's work might point out that an individual does not usually consciously base what they say entirely upon their expectations of another and how they might react, since the social world 'is not thought about at least in the first instance, but participated in' (Crossley 1996a:74).[125] Intertwined with these expectations of another, and perhaps even more significant, are individual motives. According to Schutz, various types of 'motive' might influence an individual in saying certain things at a given time,[126] so that an investigator might ask:

> 'What does this person mean by speaking to me in this manner, at this particular moment? For the sake of what does he [sic] do this (what is his in-order-to motive)? What circumstance does he give as the reason for it (that is, what is his genuine because-motive)? What does the choice of these words indicate?' (Schutz [1932]1967:113)

[125] Just as they might similarly critique Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, taken at its most cynical.
[126] In a similar way to what has been more recently framed by Archer (2007) in terms of 'projects'.

Schutz's conceptualisation of these different kinds of motive again underlines the importance of context, and is useful in drawing attention to differences between what might be perceived as a motive in an immediate sense, and the further reasons that might underpin this.[127] That is to say, he highlights some of the problems encountered in understanding the complex layers of talk. The above questions reveal difficulties at the point where Schutz contradicts himself by veering into discussion of the 'genuine'. Although he elsewhere denies the possibility of direct access to the subjectivity of another,[128] in his notion of the 'genuine because-motive', the possibility of establishing what is an unquestionably 'authentic' meaning or intention seems to be posed. Given the assumption underlying this, that there is an underlying objective truth in what people say that can be accessed by, for example, a skilled sociological inquirer, this is problematic. It can also be contrasted with the more cynical and agentic Goffman-esque notion that, as with every other decision, giving reasons is part of an overall presentation of a particular self in pursuit of that individual's aims.[129]

The most helpful position lies somewhere between these poles, looking to what people say and why and assuming that they are more or less 'honest', but also acknowledging that people are always in pursuit of their own project (Archer 2007). Archer's take on reflexivity provides a useful adjunct here, in that it emphasises the impact of an individual's 'natal social contexts' and 'their ultimate personal concerns' on the way in which they 'think their way through the world' (Archer 2007:100,145). Significantly for my concerns, Archer also suggests that while people have the capacity to make choices from among the options available to them:

> 'The "context" confronted by any subject at any time […] is never of their making or of their choosing. The "concerns" they can adopt as value commitments are similarly dependent upon the contents lodged in the cultural

[127] I do not attempt to unpack the intricacies of Schutz's notion of 'motivational relevancies' here since this would take the discussion beyond the focus of this thesis.
[128] Earlier in the same text he stresses that '[t]he postulate […] that I can observe the subjective experience precisely as he [sic] does is absurd. For it presupposes that I myself have lived through all the conscious states and intentional Acts wherein this experience has been constituted' ([1932]1967:99).
[129] Goffman notes: 'Just as there is no occasion of talk in which improper impressions could not intentionally or unintentionally arise, so there is not occasion of talk so trivial as not to require each participant to show serious concern in the way in which he handles himself and the others present' (Goffman 1967:33). Schutz predated Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor by some way – as well as anticipating the uncertainty it introduces – in suggesting that 'In everyday life, […] we never quite know whether another person is "acting"' (Schutz [1932]1967:117).

> system - which are not of their making or choosing either.' (Archer 2007:315)[130]

That is to say, they must choose from amongst the available stocks of knowledge. With Archer's perspective in mind then, a useful way of formulating Schutz's original question for my research is not to focus on the problematic notion of a 'genuine because-motive', but instead to ask 'in which circumstances does she or he give reasons for what they say?'. In other words, when does the speaker – specifically, the interview participant – feel the need to explain themselves and why might this be? Thus, with some modification, Schutz's intertwined questions regarding the 'what' and 'why' of talk can be utilised in an analysis in a way which recognises that much of how people think and make decisions is based around 'real and imagined dialogue with what others think, do and feel' (Holmes 2010:148). This perspective permeates the analytical chapters which follow.

Criticisms and correctives

Schutz's work has been criticised on a number of other grounds, for example, for its lack of empirical application (see Kim and Berard 2009), its over-reliance on geographical proximity and an ensuing inability to account, for example, for the 'big worlds' of global communication (Crossley 1996a).[131] However, for my research, which has been accomplished through face-to-face interaction and which takes as its focus a practice built around physical co-presence,[132] Schutz's attention to immediate, face-to-face interaction is in fact particularly useful. Furthermore, the absence of a 'grand plan' for the application of Schutz's theories can conversely be understood as an advantage, in that the sociologist is thus free to pursue an inquiry in the way they deem most appropriate to their concerns, rather than being obliged to remain within the confines of a prescribed process.

A notable critique of phenomenology overall and including Schutz has come from Bourdieu (1977), who saw phenomenologists as being overly concerned with 'lived

[130] In this way Archer's viewpoint is also useful in emphasising the socially constructed nature of stocks of knowledge and resonates with the perspective on 'narrative resources' outlined in the next section.
[131] The application of phenomenological sociology is elsewhere being investigated in relation to the internet (for example Zhao 2007),which has of course vastly reshaped the world of social interaction.
[132] Like other forms of body/touching work, such as hairdressing or personal care, Holistic Massage cannot be done without physical proximity (see Chapter One).

experience' and 'the world as self-evident', and phenomenology as having no potential beyond the descriptive (Bourdieu 1977; see also Throop and Murphy 2002). In specific relation to Schutz, Bourdieu suggests that 'lived experience' over-emphasises intentional action, for example in Schutz's conceptualisation of 'motives' and 'projects' (Schutz 1964, 1970; see above). This can be countered by pointing out that Schutz does in fact allow for 'pre-reflective action directed by a practical sense', as well as illustrating the ways in which 'it is often the case that conscious motives and projects do play important roles in patterning social action' (Throop and Murphy 2002:195). Furthermore, while Bourdieu (1977) reads Schutz as being weak on social structure, it is evident throughout his writings that structure is in fact a central feature of Schutz's theory, in a way that is ironically not dissimilar to Bourdieu's own concept of 'habitus' (Throop and Murphy 2002).[133] Schutz's specific example of a postman illustrates each of these points, and is therefore worth quoting at length:

> 'I take it for granted that my action (say putting a stamped and duly addressed envelope in a mailbox) will induce anonymous fellow-men [sic] (postmen) to perform typical actions (handling the mail) in accordance with typical in-order-to motives (to live up to their occupational duties) with the result that the state of affairs projected by me (delivery of the letter to the address within reasonable time) will be achieved […] Even more, in my own self-typification – that is by assuming the role of the customer of the mail service – I have to project my action in such a typical way as I suppose the typical post office employee expects a typical customer to behave. Such a construct of mutually interlocked behaviours patters reveals itself as a construct of mutually interlocked in-order-to and because motives which are supposedly invariant. The more institutionalized or standardized such a behaviour pattern is, that is, the more typified it is in a socially approved way by laws, rules, regulations, customs, habits etc., the greater is the chance that my own self-typifying behaviour will bring about the state of affairs aimed at.' (Schutz 1964:25-6)

As is clear from this passage and the preceding discussion, Schutz characterises the common-sense world as constructed out of the stock of knowledge on which individuals draw in order to move through and make sense of everyday life. The fact that Schutz orients the researcher to the links between individual (as intersubjective) experience and the larger-scale structures of the lifeworld is one of the most useful aspects of his theory. Delamont (2009) has recently suggested that theorists such as Tilly and Goffman may be

[133] The key difference being that Schutz approaches this structure as a process rather than an object (Throop and Murphy 2002:196). Throop and Murphy go so far as to suggest that, in Pascalian Meditations (2000), Bourdieu in fact 'seems to be merely rephrasing some of Schutz's premises in his own idiosyncratic and overly deterministic vocabulary so as to make them sound new, when in reality they are not' (2002:197).

used as ‘correctives’ to the ‘tendency to elide the social and the personal, and to collapse the conduct of everyday life into a confessional mode of "lived experience"’ (Delamont 2009:10.3).[134] I propose that, contrary to objections which might have been voiced by Bourdieu, Schutz can be added to this list. As with Tilly and Goffman, Schutz’s work is extremely helpful in orienting enquirers to small concerns in a way that links them to larger social issues.

Schutz has also been criticised for his conflation of the ‘life-world’ and the ‘natural attitude’, as well as various other terminological inconsistencies (Costelloe 1996). While Costelloe expresses this from a philosophical viewpoint and sees these inconsistencies as fundamental flaws in Schutz’s conceptualisation, Luckmann (with whom I am inclined to agree) frames them as merely a ‘terminological problem’ (1974:21) and thus of less account. Costelloe also criticises Schutz for the conflict between his claim that the social world is first and foremost an intersubjective one, and ‘the individual experience which, it turns out, Schutz’s account is based’ (Costelloe 1996:248). While this may well be the case, it is for me the interplay between individual and shared experience that Schutz’s work highlights which makes it particularly relevant to a narrative inquiry of the kind I have engaged in.

A further perceived shortcoming in Schutz’s writings relates to bodies. As outlined above, Schutz’s work can be read as very much embodied, in that an individual’s orientation to the world – and thus an investigator’s orientation to inquiry – always begins from their body. However, his limited attention to actual sensory/sensuous components of embodiment does to an extent leave his theory weakened in this respect. As part of the ‘Continental’ philosophical school of phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty (1962) worked at a more abstract level, relatively speaking. However, he does attend directly to the sensuous nature of existence. While a certain visual bias is evident in his work, Merleau-Ponty foregrounds the importance of touch as a primary way of knowing about and being in the world, and therefore offers a useful complement to Schutz’s ideas.

[134] Delamont goes on to say of Goffman and Tilly that ‘Each in his own way demonstrates that everyday life and the minutiae of its conduct must be just as subject to disciplined scrutiny as the 'big' issues of social organisation' (Delamont 2009:10.3).

It is largely true that, while Schutz re-constitutes phenomenological concerns in a way more amenable to sociological investigation – providing a 'thorough methodological and philosophical basis for understanding the application of knowledge in everyday life and the functioning of the lifeworld' (Brown 2009:393) – he does not go so far as to set out specific empirical methods through which this might be achieved. However, he does highlight the central significance of 'the vocabulary and syntax of everyday language' to the typifications which form stocks of knowledge (Schutz 1964:14). Hence, a method which focuses on the form and content of talk presents itself as an appropriate way to proceed. Moreover, the transcription techniques I have used draw on conversation analytical conventions, the approach most commonly associated with phenomenological sociology, as well as ethnomethodology.[135] These affiliations, coupled with the overlap in substantive concerns around active 'work', sensuous embodiment and touch, all indicate the appropriateness of Schutz's work for the wider concerns of this thesis. It is the narrative and methods aspects of my methodology, built upon the interlinked theoretical and methodological foundations already outlined, which the second half of this chapter addresses.

Constructing a narrative inquiry

The preceding discussion has outlined the ways in which phenomenological sociology provides the foundations of my methodology. A narrative inquiry approach is built on this, assembled pragmatically from a range of component parts. The remainder of this chapter attends to these components, which include the means by which data was produced, transcribed and analysed; and how the research relationship is understood. Outlining the practical decisions made illustrates how a narrative inquiry facilitates a phenomenological examination of the data produced and presented here. The influence of 'narrative research' in general is most explicitly evident in the discussion of the process of analysis, although it has relevance throughout the different aspects of my methodology. Perspectives from outwith the varied field of narrative scholarship are also drawn upon where appropriate.

The heterogeneity of the field loosely gathered around 'narrative', the profusion of work therein, and the range of epistemological positions taken, necessitates clarification of

[135] See below and also Appendix One for a full explanation of the transcription conventions used.

precisely how it is understood and operationalised here.[136] There has been a growing chorus of interdisciplinary narrative since the so-called 'narrative turn' in social science and humanities (some key examples being Andrews et al 2008; Atkinson and Delamont 2006; Bruner 1987; Chase 2005; Clandinin 2007; Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Eliot 2005; Frank 1995; Holstein and Gubrium 1999; Josselson 1996; Josselson and Lieblich 1993, 1995, 1999; Labov 1972, 1982; Lieblich and Josselson 1994, 1997; Mishler 1986; Riessman 1990, 1993, 2008). That this vast field is therefore home to 'conflicting epistemological underpinnings, clashing theoretical presuppositions, and discordant methodological precepts' (Stanley and Temple 2008:276) is not surprising. However, this diversity is often neglected and the wide, imprecise use of the term 'narrative' leaves the waters around it somewhat muddied. The most significant distinction to be made in terms of my own research lies between:

> '"narrative studies" (signalling a focus on narrative as a particular kind of data or the content of this) as compared with "narrative inquiry" (signalling narrative as a methodological and analytical approach by the researcher)' (Stanley and Temple 2008:276)

My application of narrative is in this latter sense, given that my interests lie less in the storied form of tellings[137] and more in the way links are made between individual tellings, the resources (or stocks of knowledge) people draw upon in these tellings, and what can be known from them.[138]

Following Riessman (2008), Stanley and Temple (2008) and others, narrative is here understood in sociological terms not simply as denoting a particular type of data or feature thereof, but as a broad epistemological and methodological position adopted toward inquiry. Conceptualising narrative in this way opens opportunities to draw links between personal and societal levels of understanding, an endeavour which is surely close to the core of sociology itself. This broad methodological position does not dictate a particular mode of data production or analysis, but offers a way of thinking about experience which responds to, and moves on from, positivist and post-positivist research paradigms (Bruner 1987; Clandinin and Rosiek 2007). It also corresponds to my own

[136] Given the vast array of narrative scholarship, I do not attempt a comprehensive overview, but rather draw out key contributions relevant to my research.
[137] Although these are examined in some of the interviews, at certain points where participants talk can be understood as distinctively 'storied'.
[138] More is said on precisely what can be known from such tellings in the Analysis section of this chapter.

preferences and commitments with regard to the nature of the research relationship, ethical concerns, and the two-pronged approach I have taken to data analysis.

While the philosophical assumptions underpinning this inquiry are developed out of a phenomenological sociology, they are also shaped by a number of 'turns' toward narrative ways of knowing (Pinnegar and Daynes 2007). These turns, which open the researcher to new ways of knowing and doing research, involve:

> '…(1) a change in the relationship between […] the researcher and the researched, (2) a move from the use of number toward the use of words as data, (3) a change from a focus on the general and universal to the local and specific, and finally (4) a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing.' (Pinnegar and Daynes 2007:7)

These shifts are not of import only to narrative inquiry, but reflect wide-ranging changes in qualitative research overall. The implications of each of them will now be considered.

The research relationship in narrative inquiry

What 'narrative inquiry' means here for the practicalities of data production is a greater commitment to a balanced research relationship than exists in more positivistic research paradigms. The possibility of 'objectivity' is rejected in favour of situating both interviewee and interviewer as active participants in an interaction (see Kvale 2009). Consequently interviews are seen as dialogic (Bakhtin 1981; Kvale 2009; Frank 2010),[139] that is to say 'co-constructions' between participant and researcher. This is a relational understanding of interviews which is also addressed through the presentation of my researcher-voice in the transcripts. The emphasis on 'co-construction' is significant here, given the tendency in some 'constructional' perspectives to present data as being 'created or constituted by the transcriber rather than representing more or less adequately "what occurred"', which ultimately 'leads to a radical epistemological scepticism that is self-undermining' (Hammersley 2010:558). Rather, the data analysed here is held to be a representation, with a necessarily interpretive element, of the intersubjective knowledge produced in the interviews, while at the same time recognising that it does also interface with the 'real world' in complex and fascinating ways.

[139] See also Smith (1998) on the dialogic character of sociology as a discipline, for example in the use of language in sociological texts, and in the way 'other sociologists appear as characters' in those texts (Smith 1998:76).

Taking interviews as co-constructs is not to imply that the power dynamic in the interview is assumed to be unproblematically and fully 'equal'. A dialogic perspective implies not only that 'questions are a central part of the data and cannot be viewed as neutral invitations to speak', but that they in fact 'shape how and as a member of which categories the respondents should speak' (Baker 2004:163). Moreover, interviewees were expected to tell me about their lives and embodied experiences while I discussed relatively little of myself. However, making explicit the power relationship in the interview and approaching the data produced as socially (co)constructed knowledge (Kvale 2006) goes some way to protecting both the participants and the trustworthiness of the final analysis, and it is this which I have aimed for here.[140] The research relationship is also considered here to be an embodied interaction, of which more will be said below.

Narrative ethics

In ethical terms, I have used a narrative inquiry approach to place an emphasis on my ability to work reflexively throughout every stage of this research. Reflexivity – which I am discussing here as the awareness which develops in the course of doing research (Ethernington 2004) and which is therefore as an ongoing process rather than a fixed list of tick boxes which must be adhered to – is a crucial component in a methodology which rejects positivist notions of 'validity' in favour of measures which are more appropriate to the understanding of knowledge as contextually co-constructed. Significantly in this respect, reflexive awareness is crucial in maintaining an interpretation which is close to both the data itself and to the understandings of participants, in order to justify larger knowledge claims made by the study and in enhancing the trustworthiness of the research itself (Riessman 2008).[141]

Trustworthiness is an appropriate marker of the value of a narrative inquiry – particularly, I would argue, one which is based on a phenomenological-sociological ontology – in that it looks to the proximity of the analysis to the subject matter. Given the context-dependent nature of tellings, they would not necessarily occur in the same way twice, and trustworthiness allows for this in a way that a convention such as replicability cannot. Moreover, this brings to centre stage the importance of language,

[140] More will be said about the dialogic character of interviews in the analysis section, below.
[141] In this respect I also took insight from my participants, whose reflexivity – in the sense of reflective awareness of the self and of one's impact on others – proved to be highly significant.

and of writing up the research in a way which remains true to the lifeworld of participants, while at the same time attaining acceptable standards of 'coherence' and 'persuasion' (Riessman 2008). As Holstein and Gubrium (2004) highlight:

> 'the validity of answers derives not from their correspondence to meanings held within the respondent, but from their ability to convey situated experiential realities in terms that are locally comprehensible' (Holstein and Gubrium 2004:145, my emphasis)

With this in mind, I present in subsequent chapters an analysis which is not only 'comprehensible' to the participants involved, but which conveys a convincing sense of their lifeworlds, collectively and individually. In this way it is acknowledged that interviewees are valued as participants in the creation of data, rather than mere sources of information which are there to be plundered by the researcher.

In both the data production and writing-up process, I have worked with a keen awareness of the researcher's responsibility to participants, to fairly (re)present their varied viewpoints and to protect their anonymity. Specifically, this has meant that some details about individual participants which might have added to the richness of the data have been modified or excluded to protect individual anonymity, particularly given the relatively small 'community' in which these participants work. The right of interviewees to engage with the research at later stages has also been considered. Alongside the increased control offered them by the interview style (see below), their feedback and comments on the work presented here has also been sought. While this was not available in time to be incorporated into the thesis, it will be taken into consideration in any future developments or publications. This position toward research ethics permeates the methodology presented here and is not easily disentangled from other features of this narrative inquiry. However, whilst following the institutional guidelines of my university, funding body and professional association, additional factors have also been considered which I would argue are of equal or more relevance to my methodology, as I will explain below.

Which data and how?

The turn towards words as data is sometimes seen to favour interviews as a mode of data production, and transcripts as the preferred form of data (see Squire et al 2008). One particular concern about this is that the analysis in this approach tends not to account for non-linguistic aspects of an interaction, nor wider social context. Just as the narrative

inquiry approach taken here does not view narrative as a particular type of 'storied' data or a property of such data,[142] I also acknowledge that data production is likewise not only achievable via interviewing.[143] While this is often the preferred method, a number of studies have ventured into visual methods and documentary analysis and quantitative methods, amongst other means of data generation (see, for example, Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Eliot 2005; Riessman 2008; Stanley 2008; Stanley and Dampier 2009).[144]

The suitability of non-interview methods was explored early in my research. In my first end-of-year thesis review, it was mooted that an experiential aspect to my data production was all but essential. I considered the possibility of participant observation both in the context of training and treatment, and explored how I might position my body as a tool for generating data, drawing on Oerton's (2004b) account of doing the same. I had several massages as I began to scope the field via pilot interviews (see below) and the way these interactions departed from the 'usual' research relationship was interesting in several ways. Firstly there was conflict between my aims as a researcher and those of the participant-practitioners, in that for them to do their work as usual they intimated that they did not want me to actively 'analyse' what they were doing in the course of the massage (or for that matter making notes and asking questions). While there is an extent to which the client is expected to engage with what happens to them throughout a Holistic Massage, this is a therapeutic, experiential and felt engagement, rather than a researcher/academic thinking one. Equally this conflict applied to my own experience as I negotiated embodying both 'thinking' researcher and 'feeling' client. While I wanted to examine academically what happens for a client in a massage interaction, I needed to experience massage in that more therapeutic manner, to enable me to reflect on this. Given the physical and emotional impact of an effective Holistic Massage, and that it can induce extreme relaxation, these aims would prove difficult to reconcile in a way that would produce coherent data. While the client-body may be the focus of massage work, massage work may simultaneously involve the 'ultimate "disappearing act"', rendering the researcher-body 'erased' (Oerton 2004b).

[142] This is a limiting view which may only allow for the recognition of some stories in what participants say and not other important features.
[143] Atkinson (2009) and others have noted that there is 'an almost compulsive obsession with the extended interview among social scientists', which is intertwined with 'professional (therapeutic) and commercial (celebrity) interests in talking about 'experience' (2009:2.15).
[144] Stanley (2008) questions the received wisdom that narrative inquiry is only suited to small-scale projects and explores the strengths and weaknesses of formulating it for large-scale investigations.

Secondly, there was the extent to which I was required to give information about myself, my health and my emotional state. This level of self-disclosure, which resonates with many feminist perspectives on the research relationship, was quite unnerving. Similarly, the embodied relationship in these interactions also mounted a challenge to a more 'typical' research relationship in that I was for the most part undressed. Oerton notes that:

> '…in being positioned as largely inactive, prone and receptive during these treatment sessions, my body was subjected to detailed and direct observation, thus rupturing the conventional relationship between researcher as-observer and researched-as-observed.' (Oerton 2004b:308)

This may contribute to the democratisation of the research relationship, and deploying the researcher's body in this explicit way has the potential to offer an interesting alternative to more conventional data production methods which favour sight and sound. Analysing my involvement as a client could have offered an additional perspective on what happens in massage interactions, how this feels and how such feeling translates into conscious understanding via language. However, the complexities of this approach led me to believe that using the experiential as the primary source of data would take my research too far toward a kind of autoethnography to fit with my aim of foregrounding practitioners' experience and embodied know-how. It would have involved an over-reliance on my own interpretation and verbalising of touch, rather than utilising the perspective and explanations of those who do massage every day in a language which they would use to describe it. The phenomenological underpinnings of my methodology point toward:

> 'an interest in understanding social phenomena from the actors' own perspectives and describing the world as experienced by the subjects with the assumption that the important reality is what people perceive it to be.' (Kvale 2009:17)

So, my research aims having crystallised around the ways in which massage and touch are understood and presented by practitioners, it became clear that interviews which allowed a consideration of how and what they said about their everyday working lifeworld would therefore be the most appropriate method of investigation. While maintaining an interest in attending to the 'embodied' aspects of this interaction (as I explain below), I therefore chose to focus on the ways in which touch and touching work were talked about, the conflicts and contradictions in these, and what this tells us about work which revolves around touching.

Given what I have said about touch in Chapter One – in particular that it may be difficult to articulate – I am aware that talk may seem an odd choice of data through which to address this. However, what I argue to this is that touch is in fact talked about all the time and, moreover, that Holistic Massage practitioners talk about touch at the same time as saying that it cannot be talked about. I am interested in the contradictions which this raises, and will return to this point in the conclusion to the present chapters, and for specific discussion in Chapter Six.

Based on my prior experience of loosely-structured interviews (Purcell 2007, 2009), I knew there was a potential for unexpected issues to emerge and, given the exploratory nature of my research, I hoped this would be effective and valuable. It was important that I strike a balance between flexibility and openness on the one hand and focus or purpose (Kvale 2009) on the other,[145] so interviews were designed to have a loose structure that would give my interviewees more control over what they might say. This was tested over four pilot interviews.[146] The questions posed in the pilot interviews were kept to a minimum, and generally took a 'Tell me about…' format, to allow for a general exploration of the field and to see what issues might arise spontaneously and which, given my research interests, might require more direct questioning. These were informed by the literature and designed to solicit accounts of the type of massage participants identified with and what they actually do when treating a client. These pilots allowed me to scope the massage field and – since they involved practitioners of Therapeutic, Swedish and Pregnancy Massage, Manual Lymphatic Drainage and a type of 'traditional' medicine[147] – they were helpful in highlighting the complexities created by variations in that field as I had initially conceived it. My initial question ('Tell me about what you do') immediately highlighted the fact that each participant in the pilot practiced multiple types of massage, and three of the four also practiced non-massage therapies, which they were equally keen to discuss. If I wanted a more focused end result, I realised I would need to address one particular practice. This resulted in my decision to concentrate on 'Holistic Massage', the reasons for which are outlined in the Introduction

[145] While they were approached as dialogic in the Bakhtinian sense, this dialogue does have limitations in that it is still largely one-way, with my contributions largely consisting of prompts and requests for clarification.
[146] See Appendix Two for the interview guides used in both the pilots and final interviews.
[147] In the interest of participant anonymity I will not be more specific on this. Despite its problematic connotations, the label 'traditional' is therefore used to describe it, and for want of a better label.

to the thesis and developed in Chapter One. I will say more about the sample after noting three further ways in which the pilot interviews were useful.

The first relates to interviewing technique. The minimal structure worked less well on one occasion, where the invitation to speak freely seemed to clash with the participant's expectations of a more formal interview experience, despite my explanation and encouragement. This interview was with a practitioner who had vast experience in a number of CAM practices and for whom massage was not necessarily central to her work. She also had her own experience of interviewing carried out in a quite different style and context. This led to tensions in the interview as I attempted to strike a balance between keeping the participant 'on topic' and allowing her to guide what was spoken about. The experience provided a taster of how I might need to manage future interviews. But it also highlighted a commonplace assumption, made by advocates of loosely- or un-structured interviews, that minimal structure enables the interviewee to speak entirely 'freely' (Hammersley and Atkinson [1983]2007), when in fact '…the passivity of the interviewer can create an extremely powerful constraint on the interviewee to talk (as seen in "non-directive" styles of psychotherapy and counselling)' (Silverman 1993:96). In this sense the pilot interviews were a valuable forum in which I could 'get a feel for' how directive I needed to be, how to manage the expectations of the interviewee, and how they might respond to such minimal structure.

The second point is practical one concerning the immediate context of the interviews. The pilot interviews were conducted in a variety of locations: a café, a treatment room, and at two of the participants' homes. The treatment room turned out to be the most 'effective' location, as it encouraged the interviewee to be more immediately focused on the subject at hand, minimalised distractions, and provided a space in which she was able to feel at ease and in control. While the home location was comparable on this latter point – in fact many of the participants also practiced from home meaning it had a double function in this sense – the interviews done at home did involve more distractions (such as inquisitive pets). I judged the public space of the café to be, perhaps unsurprisingly, the least 'successful', in particular because of background noise and distractions. However, this location was convenient for the interviewee in question and

allowed for an interview which would otherwise not have taken place.[148] As a result of these different experiences I decided to suggest treatment room or home as first choices for the location of interviews (at the interviewee's discretion), using public places only when necessary.[149]

A third issue raised by the pilots regarded whether I should raise the question of 'sexuality'.[150] While the existing literature raises the issue in relation to 'intimate' physical work (see Chapter One), addressing this with participants was in a number of ways sensitive and problematic. Foremost was the fact that in a fieldwork context, my merely raising the issue could have implied that I assume it had relevance to what my participants do: an assumption not necessarily congruent with practitioners' views. I imagined interviewees might be reluctant to talk about this or that they might take it as a challenge to their professional identity. However, in informal, 'backstage' situations (with massage practitioners outwith the sample drawn on here), I had been party to some extremely interesting discussions about the speciousness of separating the sexual element of a person from the rest of their 'whole' self. Moreover, my previous research on male massage practitioners had suggested that sexuality – in relation to 'inappropriate' expectations or behaviour from clients – is very much a relevant consideration for massage workers which some (though not all) participants had been keen to raise (Purcell 2009). In the end, in order to avoid imposing my pre-existing ideas on this issue, I opted not to focus the discussion on sexuality unless it was first raised by participants, in which case I might then ask them to elaborate.[151]

Despite the diversity of interests and specialities of the pilot interviewees, it was clear that they did nonetheless share aspects of a common stock of knowledge relating to massage, 'holism' and touch, upon which they drew in talking about their work. That this stock of knowledge was likely to be more strongly defined in practitioners of one form of massage informed my approach to the core interviews. Practitioners of Holistic

[148] Moreover, a similar location did work with Kath (see Chapter Three), so the limitations to this pilot interview were perhaps not entirely attributable to the space in which it took place.
[149] In the end, four of the interviews were conducted at participants' homes (where two of them practiced), three took place in treatment rooms, and two in public places.
[150] The label 'sexuality' is inherently problematic given the familiar axiom that 'nothing is sexual but naming it makes it so' (Plummer 1975). For the sake of being concise, by 'sexuality' I here mean the sexual feelings and behaviour of both clients and practitioners, as interpreted by my interviewees.
[151] In many cases it was. See Chapter Five for the interesting ways in which it was presented.

Massage were recruited purposively, through my existing connections in the field and through online directories. Having decided that one city – the CAM 'scene' with which I was most familiar[152] – offered a suitable context and one with a boundary to it, everyone listed as practicing Holistic Massage in the city in question was contacted. Of thirteen practitioners, nine initially agreed to take part, with a tenth being recruited at a later stage, as discussed in Chapter Three in relation to Ally and Jen. Of the four who did not take part, two were male and declined to say why they chose not to be involved. The other two were female, one of whom did not respond to my attempts to make contact by phone and email. The other was on a sabbatical and would not return to Scotland within the necessary timeframe. This final group of ten participants was therefore as exhaustive as possible, given the parameters decided upon.[153] All ten women were at that time practicing Holistic Massage, and had experience of doing so ranging from six months to eighteen years. Whilst not deliberate, the gendered character of the sample is indicative of a female-dominated field (see Chapter One), and has implications for the data produced and subsequent analyses (which is discussed in Chapter Six). A detailed outline of the overall shape of the nine interviews is given in Chapter Three.

Having decided to use one-on-one interviews, I had also hoped to conduct two focus group interviews with users of Holistic Massage, to address the agency and perspectives of clients, who are by no means passive in this sort of touching interaction. I would use focus groups to explore which 'personal beliefs and available collective narratives' – or stocks of knowledge – are drawn on and how (Warr 2005), in relation to Holistic Massage and touch. I anticipated that users might not be as well-versed as practitioners in discussing these matters, and therefore planned to use group discussion of a variety of vignettes to open this up for discussion. A significant stumbling block in this respect was that I had no means of access to these clients other than through their practitioners. While I had experienced Holistic Massage, I did not personally know any other users and was therefore reliant on gatekeepers, which produced a two-fold problem.

Firstly, those clients who would be put forward would be 'cherry-picked' by the practitioners themselves, and therefore would not necessarily represent a broad range.

[152] This scene is lively and well-established and includes a number of respected CAM centres and a proliferation of practitioners.
[153] Temporal parameters were dictated chiefly by the time constraints associated with completing a PhD.

However, since generalisability was not my primary concern this was not an insurmountable issue. A bigger problem was that, while the practitioners approached had been willing take part, they were less enthusiastic about putting me in touch with their clients. Two practitioners did immediately put forward clients, four did not respond to my request at all, two did respond but were declined to help citing other commitments, and one other directly cited reservations about the practitioner-client relationship as her reason for refusing. An educated guess might put see this latter point as the most likely reason overall, given that massage workers are largely self-employed and heavily reliant on both return custom and word-of-mouth. Despite my reassurances to the contrary (in terms of confidentiality, research ethics and so forth), the perceived risks were perhaps too much, especially at a time when many were experiencing a decline in client numbers. While I continue to believe data from clients would have been a valuable foil to practitioners' experience, I thus chose not to follow up on this aspect of the research, rather than risk damaging my relationship with the practitioners.

Analysis

Transcription

Extended excerpts from transcribed interviews are presented in this thesis, in order to evidence my interpretations of them, and in the acknowledgement that 'other readings of them are possible' (Riessman 1990:230). And while presenting such lengthy quotes does 'not substitute for the analysis of them', what it does do is 'avoid the usual transformation of "data" into a written report that disembodied the subject and represented the results as a set of "findings"', and instead 'show[s] how individuals themselves constructed their accounts' (1990:230). Since an account of how the interviews were transcribed is given in Appendix One, this section focuses on why certain choices were made.

There was no distinct line between data production and analysis in the approach which was taken here. As with similar interpretive methods, analysis began during the process of transcription, if not in the interviews themselves. Transcription was a nonetheless significant watershed given that – as is the case with any qualitative inquiry based on transcribed data – decisions have to be made regarding what to put in and what to leave out. As Hammersley notes:

> '…what we transcribe, and to some extent how we transcribe it, reflects substantive assumptions (about human beings and their social institutions) and methodological ones too (about how best to describe and explain social phenomena).' (Hammersley 2010:558, original emphasis)

These decisions include: the level of detail and which details to include; whether and how to represent, for example, accent and 'dialect'; and how to actually set out the words on the page (Hammersley 2010).[154] In line with a commitment to maintaining an interpretation as close to the original materials as possible, narrative inquiry requires particularly detailed transcripts. I would in fact argue that working from detailed transcripts is a fundamental criterion of good narrative inquiry (Riessman and Speedy 2007). Given my concern with both context and content of the interviews I required transcripts which not only (re)presented what participants said, but which conveyed a sense of how they said it.

As touched on earlier, it has been suggested that there is an over-emphasis on methods which cannot accommodate the multifaceted character of social life. Squire et al (2008) refer to term the 'tyranny of the transcript', a criticism of the reliance on 'restricted narrative material privileged by transcripts' which are 'mostly speech, rarely paralinguistic material, other media, interpersonal interactions and other social context' (Squire et al 2008:8). The two-pronged analysis presented in this thesis – which attends to both the shape and to the content of interviews – is a means by which this criticism may be challenged. Going beyond this I also aimed to explore what was going on around the interview talk, in the wider context in which both these interviews and the practice of Holistic Massage are located.

One aspect of this was orienting myself to the question of embodiment in the interviews and conveying this in transcripts that it might be available for analysis. As with the sociology of the body, attention to embodiment in narrative inquiries tends more toward writing about bodies rather than explicitly from bodies (for example Bresler 2006; Sparkes 1999). But, given that interviewing is necessarily an embodied interaction in which both participant and researcher have and are bodies, the ensuing analysis can be sensitised to embodied characteristics of the interview. For example, the physical

[154] See Hammersley (2010) for further discussion of the possible choices involved and the implications they have for whether transcripts are understood as 'constructions' or 'reproductions'.

interaction between myself and the participants – including significant movements, gestures and other physical features of the interviews – were recorded in note form and included in the transcripts.[155]

Consideration in my analytic work was also given to (equally 'embodied') emotional factors, including my responses to these physical features and to what participants talked about. Recognising the 'emotional labour' of interviewing is another valuable tool in achieving a thorough and rounded analysis (Hochschild 2010a). The means by which I understand what is 'going on' in an interview, how I respond to the participant, or why I cut them off at a particular moment are worth examining for the indications they might offer of the significance of what was and was not said at that point and how the interaction is taking shape.[156] It may be difficult to extricate emotional responses to a recording or transcript from that of the 'live' interaction, but notes were made to this effect immediately after the interviews. I aimed to tread carefully in order to enhance this reflexive component of my research and to foreground certain analytical issues, without lapsing into a 'confessional' form of writing up. While it is impossible to capture and convey every aspect of an interview, it is possible by considering embodied features in this way to convey far more about the local context in which things are said than is offered by more conventional transcription methods. How these non-verbal acts are addressed in the analysis may be held by some to be theoretically problematic and 'contentious' (Squire et al 2008). But, I argue, in a phenomenologically informed inquiry they add another layer of richness and depth to the data which in some looser and less 'to the word' approaches is lost. In order to achieve this more rounded picture, the interviews were fully transcribed using a modified form of the conversation analytic conventions for transcribing talk developed by Jefferson (see Atkinson and Heritage 1984), which (re)presents a sense of the overall interaction between myself and the participants.

Form, content and context

To recapitulate, the empirical materials produced in a narrative inquiry are not necessarily themselves held to be 'narratives' in the sense of 'stories'. Stories – with the

[155] Of course this was reliant on my own interpretation of those gestures, but what I mean by 'significant' is movements or incidences of touching which stood out, in that they went beyond the more commonplace such as hand gestures while talking. See Chapter Three for discussion.
[156] See Chapter Three, for example in relation to the story recounted by Kath about the male client who frightened her, or my interaction with Rachel.

features of beginning, middle, end, plot, characters and so on – may be told within an interview, indeed this was so on numerous occasions during my fieldwork. This was to be expected given the 'universal impulse' to do so (Riessman 2008) and the 'inner library' of stories which individuals carry (Frank 2010).[157] But that is not to say entire interviews are storied: tellings may be told in a number of ways. Furthermore, it is not stories qua stories that are the focus in this analysis, but rather the relationship between the talk of individuals and the larger, and to varying extents shared, resources upon which they draw. Hence, the analysis presented here does not neatly fit into the category of 'narrative analysis' in a narrow sense, such as a Labovian structural reading of a text.[158] Neither is it an exclusively thematic analysis which focuses only on what is said, and how it connects to large-scale, societal context (as in Tamboukou 2003; Williams 1984). Instead it looks at both the overall shape and context of the interviews as well as common themes which arise out of participants drawing on shared 'narrative resources' or stocks of knowledge (see Riessman 1990). It is the use of these stocks which can provide a picture of the lifeworld of the participants and their location within it.

My approach to analysis is primarily influenced by Riessman's (1990) narrative inquiry on people in the process of divorcing. In this work Riessman produced one of the most effective examples to date of a narrative inquiry which brings together small scale and large scale concerns. Through her exploration of the links between individual accounts of divorce and the societal context in which these accounts were located, Riessman presents a shrewd analysis of contemporary (to the late 1980s) attitudes to and expectations of marriage. Using individual accounts of divorce, she draws together an examination of the phenomena at both individual and societal levels, with the aim – in which she is immensely successful – of bringing together 'social and public issues' of divorce with 'personal and private experience' (Riessman 1990:7). This approach has firm sociological roots, drawing on the work of those whom Riessman terms the 'social context theorists' – such as Mead (1934), Goffman ([1959]1990), Blumer (1969) and Berger and Luckman (1967) – theorists who:

[157] Frank suggests: 'People have an inner library of the stories they know, including stories they might have heard, or that are resonant in the stories they once heard. This library predisposes attention to those stories that can be readily located; they sound like familiar stories' (2010:55). There are distinct consonance in this comment with the Schutzian notion of the stock of knowledge outlined earlier.

[158] Which attends chiefly to how participants say what they say, via the temporal organisation and plot of the data and other literary features such as characters and genre (Labov 1972; 1982).

> 'elaborate the broader contexts and social roots of motives that individuals invoke to explain their actions, and they explore the functions served – both for the individual and for society – by particular explanatory schema.' (Riessman 1990:13)[159]

Contextual features will play a key part in the analysis of my own data in the following chapters, and will be presented in two main ways. Firstly, in Chapter Three, I attend to each interview individually, providing an overview of relevant contextual aspects and their impact on the unfolding of the interview. Extended portions of participants' talk are presented in order to examine their overall concerns via the ways in which they present their tellings. Rather than taking a fully 'technical' focus – as in the sociolinguistics of Gee (1991) or Labov (1972) – I again follow Riessman in maintaining a sociological orientation to the analysis by considering the ways in which individual participants make sense of their experience through talk and through drawing on wider resources. Chapters Four and Five then focus on common thematic concerns of the interviews by looking to the 'what', rather than 'how' of the tellings, and to the stocks of knowledge which are drawn on and which link individual tellings. By this means, component parts of a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge can begin to be identified.

The significance of language, which has been highlighted throughout this chapter, is attended to in each part of my analysis. Riessman suggests that:

> 'To see how individuals actually go about making sense, it is necessary to take language seriously, for in a large part it is through language that we create our realities. Rather than passing by the messy stuff of "talk", it needs to come to the centre of analysis, so that we can examine what people might mean by what they say.' (Riessman 1990:17)

This approach to language fits with my phenomenological commitment to (re)presenting and examining Holistic Massage via the words of those who do it, as well as being appropriate to an overall focus on meaning-making.[160] Detailed transcripts, produced in the way I have outlined, in tandem with providing contextual detail, facilitate such an examination of talk. When I refer to context here I mean three things. One is the large-scale social context in which the participants live and work. For example, the way in

[159] And I would argue that Schutz too might be added to Riessman's list of theorists who see contextualisation as crucial to sociological inquiry since, as she suggests here, it is in the links between personal and social levels in which we see the intersubjective social world.

[160] It is additionally justified in sociological terms with reference to Mills' suggestion that we (sociologists) look to the 'vocabularies of motive actually and usually verbalized by actors in specific situations' as '[t]he only source for a terminology of motives' (cited in Riessman 1990:17).

which they relate misconceptions about massage draws on concerns which are broadly social, such as the conflation of massage with sex work, or the relative devaluation of health-oriented massage work. The interviewees draw on a pre-existing stock of stories in order to understand and make sense of their own experiences (Plummer 1995 and others). In other words, the participant:

> '… speaks by vocally producing socially and historically shaped words. Through the seemingly individual account of the interviewee, we are most likely exploring a variety of discourses coproduced by the speakers and made available through common and sometimes diverse and variant social language repertories.' (Tanggaard 2009: 1511)[161]

If the very way in which the interviewees configure what they recount is rooted in and shaped by assumptions reflecting their view of their lifeworld,[162] including what they take for granted as shared understandings (or a lack of such) between themselves and their audience, then significant assertions can be made about the social world in which they are located. In other words, attention to the verbalised stocks of knowledge ('narrative resources', 'social language repertories' or whatever they are termed) drawn on by participants offers insight into what can and cannot be told. It also makes it possible to address alternative ways of telling, the creation and the (re)claiming of spaces via language, and thus to examine the workings of the wider social world (see Chapter Six; also Plummer 1995; Phoenix 2008).

Contextualisation at an individual level is also significant. Citing Garfinkel's (1967) notion of 'background expectancies', Riessman notes that interviewees themselves will tend to contextualise their own accounts 'including the information necessary to read their texts in the ways that are most appropriate' (Riessman 1990:18). This proved to be the case with my participants, who situate themselves in this larger context through reference to other factors such as whether or not Holistic Massage is their main job, why they do it, how they came to do it and what else they do in their day-to-day lives.

From a narrative inquiry point of view, and consonant with the Schutzian perspective underpinning my research, context is relevant not only in this sense of individual tellings, but also to the interviews on a practical level. Understanding the researcher not

[161] This is also compatible with a Schutzian perspective.
[162] See also Smith, who notes that 'meaning is not determined by individual intentions, but is social, a property of groups and relations' (Smith 1998:65).

only as being in dialogue with the participant, but also being an immediate audience to their telling, brings an additional dimension to this. In this respect, it is necessary to consider not only what is said and how, but also what and how (and from where) the researcher hears in the interview (Squire et al 2008). As Frank notes, '[p]eople's access to narrative resources depends on their social location: what stories are told where they live and work, which stories they take seriously or not' (2010:13); and this applies as much to researchers as anyone else. Where my familiarity with the field, coupled with extensive background reading, oriented me in a positive way toward doing the research, it also means I am inclined to hear certain stories in certain ways, as is unavoidably the case in any research. I aimed to maintain an awareness of this coupled with an openness of hearing not only at the interviewing stage but throughout the analysis.

My prior involvement in the field also made me locatable to participants (in a perhaps more easily recognisable way than as 'researcher' alone) beacuse I had worked in a centre they were familiar with. However, this may also have contributed to a certain ambiguity around my position. As a receptionist, my role was to assist practitioners, promote them and book appointments with them. I was expected to have familiarity with their therapies and perhaps even be training to practice myself, as many of my colleagues and predecessors had been. However, to have 'insider' knowledge of their therapy, and yet not be a practitioner, seemed to place me in a somewhat puzzling grey area for some participants. I was on several occasions asked if I was a practitioner, and while a response in the negative, backed up with the information that I had worked in the CAM centre, seemed to satisfy the majority of the participants as they attempted to locate me, it still seemed to sit uneasily with others. The way in which participants perceive a researcher's social and cultural location obviously impacts on what they will be willing to say or not say in an interview (Song and Parker 1995). On reflection, a more detailed explanation of the reasons behind my interest in massage and the extent of my involvement, which was more often discussed after the interview, might have helped with this. The unfolding research relationship is reflected on further in the following chapter.

For participants, an imagined audience beyond the immediate context of the interview also plays a part in what they say (Squire et al 2008). Regarding the way in which participants were approached to take part in this research, for example, their opinion was characterised as 'valuable', and it was suggested that agreeing to an interview would

enable them to 'have their say' about doing massage. But to whom they are saying this is open to individual interpretation, contingent on their own concerns, interests, and orientation to their work. While no suggestion was made that my research could in itself change policy or perceptions of massage, a hope that this might be the case was made explicit by one or two of my interviewees. This situation was problematic since it required me to negotiate the ground between a dismissive attitude toward the significance of my own research on the one hand, and an exaggeration of its likely impact on the other. Addressing this issue with an appropriate level of candour prevented participants from being misled. However, in the analysis it became clear that amongst the possible imagined audiences to which participants addressed themselves were not only a particular researcher but also clients, policy makers, the press, the medical profession, friends and colleagues. Moreover, it appeared that they could be speaking to different audiences at different stages of the interview. Far from confusing matters, this not only illustrates the complexity of talk, but also indicates the number of different groups to whom the research presented here may be of interest.

Participants may not only address themselves to various imagined audiences, but also speak from a variety of perspectives, that is, in a number of 'voices'.[163] Given the complexity of individual identities, it is clear that interviewees are never likely to speak from a single position throughout the course of an interview, but rather to switch between a number, depending on how and what they are saying. As Tanggaard highlights:

> '…not only do different actors tell different stories in each interview but over an entire interview it is often exceedingly difficult to reconstruct or summarize the views of one participant because each actor has many different voices crossing, delimiting, or refusing to interact with one another.' (Tannggaard 2009:1502)

This once again bears out Schutz's perspective on the stock of knowledge as a 'sedimentation of all our experiences', including those of our contemporaries and predecessors. Tellings need to be understood not just as a straightforward to-and-fro between researcher and participant, but as the complex interaction of these sedimentations. This may be of particular interest regarding the ways in which

[163] The notion of 'voice' is a problematic one, which there is not room to engage with here (see Atkinson 2009 on the question of 'voice' in narrative research). The term is used here to signify the different identities which participants act out in the course of their interviews, some of which are aspects of their own identity, and some of which refer to other people.

participants ‘demonstrate their disagreement with particular discourses about their own situation’ (Tanggaard 2009:1506), for example in relation to misconceptions about massage. It also has clear implications for the way in which interviews can be understood and interpreted.

All of the points made in this section have implications for the possibility and practice of generalisation from small-scale qualitative projects. While this is conventionally considered to be limited, the specifity of the interview interaction ‘does not discount the possibility that knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained.’ (Miller and Glassner 2004:126). As I have demonstrated in the above discussion, and as I will further establish over the coming chapters, the data produced in the interviews I conducted is rooted in the participant’s lifeworld, and an effective analysis of this data can tell us much about the latter. Generalisations may be made precisely because of the connections between individual tellings and the commonly drawn on, contextually situated and intersubjectively shared stocks of knowledge. This data, approached in this way, has much to tell us about touching work and touch more generally.

Exploring touching work through narrative inquiry

Having presented the case for my use of narrative inquiry as the overall methodology for this research, this chapter also illustrates how touch may be explored through talk. The methodological grounds on which the senses are explored continue to be somewhat underdeveloped, and for some the assumption persists that the best way to explore a given sense is via that sense itself (see Mason and Davies 2009 for a discussion of this). However, as discussed earlier, it quickly became apparent to me that such an assumption is, in the case of touch, both simplistic and highly problematic. Moreover, ‘the sensory is not all, and is routinely intertwined with other dimensions of experience, including the extra-sensory and ethereal’ (Mason and Davies 2009:588). I argue that this is particularly pronounced in the case of touch and Holistic Massage, since much of what happens in Holistic Massage is elusive and difficult to pin down. It can also be argued that it is the very attempt to ‘pin down’ that which is elusive to sociological research which leads inquirers into a methodological impasse. Overcoming this dilemma requires imaginative sociological thinking and:

> ‘amongst other things: gentle, inquisitive and appreciative knowledge practices; a respect for the fascinations that motivate us; a readiness to accept and even celebrate the half-seen, the glimpsed and the ethereal; a playful approach to epistemology that involves […] a recognition and appreciation of non-conventional ways of ‘coming to know’ that exist alongside/outside those we currently think of as “method” and data’ (Mason 2010)

The fact that little direct attention has been paid to touch in sociology suggests that its exploration has previously fallen into the category of ‘unknowable’; based on an assumption that there is something about touch itself which is problematic for sociology and which makes it unavailable to sociological investigation. It also speaks to the features of sociological research which give preference to certain methods of data production over others. With Mason’s suggestions in mind - along with sympathetic aspects of the ‘narrative turn’ discussed earlier – it is possible to see how this may be rectified.

Despite its common portrayal as the ‘immediate’ sense, touch is, like all social phenomena, always socially and culturally mediated and cannot be ‘directly’ accessed, any more than can emotions or embodiment more generally. Moreover, whatever way data is produced, touch and tellings about touch must still be (re)mediated through language (Paterson 2009) and, if a written thesis is to be the end result, this must be done in a particular way, considering certain conventions. Moreover, the only means by which the sociologist can know about the social world – the only means by which any human beings can convey to one another their embodied experience of being in the world – is via ‘socially shared resources’ (Atkinson 2009:3.9). From a Schutzian perspective, it is the intersubjective sharing of these resources – most readily shared through language, and thus through talk – which constitutes the social.

If touching is difficult to investigate through observation or participation, and in any case requires talking and then writing (as it does in this instance), then an effective means by which to explore it is to shift the focus from attempting to ‘directly’ study how it is done, to how it is talked about. In the present context, this approach has the potential to encompass how practitioners do touching, and how they think about touching, from the perspective of the shared stock(s) of knowledge they draw upon. This in turn allows for the exploration of what it is possible (or seemingly impossible) to say about this phenomenon which is seemingly so intrinsic to embodied being-in-the-world. Holistic

Massage work provides an interesting context in which to explore the utility not only of Schutzian phenomenology, but also of narrative inquiry as a feasible means for investigating the sensory. What this approach has accomplished in terms of the empirical component of my research is set out in the following three chapters, before its overall sociological contribution in addressed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Three
Nine Tellings: What Practitioners Talk About When They Talk About Massage

Introduction

The analysis presented in this chapter builds on Chapters One and Two by operationalising the phenomenologically-informed narrative inquiry methodology they set out. It presents a discussion of nine interviews conducted with Holistic Massage practitioners in early 2009, as well as an examination of some of the key features of each telling, and the ways in which they were composed. This is followed by an analysis of common features and intriguing differences between the accounts and what these might signify more broadly. In presenting this analysis, I do not attempt to 'box in' the interviews or interviewees in a particular way: what was said in the interviews was always going to be more than I could convey within the practical and analytical confines of a small number of thesis chapters. While the interpretation I put forward is of course shaped by my research interests, the presentation of lengthy excerpts of the data allows the reader to see that these concerns are grounded in what was said by my participants. In particular, and as indicated by the title of the chapter, one of the key issues which will be highlighted is that the participants did not necessarily talk about massage in the straight-forward sense of touching as much as I had expected they might. The implications of this are discussed toward the end of the chapter.

My analysis draws on Riessman's (1990) narrative inquiry on divorce and echoes her presentation of the participants' 'narrative accounts' of their experience. As with Riessman, the accounts discussed here are analysed primarily in terms of how they are constructed and what this may say about Holistic Massage, touching work and touch on a broader scale, and this is then developed in later chapters. Where Riessman focuses on just four participants (from a large sample of over one hundred), I present each of my nine interviews in order to give a comprehensive sense of this research overall. This is the most conventionally 'narrative' of my four analytical chapters, as it focuses on <u>how</u> the participants talked about what they do. As Riessman notes:

> 'Humans create their realities through […] presentations and responses […]. We can see the process only by examining, in some detail, longer stretches of talk […]. There is a reciprocity between form and function, that is, between

> the way an account is told (how it is narrated), the understandings the narrator wants to convey, and the listening process.' (Riessman 1990: 74-5)

These three issues – how a telling was told, how they were heard by me, and what the teller did or did not say – formed the framework with which I examined these interviews. Consideration of context and meaning is also essential to a phenomenological-sociological methodology since, from this perspective:

> '…communities (ranging from families and peer groups to societies) have particular ways of saying things, including jargon and technical terms, which take form around and acquire significance from group activities and particularly literature, traditions and belief systems.' (Crossley 1996a:83)

Close attention to the language used by interviewees is crucial to maintaining an interpretive analysis that is as close as possible to what they say and mean. Through examining each interview with these points in mind, this chapter begins to explore the possibilities and practice of a narratively-informed phenomenology.

The ways in which interviews unfold relates closely to the power relationship in the interview context. While I did aim to be as open in this matter as possible, evidence can be found in the majority of these tellings for the ways in which the participants and I negotiate the 'different rights and obligations' of speakers in this respect (Tanggaard 2009:1502). Furthermore, it is in through the interviewees' use of narrative resources – the intersubjectively shared 'stock of knowledge' (Schutz 1962) – that links can be drawn between the individual and the social. And it is through a consideration of these factors that the kind of analysis presented in this chapter is of particular interest in sociological terms.

While the entireties of these tellings are valuable, it is obviously neither necessary nor practical to include the transcripts in full in the present context. Hence, what have been included are relevant excerpts which illustrate the different points of analytical interest. These are often relatively long in order to preserve the way in which they were told. Lines are numbered as a means of identifying where in the interview a particular exchange occurred, and the talk has been transcribed in a detailed way – including, for example, false starts, non-lexical utterances and overlaps in speech – in order to convey as much as possible of both the 'what' and 'how' of the tellings (see Appendix One for a full account of the transcription conventions used). This also avoids the kind of

'finalizing' which the presentation of un-contextualised data may imply (Frank 2010).[164] In the course of my analysis I have found that, where the way in which things are said is significant, what is being said is also of particular relevance, and vice versa. Since it is primarily the 'how' which is the focus of this chapter, some comments and issues raised here are also returned to from different perspectives in later chapters. The nine interviews with ten practitioners (one being a double interview) are addressed in turn here. Of these central ten participants, three – Eve, Kath and Ally – are Holistic Massage tutors as well as practitioners. All bar two of the remaining seven – Carol and Rachael – were trained by one of these three. Having said this, I have avoided specifying who was a student of whom in favour of participant anonymity, other than in the case of Ally and Jen, where this relationship is an integral part of their dual interview. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

Sarah

I begin with Sarah, who was chronologically the first interviewee and whom I had met several times prior to the interview taking place, and from whom I had had one Holistic Massage treatment.[165] At the time of the interview, Sarah had been practicing for two years in a CAM centre, and the interview took place in the room in which she usually worked in this centre. The interview with Sarah offers a useful starting point since, as well as it being the first 'proper' interview conducted, Sarah is one of the few participants who practices Holistic Massage only. This enabled us to maintain a focus on this one practice throughout the interview without any overt direction from me.

The interview with Sarah lasted 1 hour 5 minutes, running to 800 lines when transcribed, and might potentially have gone on for longer had it not been that Sarah had to be somewhere else immediately afterwards. In fact, having signalled the end of the interview, our discussion did continue and I asked to switch the recorder back on, when it seemed likely that some important points would be made on a topic Sarah was particularly interested in. Her turns in speaking were relatively uniform in length, averaging about fifteen lines. This reflects the fact that while she seemed happy to talk

[164] Frank notes: 'Not acknowledging the dialogic (ongoing) character of stories and chopping them up in analysis risks attempting to "finalize" stories' which are 'always more' (Frank 2010:118, 42). While Frank refers specifically to stories, this applies equally to the accounts which I present.
[165] Sarah was the first of the nine core interviews. I had previously conducted four 'pilot' interviews (see Chapter Two).

quite freely, she did, especially early on, check in as to the appropriateness of her responses, whether she was giving 'too much detail' and the like. Also, while Sarah did seem to convey strong ideas to which she had obviously given much thought with regards to her work, she had not been practicing as long as some participants, whose turns proceeded (to 60 or 70 lines) in a more smoothly constructed way. She also drew on similar examples to those who trained her, which is indicative of their influence on the narrative resources on which she draws.

A general impression from notes made during and after the interview, and also on reflecting upon the transcript, is that the physicality of the interview was more pronounced with Sarah relative to the other interviews. In particular it featured an animated touching interaction between myself and Sarah, as initiated by her on several occasions. In the first example of this Sarah demonstrates what she does to prepare herself for doing a massage, as part of her response to my question, in line 98, of what happens after the initial consultation:

> Sarah: […] I I feel like [laughs] demonstrating I'll just show you if it's not a problem
> Carrie: [laughs] yeah
> Sarah: yeah so what I do is I em. like I sort of em I bend my knees and I I get my legs well apart almost like I'm holding myself like a tree and I imagine my roots going down through the earth and with an out-breath I imagine those roots going down and then with the in-breath I imagine the energy coming up from the earth and then out-breath going back through. [breathes in slowly and deeply] and I'm going I'm gonna just do everything actually its really helpful […] em ok and I'm holding myself here and here. [one hand on chest one on stomach] and em that just feels good I don't know yeah I guess its about chakras or something but it just it feels right there. um and then very gradually I bring my hands down almost like coming down through their through their aura [brings hand down from above head height, out to side, stopping above where person on table would be] um and just and just almost gently coming into their space basically (Sarah, lines 146-168)

Sarah could have chosen to talk through these actions rather than actually doing them. However, her demonstration conveyed what she does with her body very effectively and expressed what Sarah does in a way for which words might have proven inadequate. Indeed, while they do give a rough impression, the words I used in making notes record and interpret what Sarah did (in square brackets in the above and following excerpt) lose much of the nuances of, for example, the fluidity and pace with which she moved. While there remains a layer of interpretation where I have translated her movements onto this

page, consideration of Sarah's interview overall is enhanced by accounting for this physical demonstration.[166]

In the second instance, what Sarah enacted was related to the feeling of different kinds of pressure as these would be applied in Holistic Massage:

> Sarah: I remember doing this in my class like the difference between if somebody em I can [stands up] I can do it to you now if you want [laughs]
> Carrie: [laughs] yeah do you want me to stand up
> Sarah: no I'll just stand here [goes behind my chair] but basically somebody I'll try and do it so if I if just push you like this [pushes on my shoulders]
> Carrie: mhm
> Sarah: ok let me try and ok so this is me just pushing with my arms and then this is gonna be me pushing with my whole body I don't know if you can feel the difference but like its em its really hard to get that movement just with your hands so like its really helpful to kind of have it have it c coming up
> Carrie: so you're using your whole body
> Sarah: YEAH so you're using your WEIGHT and stuff yeah um
> Carrie: it's much stronger when you're
> Sarah: yeah but also quite often it feels somehow more peaceful whereas if people massage just with their HANDS it's extremely tiring yeah it's more nippetty (Sarah, lines 394-411)

This example involved two different qualities of touch brought about by different uses of the practitioner's body which would be much more difficult to convey verbally, and this is presumably why Sarah chose physical demonstration. While I could describe these two different ways of touching as stronger or weaker, deep or shallow, neither conveys fully what this difference actually was. This is conveyed in the only tentative agreement that she and I come to at the end of this passage (and our feelings of awkwardness about this exchange are conveyed by laughter on each side). This exemplifies a central methodological problem with researching an interaction centring on touch: how to account for the tactile, which may often be articulated in distinctive ways. This, and the point that interviewees in fact routinely talked about the ineffable character of touch in detailed and eloquent ways, will be further explored in later chapters.

[166] This idea will be returned to later in the discussion.

Another notable feature of this interview is Sarah's explicit awareness of the recording equipment, which she makes direct reference to on two occasions, as in this example:

> Sarah: that's really funny I suddenly realised I wasn't looking at you [laughs]
> Carrie: [laughs]
> Sarah: I was sort of conscious of the machine but um. ah FUCK I've forgotten what I was saying (Sarah, lines 75-9)

The presence of recording equipment is a concern in considering how best to do interviews. While it may be somewhat intrusive, without audio equipment recording data is significantly more awkward and detracts from the researcher's ability to interact with the participants, because they find themselves absorbed in extensive note-taking. Consequently, the researcher may then miss much of the rich detail of social interaction that repeated listening or readings offer (Sacks 1995). But, while it was clearly somewhat intrusive here, this occurred early in the interview and any disturbance seemed to be relatively fleeting. The recording device was not otherwise commented on by Sarah or any of the other interviewees.[167]

Also interesting to note is that Sarah seemed quite openly reflective in her considerations and responses, as demonstrated in phrases which often seemed like asides to herself, such as 'ok this is it' (line 376) or 'ok I'm gonna say this' (line 363). In this way her conscious formulation of what she was thinking and/or presenting to me is quite clearly evident in the interview. A further point in the same vein is that Sarah, like several of the other interviewees, seemed to be concerned about conveying an image that was too unconventional, prefixing several statements with for example 'I don't want to sound hippy but […]'. Not only does this reflect a personal concern in relation to her self-presentation in the interview, but it also relates to wider perceptions of massage workers, and discourses of 'professional' images and social standing (reaching to the 'mainstream' in this respect, rather than 'alternative'). In this way Sarah manages the stigma (Goffman 1968) which she sees as potentially being attached to massage and its ways of knowing. She demonstrates this self-consciousness in a number of instances, and in particular in relation to more 'energetic' aspects of massage, as here:

> I think. it's almost like a. I don't want to be really hippy but its almost like a cellular harmony you know like if you think of us as water or whatever and

[167] The small size of contemporary digital voice recorders is a blessing in that this minimises the extent to which they are intrusive.

> how we respond to whatever's going on and it kind of em.. yeah its encouraging harmony I don't know if that's too hippy. but yeah ok [laughs] (Sarah, lines 142-5)

Sarah's anxiety not to sound too 'hippy' bookends this statement about 'cellular harmony', which indicates that she feels this to be part of an 'alternative' (rather than mainstream) stock of knowledge. This is a sentiment later mirrored in prefixed comments such as 'ok I'm gonna say this you're absorbing quite a lot of their ENERGY' (lines 364-5). This unease with presenting 'alternative' perspectives in any kind of uncritical or naïve was recurrent in many of the interviews, and reflects the uneasy position of massage – particularly Holistic Massage – as a healthcare practice. Its position in a 'liminal' space between mainstream western, scientific approaches to the body and less conventional, politically marginal perspectives – which have in some cases been systematically, deliberately 'discredited' or 'subjugated' (Foucault 1980, see Chapter Six) – has crucial implications for the professional standing and knowledge claims of its practitioners. In drawing on this shared stock of 'alternative' knowledge, they actively and paradoxically maintain a position outwith the bounds of conventional biomedicine. But at the same time, as shall be seen in the discussion below and in later chapters, this also creates an anxiety which is shared by a number of Sarah's fellow practitioners.

On the whole, a central concern of Sarah's interview is with feeling, as illustrated by this excerpt:

> one of the things that I do do is to actually.. em. like I can actually feel it with my hands. em I can feel particular knots or like areas of tension like it just it doesn't feel as flexible or you'll find actual knobbles inside like little sort of. em yeah like sort of hard harder pieces of tissue em. and also I'll be doing that thing where I actually feel how I'm feeling inside myself over particular areas. em. and and I'm also thinking of I often do work with quite sensitive people or I seem to attract quite sensitive people and em I'll notice how I'm feeling inside myself and like and I'm looking at how they're responding like one of those. y'know someone whose feeling more fragile if they're tensing up here [indicates neck and shoulders] often people can feel a bit safer on the lower back (Sarah, lines 205-14)

Here, Sarah implies, there is a shift back and forth between 'feeling' as touching and as experiencing emotion for both client and practitioner. While this elision is common in the use of the word 'feeling', it also typifies the interview with Sarah overall, in which touching, feeling and sensing are tightly bound together. The way in which Sarah's talks underlines this slippage draws out another key thematic feature, since it suggests that it

is a certain indivisibility here, and that it may in fact be touching-feeling together which is key, not just in Sarah's experience, but to Holistic Massage work overall.

Eve

Eve was contacted through the website of her massage school, and proved to offer an interesting perspective as she is an experienced practitioner and teacher of Holistic Massage. The interview was conducted in Eve's home. Reviewing the interview recording and transcript – which ran to 830 lines of text and 1 hour 17 minutes of recording – it is apparent that Eve was both comfortable and confident in discussing issues related to massage. With minimal encouragement her turns to speak ran, on average, from 25 to 55 lines at a time, and at no point did she overtly seek the kind of clarification or reassurance sought by Sarah.

Eve's interview provides an excellent opportunity to explore the multiplicity of 'voices' between which a participant can move in one telling, to make or illustrate various different points.[168] Eve adopted up to twenty different rhetorical expressions of voice in the course of the interview, ranging from speaking for different aspects of her self – practitioner, teacher, mother, committee member – to different characters in the many illustrative examples she offers. For example, in the following excerpt, Eve speaks as someone involved in the political activity related to the regulation of massage work:

> what we're trying to DO the ah the [CAM Organisation] there's a whole lot of kind of organisations cos there's nobody as bonkers as therapists I'll tell you they're all so TERRITORIAL and just nuts but what we're trying to get is massage separated into the RELAXATION which is fine but CALL it that don't call it holistic don't call it sort of therapeutic don't call it remedial so you get the relaxation you get the the more REMEDIAL stuff you get the SPORTS massage y'know ah and stuff that I do like trauma work which is y'know it's it's HARD (Eve, lines 484-490)

As well as the categorising of massage and massage qualifications to which Eve refers here (and which are discussed in terms of boundary work in Chapter Five), the 'we' she uses aligns her with an authoritative, professional community, implies that she takes an influential role in this work ('we' not 'they'), and thus adds weight to her position. On

[168] I use the term voice tentatively here, since it may be taken to invoke the debate over representation – particularly of politically suppressed 'voices' – which has rumbled in sociology for some years now. I do not intend here to engage with this debate. Rather, I use the term to indicate a performative aspect of the interview in which Eve speaks words which she attributes to others in order to make a point.

the other hand, many of the other rhetorical strategies Eve uses seem to serve a more illustrative, literally performative purpose, as in her evocation of an ideal massage therapist as 'perfect mother', rather than a judgemental and cruel one:

> y'know the perfect mother you can go to and say my period's late y'know I've been having sex with my boyfriend I'm only fifteen y'know she'll go it's a bit naughty but lets see what we can do [laughs] y'know and there's this and this and this you can do y'know instead of the sort of SLAP BANG what the HELL do you think you're doing you're just a SLUT y'know and you totally sort of cut off any sort of [laughs] further emotional communication (Eve, lines 224-9)[169]

As well as this striking example of deft movement between modes of expression to emphasise the point, Eve's interview is littered with many other occasions where she uses different expressions of voice to great effect. Of two further examples, one was an 'airy fairy' practitioner who would have an inappropriate approach for treating acute injuries - 'oh and your mother died and all that's really terrible' (line 265). Another represented an internet user tempted to buy a 'miracle cure' online – 'I saw these cures for this disease and I remember thinking at one point I'm gonna GO for this y'know' (755-6). She also enacts the part of various clients, both generalised and specific, who represent important examples of the effectiveness of a holistic approach, or the various ways in which clients might behave which prevent this from working. In doing so Eve spoke from a range of perspectives and to a number of imagined audiences. The deftness with which she did this is commensurate with the general confidence of her manner in talking about massage, but also reflects the fact that Eve has taught Holistic Massage for a number of years and is thus no doubt frequently required to be able to articulate and illustrate key points of significance in an engaging way.

Rather than thinking of this as Eve doing or using different 'voices', this can more appropriately be understood as her drawing on the stock of knowledge which she has 'to hand' and representing this by using different rhetorical strategies. When the stock of knowledge is understood as 'the sedimentation of all our experiences of former definitions of previous situations' (Schutz 1966:123), it encompasses the knowledge of our 'predecessors' and 'contemporaries'. Eve draws on the intersubjectively shared knowledge to which she has access precisely through these contemporaries and predecessors, in order

[169] See Chapter Four for discussion of the significance of this metaphor in relation to the 'hypersymbolisation of the mother' (Hochschild 2003).

to interpret the social world she is in, and to express the aspects of it she wishes to convey. As she did this, Eve's telling also shifted back and forth in time via different rhetorical strategies and modes of expression, speaking through a 'then' fellow trainee (from the 1990s) and 'now' as herself, an experienced practitioner, in order to explain some of the ways in which massage training has changed since she studied it:

> I remember a student [contemporary of Eve's] once saying I've got a client with arthritis in her hip and like how do I work on that and they [Eve's tutor] said [puts on 'floaty' voice] don't think about it just put your hands on and let your hands guide you y'know and its all very well but its actually really handy to have a knowledge a working knowledge of what's going on in the BODY (Eve, lines 37-40)[170]

Talking about massage in this way adds a depth of time to the practice. Moreover, she spoke of her own training in the past as a time when massage was comparatively more stigmatised or taboo – 'it was still a bit of a kind of ooh it's massage [laughs]' (lines 47-8) – as compared with the present, where she is able to say that ideas of appropriate teaching are quite different:

> it was very rough and ready in those days like everybody was naked on the table and they weren't covered UP and there were some things that I consider wh that actually would have been sort of very unethical nowadays you couldn't teach like that (Eve, lines 28-31)

The way in which these comments are structured, comparing a distinct 'then' and 'now', places emphasis on the ways in which massage training has, for Eve, become more disciplined, schematised, and thus 'ethical'. It can also be interpreted as contributing to the management of a potentially 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1968) by distancing what massage is now from what it was at some point in the past.

Attending to <u>how</u> these comments are said brings out the nuances of <u>what</u> is said, and it underlines the fact that, through the accumulated stock of knowledge on which an individual participant draws, it is possible to build up an account which represents not only that one individual at one particular point in time, but also the influence of her contemporaries and predecessors, regarding the particular ways that she has absorbed and assimilated their influences. In this light, the interview with Eve not only presents

[170] As with the more performative aspects of Sarah's interview, it is challenging to convey on the page the range of effects of such examples as this where Eve actually mimicked the sound of someone else's voice. The inadequacy of the descriptor 'floaty' which I have used here speaks to this, although the aim of the transcription conventions used is to supplement this limitation.

knowledge produced between us at the time the interview took place, but also explicitly pulls together her manifold experiences over a range of time.

I experimented in the interview with the idea of using film footage of a massage taking place as a stimulus for discussion and inviting the interviewee to comment on it.[171] However, this proved to be largely counter-productive. While it did offer active, visual depictions of the 'doing' of Holistic Massage for direct comment, Eve took this as an invitation to focus more on the technicalities of whether the demonstrator in the film was 'doing it right', and on the value of the video as a learning tool. It therefore did not open new directions in the discussion in the way I had hoped.[172] However, the use of the video did underline the importance of the positioning of the practitioner body when doing massage similarly to the significance of the stance which Sarah had demonstrated on me. It also brought to the discussion some of the differences which Eve saw as existing between the examining organisation with which she is affiliated, and the one which produced this video.

Despite its not having had the intended effect, the flow of the interview was not dramatically disturbed by the film in terms of Eve's turns to speak, which continued to run to around ten to fifteen lines. The point at which this did change was when my line of questioning turned to the subject of professional bodies, where the turns became quite staccato as we attempted between us to clarify which organisations we are each referring to, and which Eve considered 'ok':

> Carrie: [checks notebook] GCMT no that's the massage one
> Eve: not the GCMT they're good the GCMT's good um now I can't remember I think they've actually sort of…
> Carrie: CNHC
> Eve: CNHC now what are they again
> Carrie: em Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council
> Eve: now it might be them….
> Carrie: they are the ones that are
> Eve: are they aromatherapists and

[171] A publicly available DVD was obtained from one of the two main examining bodies for Holistic Massage.
[172] This may in part be because the video was produced and structured as a learning tool, and a less overtly pedagogical format might have had a different effect.

Carrie: they're in with the Prince's Foundation so they're
Eve: oh they're not then they're ok..
Carrie: there's that one and then there's the other on which is GRCCT…
Eve: yeah I think they're fine as well (Eve, lines 583-605)

This snippet of the exchange concerning the present Holistic Massage professional organisations – who all operate under abbreviated and confusingly similar titles – went on for over 100 lines as we tried to clarify which association was which. The disjointed form which this part of the interview took, when compared with the rest of Eve's talk, is indicative of her uncertainty (as well as my own) over these organisations. Given that, of all the participants, she is one of the most heavily involved in this area of massage work, Eve's uncertainty can also be taken as indicative of the a broader ambiguity with regard to these organisations. Moreover, since this illustrates the extent to which uncertainty on this matter is possible, it suggests the limited relevance of professional organisations to practitioners' day-to-day work.[173]

Kath

An examination of Kath's interview follows logically from Eve. Since Kath also teaches Holistic Massage, direct comparison can be made between these two experienced practitioners and educators. This interview was the longest of the nine by some way, running to 1 hour and 45 minutes. However, it formed only 676 lines of transcript, since it mostly consists of long turns at speaking taken by Kath, rather than the shorter back-and-forth interactions which took place in some of the other interviews.[174] The interview took place in a café, which, although less private than a therapy room or home, functioned perfectly well as a venue. Having met Kath in the same place on a previous occasion[175] I knew it to be quiet and to offer secluded tables suitable to a private discussion.

[173] Given the results of this line of inquiry, and the extent to which it hampered the 'flow' of the interview, I made the decision not to pursue it in the other interviews unless it seemed to be of particular interest to the interviewee.
[174] It is worth noting that length in time and length of transcript are not necessarily commensurate, since a more fragmented interview with more turns (and thus more lines) would produce a longer transcript, as in the aforementioned section where Eve and I discussed professional organisations. A more flowing interview, on the other hand, with long turns and relatively little interruption from the interviewer could result in a shorter transcript.
[175] To discuss the possibility of my doing a Holistic Massage diploma, something which was abandoned due to time constraints.

As with Eve, Kath was extremely fluent and articulate in the interview on various matters around massage. This can be related to both the eighteen years for which Kath has practiced and to her role as a teacher. With little prompting, other than my asking her to tell me about the massage that she does, Kath took two long initial turns (73 and 68 lines) in which she gave the background story to her work. Her turns then become shorter – although still comparatively long at between 25 and 50 lines at a time – broken only by brief prompts or interjections from me, and some shorter turns of 5 or 10 lines from Kath. The interview ends with another long turn (35 lines) from Kath in response to my question of whether there was anything important she felt we had not covered. Her return to a longer (uninterrupted) turn suggests that, had I minimised my contributions further, the entire interview might easily have consisted of such lengthy turns.[176]

Kath began to explain what she does by contextualising it in her wider life story. In this way her 'coming to massage' story immediately reaches to the past, specifically to 1978, even though this was well before she actually began to do Holistic Massage proper. A key to the 'it' of Kath's interview as a whole is flagged in the first few lines, where she notes 'over that period of time [1978-1990] I had.. a very STRONG grounding in spirituality AND meditation' (lines 8-9). In line with this, much of Kath's interview typifies an approach to massage which positions it as part of an 'alternative lifestyle'.[177] This is encapsulated in the following excerpt from her first lengthy turn, in which she described her first significant experience of massage:

> she [massage tutor who was also a follower of the same spiritual teacher] demonstrated on me […] she came round. and sat down and she just held my HEAD in her hands and something HAPPENED. it was something that happened with her TOUCH that was so PROFOUND for me. that when I got off the table I went outside and I just sat for a long time and it was SO it transported me INTO myself into a very very deep place so it was much more than physical and later on I went to her and I said that was not massage that you were doing that was something else you were doing and she said actually she said I've recently done a cranio-sacral therapy training and. I was just using some cranio techniques and its HUGELY deep work so I decided there and THEN that I was going to train in massage and then I would train in

[176] Of course, that is not to say that this would have been ideal, since a completely unstructured interview could have produced data not directly relevant to the concerns of this research. However, it is interesting to note the success of the largely unstructured approach in this instance.

[177] In terms of the argument made in Chapter One – that Holistic Massage practice is not exclusively tied to 'alternative lifestyles' – Kath is the exception that proves the rule, being the only interviewee to explicitly contextualise her work in this way.

> cranio-sacral therapy and to cut a long story SHORT I did I DID train with her (Kath, lines 40-51)

The broader stock of knowledge on which Kath draws here stems from her spirituality, given that this experience was with another follower of the same mystic. In this way she first approaches massage in the interview from a point of view not of science but of spirituality, and exhibits no wariness in doing so. From this perspective the term 'deep' implies not simply strong pressure, but also a more profound 'energetic' affect. By this, Kath says she does not mean to imply a magical or mystical quality, however. She later qualified the way she talks about massage: 'I'm not saying this in a REIKI way like something mysterious […] it's TOTALLY grounded and TOTALLY straightforward and totally PRACTICAL' (lines 126-8). Allusions to a practical, everyday spirituality set the tone for the interview as a whole.[178]

The longest turn of all in Kath's interview ran to 88 lines, in which she gave an account of an encounter with a client early in her practice (around sixteen years previous) which she found especially disturbing. In the course of this long turn, she explains how this male client came to see her at a time when she practiced from home (a relatively secluded attic flat) and for a number of different reasons the encounter gave her a 'bad feeling'. In the following excerpt Kath describes how he initially invaded the personal space of her flat in a way other clients did not:

> so he came and when he came upstairs he had to walk through my LIVING room to get to my MASSAGE room and most people just did that but HE I opened the door and he kind of wandered around looking at things which was not ok and I had quite a job to get him into my massage room he was kind of like oh gosh look at that what a lovely view and y'know it was all done in a very kind of nice way but I already was going hmm that DIDN'T feel ok (Kath, lines 532-7)

When she finally did get him to the correct room, Kath performed the massage but continued to feel highly uncomfortable. To convey this deep discomfort, she draws on an image from popular culture of the Hollywood film 'The Silence of the Lambs'. Despite not having seen the film, Kath recalled a friend's description of a particularly graphic scene of a person who had been flayed, explaining that, for whatever reason, this was all

[178] This introduction to Kath's work also sees the first direct reference in the interviews to touching as doing 'something else' or being 'more than'. See Chapter Four for more on this.

she could think about while working on this man, and that she 'felt very very not OK and very very UNCOMFORTABLE' (lines 549-50).

Given that this encounter had occurred as much as sixteen years prior to our meeting, the amount of specific detail given is striking, emphasising the impact that this experience had on Kath. The follow up to this encounter – of the man telephoning Kath a number of times, and of her seeing him watching her through a shop window some weeks later – along with the language Kath chooses – 'I felt like I escaped something quite EVIL to be honest..' (line 572) – adds to the generally sinister tone of this story, which certainly made a strong impression on me during the interview and again in re-reading the transcript. As with Eve, the lucidity and impact of this story may be in part attributable to Kath's teaching role. While she may not specifically recount this story to her students (this was not clear), she describes it as 'another experience of LEARNING' (line 592) for herself, which indicates that she has certainly given it much reflective consideration. Kath concludes this extended turn by saying that this experience is:

> something that made me very AWARE and its something I've always talked to my students about it don't necessarily talk about me but about taking care of yourself not to put yourself in a situation in any WAY that is is threatening to you (Kath, lines 592-5)

In this way the story becomes almost a parable, an example of what can happen should a massage practitioner not follow the correct way of working or their own instincts. Furthermore, it is an excellent example of the impact a well-crafted story can have on an audience. This story is addressed again in Chapter Five in relation to the potential for sexual impropriety in Holistic Massage and touching work.

Rachel

The location of Rachel's interview was the treatment room in a yoga centre which is one of the locations in which she practices.[179] At 58 minutes (677 lines when transcribed), this was one of the shortest interviews, and this may in part be attributable to the aspect of the relationship discussed first here (see below). The longest of Rachel's turns come near the beginning of the interview, running to 43 lines when she describes her 'coming

[179] Given that Rachel also works in a centre offering medical and cosmetic treatment, where the rooms are much more akin to a biomedical clinic, it would have been interesting to know if such a context would have significantly altered the interview.

to massage', and 38 lines when she describes what happens in a massage session. While these run to only half the length of Kath's longest turns, they represent two identifiably 'narrative' sections of Rachel's interview: the first presenting a typical 'story' with a plot and characters and the second a 'habitual' narrative of what typically happens (Riessman 1990, 1993).

Rather than focus on these, however, a more remarkable aspect of Rachel's interview concerns the various exchanges in which the negotiation of the power relationship between us is fairly pronounced. These exchanges happened early in the interview, when Rachel responded to my explanation of the interview style (including my being happy for her to talk at length) and my initial question about when and where she trained, with 'ok em I'll not make it TOO long but basically […]' (line 7). She went on to give an account of her 'coming to massage' story, bringing it to a firm end in line 50 by saying 'so that's a potted history of how it all STARTED'. In this way Rachel immediately set a tone for the interview in which she would be very much in command of what was said as well as, crucially, what was not. Similarly, further into the interview, Rachel began to compare what clients like about her own style of massage vis-à-vis Spa/Beauty massage, a comparison which arose commonly throughout all the interviews:[180]

> SOME people like a very gentle relaxing SOOTHING massage MOST people I find think that's what they want but when they come in and they get slightly deeper and they feel a lot better its like the difference between a BEAUTY massage and a.. eh. and a and a massage that's going to make you feel a bit different I yeah I don't know how to explain it [laughs] fire ANOTHER question at me I'm digging myself in HOLES here (Rachel, lines 127-32)

This is the first point in the interview at which Rachel's otherwise fluid and confident talk becomes somewhat halting, as the 'a.. eh. and a and a' indicates. While it seems likely that she would be able to explain this difference, she instead chooses to move away from this comparison and asks that I 'fire ANOTHER question' at her. This request seems itself a little out of place, as it seems to suggest my line of questioning was 'quick fire', which I did not perceive or intend it as but which, on reflection, Rachel might have preferred. A more experienced interviewer might have pressed the participant on a point she had so deliberately chosen to move away from, since it could indicate something contentious that she is not comfortable talking about, perhaps

[180] See Chapter Four for an analysis of the boundaries drawn between types if massage.

because she believes her views on Spa/Beauty Massage to be inappropriate or controversial. In retrospect I regret not having pressed her on this potentially interesting point. However, on reflection, I believe my reluctance to do so here is indicative of the reversal of the power balance already noted: I felt as though Rachel were in control of the interview at this stage and thus it was not in my power to make her talk about something she had closed off.

Thankfully Rachel did spontaneously return to the issue of Spa/Beauty Massage later, which results in one of her longer turns at speaking (26 lines), in which she recounts a particularly negative personal experience of having a massage in a department store beauty salon. In the course of this turn, Rachel modifies the way she talks about this kind of massage, initially claiming that it 'was very nice' (line 641), but shortly after saying:

> 'it was AWFUL I hated every minute of it I really it and it was TOUCH and I LIKE touch but it wasn't the kind of touch I wanted it was rubbish it was really awful I couldn't actually get out of there QUICK enough' (Rachel, lines 644-7)

And then, finally, 'it was AWFUL I hated it it makes me feel ILL THINKING about it' (lines 657-8). Over just a few short lines Rachel moves from giving a polite response regarding a gift she had been given by a friend, to an emphatic expression of all that she thinks is bad about this kind of massage. As well as pointing to a qualitative difference in touching between types of massage, this exemplifies the ways in which people modify how they present an issue in the course of talking about it.

A further example of an exchange in which the power dynamic between Rachel and I is evident came approximately mid-way in the interview. From line 325-77 Rachel focuses on the different media she uses when doing massage (oils, wax, talc and so forth). Given that this was not offering much specific detail on what she actually does in a massage, or what is important to her in her work, I attempt to gently guide her back onto a more relevant topic, which results in the following exchange:

> Carrie: so from the point of view sort of I'm really interested in touch and the way that's USED I mean do you have any particular thoughts about
> Rachel: hmm quite a deep one that one [passes another tub to me to smell]
> Carrie: mm…
> Rachel: so go go again with your touch question

> Carrie: yeah I suppose do you have any particular thoughts about touch and in any sense really
> Rachel: why it HELPS or
> Carrie: yeah or
> Rachel: I think touch is REASSURING I think I'll just spill out LOADS of things popping into my head […] (Rachel, lines 378-89)

Here, the question with which I begin the exchange is cut off as Rachel continues in the direction which she had taken it, which was allowing me to look at and smell various different massage media which she had in the room. After doing this, she then asks me to repeat my question, and then responds by stating how she will respond to the question ('I think I'll just spill out loads of things…'). Given the concision of this exchange, I do not mean to overstate its impact on the interview as a whole. Moreover, it could also merely demonstrate Rachel's enthusiasms to educate me in the tools of her trade. Considering the aim of an improved power balance in the research relationship inherent to a narrative inquiry approach, these examples may even indicate a particular success on this front, as Rachel did clearly feel empowered to guide the interaction. Whatever the interpretation, these examples are worth noting because Rachel's interview was the only one of the nine in which such a shift was quite so clearly evident. At the time they served the purpose of drawing my attention to the possibility of such a shift in the interviews and reminded me what it feels like to be the less empowered party in such a relationship. On reflection, they also highlight the significance of attending to junctures where interlocutors cut each other off, as well as the impact of my own emotional responses to the interview interaction (Hochschild 2010a).

Lisa

Lisa practices Holistic Massage in two city CAM centres, as well as from her home, where the interview took place. This interview lasted 1 hour and 4 minutes and ran to 721 lines of text when transcribed. Lisa had qualified around 15 months before the interview, which she had come to as a change from a career in science. As with Eve and others, Lisa's talk moved between a number of different 'voices' in the course of her interview, seemingly in an attempt to negotiate between the 'rational' scientific stock of knowledge with which she has previously worked, and the somewhat 'weird' (to use her word) stock of knowledge about bodies to which she was introduced in her massage training and which she now uses. Throughout her interview, Lisa tentatively used

(pseudo-)scientific language: for example, she described a client as being 'just in a kinda really low probably BRAIN state' (lines 353-4), when deeply relaxed but nonetheless 'present'. The way Lisa does this in her talk exemplifies the negotiation between these two ways of knowing which practitioners have to grapple with at a very practical level.

An interesting way in which Lisa modified her talk was to mimic a client's body 'speaking' to her:

> I've found that sometimes when I do massage and I'm gonna do a technique and I think aw that sounds really DAFT what I'm gonna do like one person I had.. that was like their toes were saying gonnae MASSAGE me gonnae massage me and I'm like I cannae massage your TOES it's just like that's a bit weird (Lisa, lines 140-3)

Here, Lisa draws on the notion shared by many of the interviewees that the body can speak to and be heard directly by an appropriately 'tuned-in' or 'aware' practitioner (see Chapter Four). Book-ending her description of this instance with 'that sounds really DAFT' and 'that's a bit weird' conveys that Lisa – similarly to Sarah – is not entirely comfortable with this way of thinking and the impression it may give, or that she is not certain how I would respond to her account. Later in the same turn Lisa goes on to say that not only were the toes speaking to her in this way, but that it specifically 'felt as if they were wanting MOVED and turned ROUND and and PINCHED' (line 144-5). This is then validated when she spoke to the client after the treatment, who said: 'd'you know the best BIT was you working on my toes and I just thought right ok' (Lisa, lines 147-8). While not elaborate or particularly long, this story once again highlights the conflict between a more conventional understanding of bodies on the one hand and an alternative understanding on the other. While her own embodied experience of the latter has led her actively use it, Lisa cannot fully reconcile it with a 'scientific' perspective.

As with some of the other participants, Lisa's longest turn to speak (26 lines) comes in response to my asking her to talk me through what happens when someone comes for a Holistic Massage; and, again similarly to other interviewees, she spends a large part of this (lines 211-24) on the talking part of the 'consultation'. However, unlike the other interviewees, Lisa then moves on midway through the same turn, unprompted, to describe how the touching part of the massage begins:

> I start with em we just touch down the LEGS like a few strokes just to get the body used to your hands and just for a bit of GROUNDING and then do some joint release so just kinda lift the legs and move the knees and that gives you an idea well the initial touch usually gives you an idea how the BODY is like it could be a really buzzy body and em its had a busy day and whatever so em it's gonna take them a wee bit longer to kinda come DOWN I suppose so that can effect the strokes that I'm gonna do so if they're really like kinda buzzy then I'll start wi a kinda faster stroke and gradually kinda bring them down when I see their breath changing and.. and how their feeling em and […] it just kinda you start becoming more in tune with what's going on in BODY and just allowing them to get used to YOU em so I do that for a wee while and I do the ARMS I kinda loosen off the arms and I kinda shake them and then BODY rocking so we kinda rock the body and again its just like a wee RELEASE you get the body all kinda ready for it em (Lisa, lines 224-37)

As with the other responses to my 'what happens when someone comes to you for massage' question presented in this chapter, a habitual narrative emerges in this account – that is to say an account of what 'generally' or 'usually' happens (Riessman 1990) – although Lisa provides much more detail, without further prompts or specific questions, than did the other participants. The way in which Lisa talks about 'the body' in part reflects this habitual narrative: in response to my generalised question she talks about a generalised, imagined body, rather than one specific client. However, it remains striking that she talks about 'the body' in such a depersonalised, disembodied way, given the notion of mind-body-spirit as one which in an 'official' sense underpins her approach to massage. This is not to undermine what Lisa says or does in this respect, but is a point of note which will be returned to and further unpacked in Chapter Four. The language Lisa uses here conveys an effect not only of preparing the client's body for the physical contact of the massage, but also of the practitioner assessing the body through touch, just as they have assessed them through the talking (and looking and sensing) of the initial consultation. It also reflects the notion of negotiation or agreement which other participants also raised (see Ally and Jen, below). Through phrases such as 'you start becoming more in tune' and 'allowing them to get used to you', she evokes a meeting point which practitioner and client must both actively find, to enable them to comfortably interact.

Fi

Fi's interview was conducted in her home, from which she practices in addition to working in a CAM centre. She had been practising massage for around seven years at the time of the interview. At 1 hour 17 minutes in length (774 lines of text), Fi's interview is

one of the longest even though, for the most part, it consists of relatively short exchanges and Fi's turns to speak average only ten lines. Few of her turns are 'storied', although many present a habitual narrative in the sense of what 'usually' happens in a given situation. Even in her longest turn, which ran to 30 lines, Fi tended to generalise – in this case around the issue of the 'intention' of both practitioner and client – rather than presenting specific examples. What this lengthy turn does highlight, however, is a key thematic feature of Fi's interview overall, which is the balance she perceives to be necessary between working 'intuitively', and being able to justify what she is doing in a way clients can relate to. Using the example of an imagined client who complains of a sore shoulder, Fi explains that she might 'intuitively' feel the need to work on their knee, which can be problematic:

> SOMETIMES that's quite difficult for a client cos they go I've got a sore SHOULDER [questioning tone] what are you doing on my KNEE yeah and that to ME is when um. you need th it's MY belief and just my thing is that I need to be able to um REASSURE somebody that there's there is a REASON that I'm working on their knee and not their shoulder (Fi, lines 405-9)

Interestingly, the way in which Fi would do this reassurance is to draw on relatively more scientific discourses of anatomy and 'pain referral':

> I have to be able to um JUSTIFY the work that I'm doing and if it was purely INTUITIVE um I can't I can't it's very hard to justify it and so then the client feels less secure and less safe and actually will TENSE up more (Fi, lines 433-6)

This speaks to broader distributions of power and authority among different stocks of knowledge of healthcare and bodies. Rather than relying on 'alternative' explanations based on intuition – which, dependent on their own stock of knowledge, clients might question or doubt – Fi draws on tropes of conventional science and medicine which are more likely to be shared. This demonstrates a pragmatism which is not peculiar to Fi. Many massage and CAM workers have to negotiate in their confined position between legitimate healthcare practitioner and 'quack'. While Fi addressed this issue in a more direct way, it also resonates with the conflict discussed in Lisa's interview between mainstream and 'alternative' knowledge of bodies. No other participants addressed this issue directly, but it seems likely that finding a balance between ineffable 'intuition' and 'evidence-based' science may be of significance not only to Holistic Massage but to other CAM practices as well. This in turn begs the question of what counts as evidence or knowledge, a question which is addressed later in the course of this analysis.

Another intriguing facet of this interview was the way in which I probe some of Fi's responses. For example, a question about what 'holistic' means to her resulted, toward the end of the interview, in the following exchange:

> Fi: em it's working WITH it's working with um.. a WHOLE. PERSON how they present and how they present at that moment and an um.. working with an ACCEPTANCE of.. that's how they are intellectually emotionally spiritually physically and absolutely ACCEPTING that that's how they are and and by doing that uh um I think that's really. all you need with the intention to if something needs to shift let it SHIFT em and it does
> Carrie: and is that acceptance of WHATEVER they bring to you
> Fi: yeah
> Carrie: regardless or is there is there any kind of LIMITATION to that
> Fi: UM it well there IS if I feel that I'm not qualified to MANAGE something then I wont WORK with then or if or if I feel um unsafe or is somebody.. is inappropriate. or breaks a BOUNDARY that makes me feel unsafe. or or insecure or if I'M working with somebody and their reactions are very very STRONG and they're too they're too they feel like they're too strong for ME to be able to manage or or or it's very distressing for THEM I'll stop WORKING with them […] (Fi, lines 534-50)

In her initial response, Fi emphasised several key aspects of what constitutes working holistically, which arise across many of the interviews: working with the client (rather than on them); acceptance of individuals; and most significantly but perhaps also least well-defined, the notion of treating the 'whole person'. Fi presents the notion of 'acceptance' as an absolute, a point on which I then challenge her, not once, but twice. On reflection, my questioning here treads a fine line between probing and leading. This question, which came out of a genuine interest in whether it is possible for these practitioners to accept 'everything' an individual client might bring, more or less forces Fi to revise her original statement. My obvious expectation of a more bounded version of acceptance seems to compel Fi to reconsider, and to present something closer to an 'official' line. This she expressed with less certain language than she had used earlier in the exchange: note the 'ums', repetitions and pauses.[181]

[181] The fact that Fi pauses around the word 'inappropriate', but does not then elaborate on what this means is in itself an interesting feature of this passage, and is something I follow up with a further questioning (see Chapter Four).

This is not the only instance in the interviews of comments in which my own expectation of what the participant 'should' say becomes apparent, and the question of the extent to which I ought to express this is considered below in relation to Ally and Jen. For the moment, however, I suggest that, while it is clear that I do guide Fi's talk in the above excerpt in a particular direction, the fact that I also now recognise and address this means that it is not so much a 'problem' in need of a solution, but another interesting facet of interview research which a narrative inquiry approach draws out. As well as being helpful for the development of my own skills and awareness as an interviewer, it is essential to my analysis to recognise that Fi's comments on what the limitations might be do not arise spontaneously. Her 'opinion' is co-constructed and modified in a negotiated exchange between us.

Claire

The interview with Claire, who was contacted through details available on a CAM centre website, took place in the home of one of her family members, as she was living outwith the city at that time. This was one of the shortest interviews – running to just 55 minutes and 586 lines of text when transcribed – and one in which I play a more vocal part in order to encourage Claire to contribute and to keep the talk flowing. At the time of the interview, Claire had been in practice for just six months – the shortest period of all the interviewees – and, as might be expected, this fact played a significant part in shaping the resulting narrative. Just as those with the longest experience of doing massage spoke about it in a more confident or authoritative way, Claire's talk was noticeably less certain and self-assured. Her hesitancy to talk at length was noticeable at the point of transition between her and my turns to speak when, on a number of occasions she indicated that she had finished a turn by using a non-lexical utterance, such as 'mhm', followed by a pause.[182] For example: 'sometimes people will need quite a lot of work on the neck and stuff like that which you do when you flip them OVER so mhm…' (lines 126-7); 'it's just working out y'know where I stand in that as WELL mm..' (lines 192-3); and 'you can get BLASÉ about it mhm..' (line 225). Instances of this are scattered throughout the interview, and, while this may simply be a feature of Claire's usual way of speaking, given that there is no obvious connection between them in terms of the subject matter

[182] In fact, Claire's use of these is such a prominent feature of her talk that I begin to mirror them, beginning my own turns which follow these with similar utterances.

they follow,[183] it is interesting that they were repeatedly used to indicate the end of a turn. On most of the occasions where this occurred, I left a moment's pause to see if Claire would continue to speak, but she generally did not take up the opportunity, preferring to look to me for further questioning or direction.

A more extended example where the influence of Claire's relative inexperience can be seen is in her first longer turn to speak (19 lines), where she responds to my question on the difference between Holistic and other kinds of massage:

> Carrie: and for you what's the DIFFERENCE between holistic massage and and say therapeutic or Swedish
> Claire: mmm [laughs] it's a good QUESTION cos LOTS of people ask me this em yeah I mean I know quite a lot of people who have done my training who call it THERAPEUTIC massage and eh and in fact one of the teachers on the course calls calls it therapeutic and the other teacher calls her work HOLISTIC massage so I actually don't as far as I can TELL there doesn't seem to be a huge difference em and I ASKED them about it because I wasn't sure about what to call my OWN practice and em so I asked them why they had chose those terms and em.. unless eh uh. what they SAID was that or what [a teacher] said was that em she thought there was th possibly some NERVOUSNESS em still around the word HOLISTIC y'know that people might kind of think it was a bit kind of HIPPY or whatever [laughs] and therapeutic has a slightly more kind of medical SLIGHTLY more scientific kind of air to it and therefore would maybe appeal to a wider RANGE of people but at the same TIME she said that y'know she felt that was changing quite quickly and it and in fact she she chose to call her practice holistic massage and I think [another teacher] calls hers THERAPEUTIC massage so em yeah that as far as I can tell that seems to be the main DIFFERENCE its actually more kind of difference of PERCEPTION rather than y'know I think the technique is is much the same really with SWEDISH massage em yeah I think eh I think there's lot of similarities with SWEDISH massage as well and in fact that term was sometimes used on our course as well or certainly TECHNIQUES from Swedish massage incorporated into holistic massage em….. yeah to be honest I'm not absolutely SURE what the difference is between Swedish and holistic (Claire, lines 55-76)

Claire begins this turn by acknowledging the significance of my question, but then talks for several lines about other people before she begins to say something definite about her own opinion on this. And when she does, this is prefixed with a tentative 'as far as I can TELL'. She further underlines her uncertainty by deferring to the opinions of her teachers and giving over the following eight lines to what they said in this respect. This provides an example of a circumstance in which the interviewee offers reasons for what

[183] For example, they do not seem to be used to cut off any particular issues from the discussion. If anything, I would interpret them as an indication of Claire being unsure what else to say.

she says, and her justification for seeking advice – 'because I wasn't sure…' – sums up the tentative tone of Claire's interview as a whole.

Following this, Claire does return to her own interpretation of issue as being primarily one of 'perception', before eventually concluding that she is 'not absolutely SURE'. My initial question in this excerpt implies an expectation that Claire would have and, moreover, be able to express, a concrete understanding of how Holistic Massage differs from other types of massage. In the course of her turn, Claire's struggle to meet that expectation indicates that either this is not the case and my expectation is misguided, or that the distinction between Holistic and other types of Massage is not clear-cut. Moreover, by drawing on the differing opinions of her two tutors she indicates the conflict in interpretations of what this difference might be, even at the fundamental level of training, as well as acknowledging the dominance of medical/scientific stocks of knowledge. This also highlights the fact that one may practice Holistic Massage while, for 'marketing' purposes, calling it something else (see Chapter Five). Overall, what this passage suggests is that it may take more time than Claire has had so far in her career as a practitioner to form an opinion on this issue which could be easily communicated. .

A further example of an exchange between Claire and I which can be read as demonstrating her uncertainty in answering some of my questions comes slightly later in the interview:

> Carrie: em something that a few people have mentioned when I've been talking to them is about the idea of PRESENCE so whether that's like for yourself or the person you're working on can you say anything about that
> Claire: mmm... em I think it's yeah it's really important it's a really vital PART of it em you mean in terms of just BEING present
> Carrie: yeah or [laughs]
> Claire: [laughs]
> you're not gonna [laughs] or.. em…… I think again it's something that I can feel DEVELOPING as I do it more and more is just my own presence and and of awareness in the moment of just being there and being with the particular BODY particular PERSON.. em.. […] (Claire, lines 139-49)

Claire responds to my question, which I situate as something other participants have raised, and which is thus a legitimate topic, with one of the strongest, most definite answers she gives in her interview overall. However, she then checks that she is answering the right question. Since I was reluctant to direct her either way on this –

which she recognises with the comment 'you're not gonna' (that is, tell her what to say) – Claire then returns, after a lengthy pause for consideration, to the less confident ground of 'it's something that I can feel DEVELOPING'. While it is not something she can confidently talk about as yet, that it is 'developing' means she expects to be able to do so in the future. Claire's confidence in speaking on this might have been strengthened if I had clarified for her that, for example, I did mean 'being present', and my attempt to avoid being overly directive here may have undermined her confidence somewhat.[184] However, the last lines from Claire quoted above are in fact the start of one of her longest turns (25 lines), in which she goes on to reframe the notion of 'presence' in her own terms as 'receptivity', and to talk about this as, once again, something about which she is continuously learning.[185]

On the whole, the central thread running through Claire's interview is that she is very much in a process of learning and developing as a Holistic Massage practitioner. This is demonstrated by the fact that, while her training and experience so far has given her access to the relevant stock of knowledge and she can therefore discuss certain terms and draw on certain ideas, she is not yet as familiar with the full range of this particular stock of knowledge as the other participants are. However, this in itself is interesting in analytical terms, in that those aspects which Claire does draw on may constitute some of the key features of a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge, since they are the ones that even a relative 'beginner' knows and can use. Thus, concepts such as sensitivity/receptivity/presence and working with the whole person can be seen as a baseline of the stock of knowledge which a Holistic Massage practitioner has to hand.

Carol

Moving on from my most recently qualified participant I now discuss the interview with Carol who, having practiced Holistic Massage for eighteen years at the time of her interview, was one of the most experienced of my interviewees. As with Rachel, Carol differs from the rest in that, firstly, she had not been trained by any of the other participants, nor had she worked with them as far as I was aware. Secondly, Holistic Massage is not what she considers to be the main focus of her work. However, since

[184] This ties into the point made in Chapter Two on unstructured interviews being as potentially constraining as their structured counterparts, in instances where participants do not know what to say.
[185] These competencies are pursued and fleshed out in the next chapter.

Carol did at the time practice Holistic Massage on a regular basis, she was an interesting inclusion in the group of participants. I considered that this variation in interests would only enhance the data, particularly in relation to what might be said of the stock of knowledge, how the latter might differ for someone with a slightly different professional focus, and what analytical light this might therefore cast on the other interviews.

Carol began the interview with a response to my request to 'tell me about your TRAINING in massage.. and how you got into THAT' (line 3). Through her response she immediately situates dance as her 'way in' to massage – 'I was working professionally.. as a.. ah as a DANCER. um. I was getting QUITE a few NIGGLY injuries' (lines 5-6) – and the relationship between her massage work and dance work is stressed throughout. This ties into one of the most prominent features of Carol's interview: her repeated, ongoing and, seemingly, deliberately conscious negotiation of her identity vis-à-vis her different working 'selves'. Everything that Carol talks about in terms of massage and her other work pivots around her central concern with dance, and even when she talks about taking a step back from touring as a dancer and deciding to 'PUT it [massage] centre STAGE' (line 96) – a performative metaphor in itself – she continued to make the link with dance:

> Carol: I worked at um.. [CAM centre in another city] which was ABOVE a dance centre. and that really made SENSE… OR it no it SHOULD have made sense it didn't quite in that the dancers could never afford to come for treatments so all I saw were secretaries… and MUSICIANS from the recording studio round the corner
> Carrie: uhuh
> Carol: [laughs] and shoppers who were EXHAUSTED by [high street].. oh dear. um (Carol, lines 102-8)

Here, Carol's discontent at working with non-dancers is made clear, and the way in which she emphasises this early in the interview very much sets the tone. Furthermore, she explicitly drew attention to the conflict between different strands of her work, and the concern this has caused her:

> Carol: […] it literally got to the point where I'd earned MORE money through massage.. so on my tax return that I year I suddenly DIDN'T have the little. label saying.. DANCE artist I had this little label saying MASSAGE therapist and I got.. ALMOST into a terrible PANIC [laughs]
> Carrie: [laughs]
> Carol: oh I've been re-defined and re-BOXED. Um.. I feel MUCH happier now that it's finding a

> place within the entirety of my practice where it.. it feeds in AND OUT there's a constant flow (Carol, lines 112-9)

While on the one hand she trivialised this 'little label', Carol also emphasised the significant implications of this label for her self-perception on the other. Likewise, while she plays down its effect by saying she 'almost' got in a panic, the way in which she says this – along with everything else she said about her general orientation to massage – suggests there was no 'almost' about it, and that this was an extremely significant event for her.

A second notable feature of Carol's interview, which is also a particular way in which hers diverges from the other eight, is in her reference to 'trademarked' body practices such as the Feldenkrais Method or the Alexander Technique. This is perhaps a reflection of her dance background where there is a pattern of the techniques of particular dancers or choreographers becoming registered trade marks and also a preference for 'trademarked' body practices such as Feldenkrais and Alexander Technique.[186] What it definitely is, is an indication that Carol works with a slightly different and, in some respects, more formalised stock of knowledge.[187] This is somewhat ironic, given that Carol expresses this trademarking, and the restriction of access which goes with it, as a particular bugbear of hers. Indeed, midway through the interview she devotes two speaking turns of 13 and 20 lines to what she calls 'my soapbox rant' (line 408) on this very issue.

Key here is that the stock of knowledge which Carol draws on in part differs from the one I had been familiar with through my own experience, background research, and through the preceding interviews. While she does draw on some common issues – interestingly, many of those which the above analysis of the interview with Claire suggested constitute 'baseline' issues, such as 'connectedness', and treating the whole person – much of what Carol says about massage seems quite distinct from what the others say about it.[188] For example, while the others tend to talk about an applied stock

[186] I do not mean to imply here that these practices are popular with dancers because they are trademarked, but rather that they are favoured because have particular relevance for such performers.
[187] Fi is the only other participant to talk of a 'trademarked' practice: Somatic Experiencing. However, this is primarily a talking, rather than touching therapy, and thus lies at a tangent to my central concerns here.
[188] The fact that she does talk about these issues which are common to the other interviews in fact underlines their status as 'baseline' issues.

of knowledge, Carol often framed her perspective in what seemed to me to be more 'academic' language. Her stock of knowledge was at times philosophical and abstract rather than primarily practice-oriented. Where the varying knowledge forms (such as the 'pseudo-scientific') that some other participants utilised tended to limit what they felt comfortable saying about touch and massage, the resources Carol draws on equip her to talk in a different way about issues of embodiment, and in a way which is more resonant with the sociological literature presented in Chapter One. A disadvantage to this was that while I sought practitioner tellings from the interviews, Carol's interview produced one which was part practice-based and part academic:[189] her perspective on the former has already been mediated through this latter lens. However, in this way Carol's interview served as an interesting kind of interpretive bridge between academic and the practice-based knowledge forms within my research.

Of all the participants, Carol talked about touch the most freely and directly, and this was relatively spontaneous in her interview. Although I indicated my interest in touch, among other things, in my initial approach to Carol and again at the beginning of the interview, I did not ask her direct questions about touch. However, from as early as line 19 (where she talks about her early learning experiences of massage) and then throughout the interview, she addresses touch directly and frequently. Touch is a means of 'exchange' (line 23); can be 'un-ambiguous' or 'invasive' (lines 184-5); it is necessary for her teaching and other work; and is something she takes ownership of, as in 'my touch' (line 307). I interpret this as being tied into her other work, both academic and body-focused: indeed, recent dance work that she had taken part in focused on 'exploring DANCE as a.. an ARTISTIC question. through TOUCH' (line 182). While her academic perspective is quite different from my own, Carol has thought, spoken, perhaps even written on the matter and has therefore necessarily articulated it in a way the others might not have had cause to. Moreover, and in contrast to the others, it is not in conflict with Carol's own interests to have this articulated. She may not have such a vested interest in maintaining touch as un-talkable as the other interviewees. Certainly the extent to which Carol does voluntarily speak about touch directly is markedly greater than the other participants.

[189] Carol was in the process of conducting her own academic research on embodiment and movement.

Having said this, when the discussion comes around to the question of what happens when someone comes to her for a Holistic Massage, Carol's interview begins to resemble the others. Here she primarily describes the talking aspect of the encounter and takes considerable time over explaining what happens before and around the massage.[190] Like the majority of the interviewees, it was only when I specifically asked what happens when the client is on the table that Carol began to talk about the touching aspect of the massage. Even then the references to touch were minimal:

> Carrie: mm and once they're actually ON the table what happens then
> Carol: [laughs] I mean that just TOTALLY depends. why. why they're there I mean some people just want some SPACE.. and they just shut their eyes and shut UP.. uh.. depending on context some people like to have MUSIC because they're not. comfortable being in SILENCE some people REALLY like to have.. the space to be with themselves. and re-connect so they absolutely DON'T want music.. umm… working somewhere like [treatment room attached to dance studio] you're AWARE that there's activity but I LIKE that and it keeps it very dynamic and very… PURPOSEFUL so that will TEND to lead towards a session where there might be more discussion during the session (Carol, lines 484-92)

The laugh with which Carol begins this turn can be interpreted a number of ways: for example, as dismissive of the question. However, the most likely interpretation, I believe, is that she laughs because the question asks her to generalise about something she does not see as generalisable. As with other such instances across the interviews, I ask Carol to provide a habitual narrative where, as she sees it, none is available. This idea is returned to towards the end of this chapter (and later in Chapters Four and Six) following an outline of the last of the nine interviews.

Ally and Jen

I have chosen to discuss this interview last because, although all the interviews differ in a variety of ways, this is the most markedly different in structure, if not in overall content, given that there were two interviewees present. Having contacted Ally via her website and at the recommendation of another participant, she agreed to be interviewed in one of the CAM centres from which she works. A few days prior to the interview Ally emailed to tell me that her colleague Jen (who works in association with Ally) would also be available at that time and suggested she join us. Intrigued by the effect such a

[190] A turn of 40 lines (one of her longest), broken by a clarifying question from me (1 line) followed by response of 7 lines.

format would have on the shape of the talk, the distribution of knowledge between them, and the different issues it might raise, I accepted this suggestion and interviewed both Ally and Jen at this centre.

While I had expected having two participants to result in a somewhat longer interview, it did in fact only run to 1 hour and 13 minutes, which transcribed to 865 lines. For the most part turns to speak are relatively short, with Ally's running on average to five or six lines, and Jen's to just one or two lines of brief interjection. This may be indicative of the constraining effect of the triadic relationship (Simmel 1964). Where other interviewees may have felt more at liberty to talk freely from their position of relative expertise, it is possible that the effect Ally and Jen had on each others' talk was comparatively restrictive, and in different ways. In particular, given that Ally was at one time Jen's teacher, and that Jen has been practicing for a relatively short time, it follows that each may have felt obligated to fulfil these ascribed roles. This seemed to play out in their response to my first question:

> Carrie: so if you start by telling me about the KIND of massage you do.. I don't know who wants to go first but I'll put this [mic] in the middle [laughs]
> Ally: well you interviewed [names another practitioner] yeah
> Carrie: mm YEAH
> Ally: cos both of us were TRAINED by [her] yeah…. um so that's the kind of massage that we do so that's THAT one
> Carrie: [laughs]
> Jen so its holistic HOLISTIC massage isn't it [looks to Ally]
> Ally: YEAH (Ally and Jen, lines 2-11)

This excerpt sets the tone for many similar exchanges, in which either Ally made a more elaborated key point and Jen joined in to concur, or Jen made a briefer point, looking to Ally to support it. Even the body language in the interview reflects this: as recorded in my notes, Ally sat leaning toward me, with one elbow on her knee, while Jen sat with her knees pulled up to her chest and literally looked to Ally for affirmation. It might be expected that Jen would be more hesitant in her responses and perhaps even deferential to Ally's opinion, with Ally in turn acting as a kind of gatekeeper to what could be said. This certainly seemed to be the case at a point early in the interview where a verbal negotiation took place as to who would take the lead. In response to my question of what happens when someone comes to them for Holistic Massage, Ally immediately began

with: ‘YEAH I mean just will I start and you [Jen] just chip IN yeah yeah […]’ (line 80) and then proceeded with her account.

However, the impact of the triadic relationship was not as straightforward as Jen deferring to Ally in response to my questions and, in another example, the nuances of the interaction – including my own part in this – become evident. Take this example, where the interview had turned to the topic of how to deal with clients undressing:

> Jen: yeah and some people do that you say I’ll just go out but before you go out the ROOM they’ve got their kit off and they’re on the TABLE they’re not bothered [laughs] so y’know if if THEY’RE comfortable doing that there there’s no point in embarrassing them by saying no no WAIT til I go out the ROOM because if they’re comfortable and you YOU’RE a therapists it’s it’s fine it’s absolutely fine
> Carrie: there's not sort of a problem with that for like professional boundaries or
> Ally: YEAH I think it’s it’s b better to be out the room while they undress cos it’s a little bit INTIMATE but occasionally people
> Jen: if they’ve done it before [laughs]
> Ally: I’ll say I’ll just SETTLE you on the table then and I’ll go off and wash my hands [laughs] chill out for a minute [laughs] and then they kind of think oh yeah maybe I yeah
> Carrie: so maybe next time they might not
> Jen: yeah
> Ally: yeah
> Jen: yeah cos you do you need to have those sort of boundaries
> Ally: but you can’t say get those trousers BACK on [laughs]
> Jen: yeah cos people have done it and if its people you KNOW sometimes even SO I think you have to have in your PRACTICE YOUR steps are that you will leave the room and allow them to get changed (Ally and Jen, lines 450-69)

Jen’s revision of her opinion in this passage of a client undressing in front of her is quite clearly in part due to my own question about professional boundaries, which is itself indicative of what I understand the ‘appropriate’ response to this question to be. Despite Jen’s unequivocal statement that ‘it’s fine it’s absolutely fine’, I challenge her on the issue of ‘professional boundaries’, in regard to which I evidently judge her statement to be problematic. While it is impossible to say for certain, had this been a dyadic situation with only Jen and I in the room, she may more easily have maintained her position on this matter. However, my challenge is then followed by a swift response from Ally, who first of all expresses agreement (‘YEAH’), which, on first reading, may be taken as

attempt to lessen Jen's discomfort at being challenged. But it quickly became clear that it was in fact me that Ally had chosen to side with, as she went on to disagree with Jen, emphasising that the problem lies in the interaction becoming 'INTIMATE', in response to which Jen then attempts to qualify her initial comment ('if they've done it before'). When Ally then offers an example of what she would habitually do in this situation ('I'll just SETTLE you on the table'), Jen agrees, and pulls the interaction back toward a consensus, before presenting a revised and 'agreed' picture of what should be done in this circumstance. This instance highlights the significance of attending to the circumstances in which justifications or explanations (and in this case revisions) are offered for something the interviewees have said. It offers a pronounced and interesting example of the significance of negotiation and of the establishing of a common view amongst Jen, Ally and I (see Crossley 2011).[191]

Although I have argued that this situation became a key feature for the analysis of this interview because of the three people involved, a comparison can be made with the similar way in which I questioned Fi on the extent to which a client might be 'accepted'. However, since there were only two people involved in the interaction on that occasion, this did not (from my perspective at least) take on the same significance as it did with Jen and Ally. Indeed, Ally again came back to emphasise her opinion on the matter 15 lines later, commenting emphatically that 'you MIGHT actually have to insist that sometimes maybe that you do go out the room cos some people don't want to keep ANYTHING on when they're being massaged' (lines 485-6). Where the 'you' is ostensibly a generalised 'one' here, it seems to be more likely directed at Jen than Ally or I, and this remark reinforced Ally's position as being in line with 'correct procedure'.

It is interesting that this jarring of opinions should take place over the issue of undressing in particular, and highlights a number of things. Firstly, it suggests that the issue of the client taking their clothes off is a significant one in a number of complicated ways. For example, it is the client's undressing that has the potential to make the massage interaction 'intimate', as Ally points out or, to take this a step further, to

[191] Crossley notes, '[i]nterlocutors either tacitly agree about or negotiate their subject matter, the way they will frame and conduct their debate and the parameters of acceptability they will observe. They perhaps agree what roles or identities they will respectively assume in the debate. […] In some cases, moreover, they work upon and towards a shared product e.g. a common decision or view of the resolution of a conflict', and adds that '[e]ven if they don't agree, their individual views on the matter are still shaped by the process of disagreement and discussion (Crossley 2011:29).

sexualise the encounter. Or, as Jen initially seems to imply, since this is a 'professional' and 'therapeutic' relationship, there is no question of impropriety, and thus the question of whether the client undresses in the practitioner's presence has no bearing. It might be contended, however, that the fact that one person in this dyadic relationship is partially naked also entails a power relationship in which that person becomes significantly more vulnerable than their clothed counterpart. Or, alternatively, it could be argued that for one person to take off their clothes, lie prone or supine on a table and ask to be touched by another is one of the most agentic things an individual could do. None of these interpretations can, however, be advanced alone since they all in fact interact here.

Secondly, this interaction indicates that there is a generalised idea of 'best' or 'appropriate' practice for people who do Holistic, or any other kind of Massage. This is a strand of the stock of knowledge which my background research suggested was significant and, from the information I have gathered from tutors, features prominently in training for Holistic Massage. It is not so definitive that Jen was not able to disagree with it, but she was then 'corrected'. This points to a stock of knowledge which is in some ways shared and agreed upon, but also fluid and unbounded. Moreover, this exchange underlines my expectations of participants' opinions and behaviour, particularly in terms of 'best practice'. While the aim of my interviews was to explore participants' understandings and experiences, when something outwith an expected account was said, I reacted to this. It is essential that this occurrence and others like it are acknowledged in the analysis of interviews, to make visible the interpretational as well as power dynamics – which is in this case three-way – and the distribution of knowledge therein.[192]

The significance of the triadic relationship is also clearly evident in the way in which the taking of turns to speak are negotiated between Ally and Jen. For example, Jen's longest turn of 13 lines comes as a result of Ally quite bluntly telling Jen to respond to my question regarding how Holistic Massage differs from other massage:

[192] Cf. Einarsdottir and Heaphy (2010), who conducted dual interviews: although exploring a different matter (relationship issues between couples), this involved the same dynamic of two interviewees and one interviewer. The authors' analysis addresses the distribution of 'narrative resources' and language competencies between couples and how this indicative of, amongst other things, the power dynamic in their relationship.

> Carrie: so what's the DIFFERENCE between holistic massage and another kind of massage for YOU personally
> Ally: YOU tell her that
> Jen: EM well I think we've probably TOUCHED on some of the most things I think its em being able to take the time for that PERSON from the minute they walk though the DOOR […] and it also really influences how you do the TREATMENT rather than saying oh I'll do a BACK massage get on the TABLE you take a bit of time to y'know […] so I suppose for me that it's [also] about NOT having a routine although SOME some with some people you maybe DO but that's that individual it's not that you've got that same routine for everyone em that's kind of what it is for me I suppose (Ally and Jen, lines 502-18)

My question was posed to both interviewees, although, given the way the interview had unfolded up to then, it could have been perceived as primarily directed at Ally, since she had been doing most of the talking. But here, Ally's forceful 'YOU tell her that' obliges Jen to speak and – given that Jen may have expected Ally to once again take the lead in answering – to quickly pull together what she wants to convey in response to my question. Hence what Jen does say does not seem to be especially well rehearsed or concise. Although the reason for Ally telling Jen to answer was not immediately clear in the interview, it seems, on reflection, that Ally could in fact have been attempting to encourage Jen to take the lead. Given Ally's greater experience, Jen had until then assumed a role of underling, a role which it is likely that I too had allocated her, perhaps unconsciously directing questions at Ally more than I had intended to. Ally's 'YOU tell her that' re-states their relative obligations to speak and in fact acts as a pivotal point in the interview in this respect. While Ally regained the floor immediately after this with one of her longest turns, Jen subsequently spoke with greater assurance, her turns begin to equal Ally's in length, and the amount of talk becomes more evenly divided between the two interviewees. Hence there was a marked redistribution in how the stock of knowledge was discussed by Ally and Jen in the rest of the interview.

It is fitting that a key theme of Ally and Jen's interview overall is the notion of 'reaching agreement' between client and practitioner since, given the triadic shape of their interview, the attempts to reach agreement (or not) between Ally, Jen and I are more pronounced than in the other interviews. In numerous exchanges, Jen and Ally negotiate and co-create an appropriate response to the questions I pose and the issues they themselves raise, in a way that was not available to the other participants, whose only option was to try to negotiate an agreed meaning with me. The following example

illustrates the way in which Jen and Ally, perhaps even more so after the pivotal point discussed above, formed responses together:

> Ally: it's difficult to think of it [touch] just on its own as an ABSTRACT cos I think.. touch is obviously thorough your HANDS but it's but it's it's almost a kind of hand and MIND connection isn't it it isn't just about
> Jen: just about your hands
> Ally: cos you can actually get a really good connection without actually physically TOUCHING as well y'know
> Jen: and there's a different types sort of different ENERGY that you have through your touch you can have like depending what you're DOING as well isn't it (Ally and Jen, lines 552-9)

This example illustrates the new balance which seemed to develop between the two interviewees, and the way in which their talk took the form of negotiation and collaboration, with each other more than with me. However, there continued to be differences in the way each addressed the various issues, and consequently the presence of the two interviewees allows for direct comparison of how they responded to questions in the same setting. In this respect, Ally presented far more concrete examples: short stories which illustrated whatever point she was making at the time. As with Kath and Eve, Ally has this stock of stories readily to hand, most likely due to her teaching experience. Jen, on the other hand, tended not to give concrete examples, but to stick to more generalised ways of talking about doing massage. This in turn reflects Jen's relative level of experience. Having practiced Holistic Massage for a shorter time, she has had less opportunity to identify and articulate specific experiences of doing massage that might typify a particular issue.

On the whole, it is clear that this dual interview made available a number of opportunities for analysis that were either not evident or less pronounced in the one-on-one interviews. This is a feature of the interview process to which the type of narrative inquiry used here can be particularly sensitive. Having explored their overall shape, in the rest of the chapter I turn to a discussion of other key features which were either shared or markedly different across all nine interviews.

Telling accounts

As is now clear from the above analysis, the people I interviewed have access to a range of ways in which to tell of their experiences and opinions, and they actively choose

amongst these. The theme of negotiations abounded, in the sense of the negotiation between knowledge forms (more on this in later chapters), between the practitioners and their clients, and also between the participants and I (and amongst three of us in the case of Jen and Ally). This is illustrative of the fact that '[n]egotiation is a chronic feature of interaction and relationships' (Crossley 2011:36). It is helpful to bear in mind here the Schutzian questions regarding the 'what' and 'why' of talk (see Chapter Two), and that individuals frequently base what they say and do around 'imagined dialogue'. In this respect, attending to these ways of talking can draw out intriguing commonalties and differences across a sample of interviews which may in turn be 'telling' of broader issues. A number of factors of analytical relevance can be traced through these different accounts and various features recurred across the interviews with a frequency which makes possible a discussion that goes beyond the individual context.

Therapy culture

An interesting feature of the interviews was that many of the participants had experienced 'talking therapies' such as counselling or psychotherapy,[193] as either practitioner or client. This form of talking relationship is of a different nature from the research interview interaction, a difference which it is essential for the researcher to clearly and firmly maintain.[194] However, the formal similarities, that is, of a dyadic but for the most part one-way discussion between two people in a relatively private setting, may have positively influenced what my interviewees felt willing or able to say. Moreover, those who had experienced talking therapies, especially as part of 'supervision' sessions,[195] would have a familiarity with discussing many of the issues into which I was inquiring. Experience with such therapies is by no means exclusive to Holistic Massage practitioners, given the prevalence of such therapies in contemporary culture. Indeed, as Furedi (2004) has noted, it is increasingly possible to describe

[193] The most commonly practiced and mainstream 'talking therapies' in the UK are counselling, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis and cognitive behavioural therapy, or CBT (see Department of Health booklet 'Choosing Talking Therapies', available online at http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4082709.pdf (last accessed 30/06/2011).

[194] Kvale (1996) offers a useful discussion of the similarities and differences between therapeutic (that is to say psychoanalytic) and research interviews. Kvale notes that a primary difference is the intention of the interviewer, where 'the main goal in therapy is change in the patient; [whereas] in research it is the acquisition [or production] of knowledge.' (Kvale 1996:155). The author goes on to note that while the research relationship should be maintained as unmistakably free of any therapeutic intent, much can nonetheless be learned from the therapeutic interview relationship – such as empathy and listening ability – which may be appropriately applied in the research context.

[195] In which they discuss their work with another, usually more experienced, practitioner.

contemporary British and American culture as a 'culture of emotionalism' informed by a 'therapeutic imperative' (see also Foucault (1979) on 'ears for hire').[196] Certainly the impact of and identification with some of the therapeutic discourses associated with psychotherapy and counselling do seem to be particularly pronounced among this group of interviewees. While most of them maintain a clear distinction between these and Holistic Massage – Sarah noted that Holistic Massage is 'not a talking therapy it's a body therapy' (line 88) – aspects of counselling and the like do inform Holistic Massage training, as taught by and to my interviewees, and therefore plays a part in underpinning their work. This is turn may be perceived as a component of what Holistic Massage 'is'.

In a not unrelated way, Holistic Massage also relies on the increasing or resurging acceptance in the contemporary west of links between mental/emotional and physical states, and the significance of context when considering illness and wellbeing. While the notion of mental or emotional dis-ease manifesting as physical ailments is not new, it is something which has regained credence in Euro-American culture, particularly since the counter-culture and new age movements of the 1960s and 70s. The result is that mind-body connections currently have a presence in more generally shared stocks of knowledge on bodies and health. Hence, it is now easier and more socially acceptable to talk seriously about what is essentially 'treating' emotions as embodied.

'The rabbit equivalent of crying'

Another general comment is that the length of time for which participants had been practicing – which varied from six months to nineteen years – seems to be important for understanding the relative ease with which they tell of their experiences. Without reducing the fluidity and coherence of participants' responses to a single causal factor, those with extensive experience of doing Holistic Massage spoke in a significantly more confident way than those who had recently qualified. Moreover, the more experienced participants drew on a particular stock of narrative resources which they tended to recount in specific detail to illustrate particular points. While this may not have always been full-blown stories

[196] Furedi observe that the move towards a 'culture of emotionalism', predicated on the lack of power individuals perceive themselves as having in contemporary (late modern) society 'represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary western culture' (2004:4), and goes on to suggest that this offers a substitute for conventional religion and thus 'a system of meaning for our time' (2004:17). To some degree this concurs with Hochschild's (2003, 2010) idea of the 'outsourcing of intimate life' discussed later in this thesis.

– with characters, plot development and so on – they did have 'story-ness' as an attribute and there were enough commonalties amongst what was said to suggest they were not common by coincidence, but derive from a widely accepted, shared stock of Holistic Massage knowledge. For example, both Eve and Fi draw on the same comparison in order to illustrate human responses to trauma, and the problems therein:

> rabbits get chased y'know by the fox and it runs and it jumps into the tunnel and in the tunnel it shakes and that's its parasympathetic system overcoming the sympathet the sympathetic nervous system's aroused it made it run and that's it shaking off and it's the it's sort of the rabbit equivalent of CRYING y'know […] so. if we haven't had if that cycle hasn't been y'know if there hasn't been COMPLETION if you've had a fright but there hasn't completion like you've been able to cry or or shake or get cold have all the physical things that get you back into homeostasis back into BALANCE you hold that your body you hold those chemicals you're producing those chemicals all the time and they're held in your body (Eve, lines 78-87)

> after a traumatic EVENT the body needs to release what's gone on so if a rabbit's chased by a fox and it gets AWAY it goes down the burrow and what it does is it SHAKES and that releases the excess adrenalin and energy that's been in the body now the event is finished and then once it's SHAKEN it's integrated all the thing its let go of everything and then it goes out five minutes later and starts eating GRASS again and we don't do that (Fi, lines 503-8)

That two practitioners who had no obvious connection to each other both use the same example, for what is largely the same purpose, is indicative of it being an established component of the stock of knowledge: a stock which contains ideas not only about how massage is or should be done, but also wider understandings of bodies and how they function. Further examination of the rabbit example shows it is couched in fairly mainstream (pseudo)scientific terms, albeit with what could be called a 'holistic' bent. For example, Eve and Fi both spoke of 'adrenalin', the 'sympathetic nervous system', and regaining 'homeostasis' or 'balance'. Their use of 'scientific' language, loosely conceived, is indicative of the pervasiveness of scientific knowledge. Even in Holistic Massage, where understandings of health and wellbeing are at odds with conventional biomedicine, practitioners draw on the language of science to understand and construct explanations of aspects of what they do. Alternatively, this may be seen as a strategic choice (although not necessarily a conscious one) to make what they do more acceptable or plausible and to associate themselves with accepted as well as relatively discredited knowledge forms. Most likely it is a eclectic combination of both of these strands of reasoning (see Chapter Six for further discussion).

'Coming to massage' and other stories: talk and 'un-talkability'

Another feature worth examining across the tellings is the range of ways in which segments of the interview tellings could be understood as 'stories' of different kinds. As I have noted in relation to some of the individual interviews, there were occurrences of 'stories', in the relatively simple and conventional sense of focused allegorical episodes with characters and a plot. The most commonly occurring of these is what I have termed the 'coming to massage story', which it became clear from the pilot interviews might be a common story that the participants would volunteer. Hence, while 'coming to massage' stories were not specifically asked for in the interviews, I expected that they might occur. The following excerpts from Lisa and Claire's interviews are illustrative of the general form these stories took:

> I was in Thailand I went for a DETOX and em I hadnae really been fussed wi massage before then cos I'd just had the wee BEAUTY I I shouldnae really slag OFF but y'know how the ones that are just I didn't really get anything OUT of then so I didn't rate it PERSONALLY em so when I went there and I was detoxing I was getting a lot of massage it was GREAT I felt so much better afterwards so I thought this actually really does WORK.. I'd be quite interested in doing something when I get HOME so I got back and I was just LOOKING for places em to do the massage and then em it was I used tae go for Reiki in TOWN and the girl I went tae she was FANTASTIC y'know she was great she started she was the first person I started really talking about complementary therapies and ENERGETIC work and things that started my whole interest so she recommended this MASSAGE course and so I started doing that […] so it was just more that I wanted to get away from my old JOB (Lisa, 612-31)

> em I I'd had s quite a bit of experience of working of complementary health and also I'd been working in complementary health in ADMIN em […] for quite a while I'd done it as a part time JOB so I'd kinda been around that whole scene and I'd been for a lot of MASSAGE and acupuncture and found it really beneficial for mySELF and em I I'd looked at quite a few different trainings at different times I'd been interested in shiatsu and em.. actually shiatsu was PROBABLY the other main contender also counselling psychotherapy I'd thought about as well but in the end it was I was probably influenced by in particular one PRACTITIONER […] who's a massage therapist who I had quite a lot of MASSAGE from and I just I found it SO beneficial and I found HER such an inspiring practitioner (Claire, lines 21-30)

Both these examples concern a process which led up to their choosing to train in Holistic Massage. On the whole these processes tended to incorporate an embodied experience of the efficacy of massage which ignited their initial interest,[197] as well as a desire for a

[197] The notable exceptions here being Jen and Ally, who had never had a massage prior to their training.

career change. One reason that these were the most common occurring type of stories in the tellings could be that the issue of betraying client confidentiality meant that the interviewees may have been reluctant to talk about specific examples of things they experienced in their work.[198] Hence, an easier story to tell would be one focused specifically on themselves and not their clients. The only significant divergence on this point was in relation to the interviewees who were also tutors. Eve, Kath and Ally were all notably more willing to offer specific anecdotes, which I would again suggests is a mark of their having to articulate such experiences in the context of training.

Participants also presented other kinds of stories, the most prominent being what Riessman (1990) calls the 'habitual narrative': that is, one which suggests a general course of events, rather than a specific instance. These commonly occurred in response to my question about what happens when someone comes to them for massage. For example:

> I've found. well so SO far this this method seems to work.. well for me that by having the FORM there as a sort of [sighs] an understanding that we're both doing our part in contributing.. information and for me to ask for information that's going to ensure safety. and I've made it CLEAR the responsibility is for them to disclose the information I need but without it being too MUCH of a discussion and then within th treatment when we're actually hands ON.. they'll often relax and disclose stuff that they WOULDN'T have said sitting in a chair and THAT seems much better for me and then and then I make notes back on the form and then.. when they come and see me again I might say oh yes and do you remember THIS came up during the course of the treatment and then we might TALK about it (Carol, lines 463-71)

> mmm ok em well I'm really ALERT to people right from the very first moment like I'm looking at their BODY language from the very moment that I see them. and how they're responding to me and if they're looking me in the EYE. or if they're looking at the floor and also if they're looking at their how fast they're talking.. [laughs] em and kind of the way they move I'm looking at their posture. em which kind of tells you a bit about you know if they're hunched forward them might have a BACK thing going on I'm just looking at their posture um. so there's quite a bit of information that I pick up just from that FIRST first moment of greeting them em.. (Sarah, lines 35-42)

These two examples from Carol and Sarah address a number of things that they do initially in appraising the client and deciding how they will proceed. But one of the most notable features of these habitual narratives is that they say little, if anything, specifically

[198] Although this was explicitly raised as a concern in one instance.

about touch(ing), and instead give an overview of mainly the initial stage of the massage, the consultation. In part this may be because they are responding to my question chronologically and thus talking about what they do first. However, the majority of interviewees did not go beyond the consultation/talking part of the session unprompted, or if they did they tended to skim over any talk of touching with a minimal 'and then I do the treatment', before moving onto what happens post-massage. Lisa was one of the few who did directly talk about touching, more or less in the way I expected all the interviewees would (see above). The way in which she talks about what she does in this 'initial touching' is generalised and therefore relatively distant compared to what a story might convey: she talks about touching the body here and there and moving it in certain ways. Nonetheless, this stands out from the other accounts because she talks specifically about touching, and in a particularly effective and embodied way which gives a clear sense of the various actions involved.

The majority of the interviewees, on the other hand, did not explain what they do beyond this 'initial touching'. After an extended account of what happens in the lead up to the touching part, Sarah, for example, came to a stage beyond which she specifically said she could no longer generalise, because 'after that point it's so individual' (line 191). As was the case with so many of the others, Sarah's response to my requests to typify what she does is peppered with comments such as 'it all depends'. Later in the interview, she came back to the fact that she found it hard to move beyond that 'it changes every time', commenting:

> Sarah: so it's kind of like it's really about tailoring it to each single person
> Carrie: mhm.. and does that mean the way that you're touching is different
> Sarah: YES TOTALLY and I think that's why I find it so hard to [laughs] y'know when you said what do I do like after that point I was like ehh yeah cos it's very eh every single person it's like I'm an individual and they're totally individual and eh yeah it changes every time so I'd say THAT'S what holistic massage is it's like em for me it's em when it says holistic talking each person all of them but each individual person all of them yeah (Sarah, lines 476-84)

By returning to this point, Sarah underlined the issue involved in typifying this interaction. And after examining these different examples, I conclude that there are five main ways in which the complications involved in telling about what Holistic Massage practitioners do can be interpreted. Firstly, it can be seen as indicative of a conflict between what I was asking and what they are actually able to tell. That is to say, I was

asking them to provide a generalised, habitual narrative whereas, following the ethos of Holistic Massage, there can be only a limited amount of generalisation since the interaction is dependent on how an individual is on a given day, as well as how the interaction between client and practitioner shapes up on that day. Hence, practitioners quickly get to a point after which they can no longer generalise. Secondly, it can also, or instead, be argued that Holistic Massage is a recognisable practice which it is possible to teach and learn and, thus, it must be possible to generalise, perhaps not completely, but in many ways about what is done. That is to say, massage is something where a client will come to a room where the practitioner works, where they will answer some questions about their health/wellbeing, get more or less undressed, lie on a table and be touched, pressed, manipulated and kneaded. When the practitioner is finished and the allotted time is almost up, the client will then get dressed. A brief discussion of the treatment may follow, money will probably change hands, and the client will leave. But it is the detail of the touching, pressing, manipulating and kneading that the interviewees struggle to articulate.

The paradox here is that Holistic Massage must be typifiable to some extent in order to be a recognisable (social) practice. It has to involve a recognisable set of 'things', and things which are deemed appropriate, in relation to either practitioner or client, for practitioners to be able to speak of the inappropriate. For example, the client with whom Kath had her especially unpleasant experience did not follow the pattern of expected 'appropriate' behaviour, and this signalled to Kath that he was a potential threat.[199] I would venture, a large part of what constitutes 'appropriate' is what is 'usual' or 'habitual': what Hochschild calls 'social-situational appropriateness' (2003:82). This can be further illustrated with reference to the interview with Ally and Jen and the issue of the client undressing which was such a prominent feature of this. What Jen's initial comment – about it being ok for clients to undress with the practitioner in the room – hints at is that if something is usual for that client, it is acceptable, and vice versa. But Ally's and my responses suggest that what is in fact 'officially' appropriate is less flexible and more tightly bounded than Jen first allowed. The point is that if accounts of

[199] Moreover, it is important to note with regard to this example that the notion of (in)appropriate behaviour is not reserved for the sphere of sexuality, and can involve any number of things, such as the practitioner touching the clients face too quickly or the client talking when the practitioner wants them to be quiet. See Chapter Four for further discussion.

what is acceptable or appropriate can be told, then why the struggle to articulate accounts of what they habitually do in terms of touching?

In addition a third argument, one which is my preference amongst the five, can be proposed. This is that it is the presumed ineffability of touch which causes practitioners to stumble or be at a loss for words here, because this is the appropriate response. Similarly to what has been said elsewhere about pain (see Bendelow 2000; Marshall [1996]1999; Scarry 1985; Williams and Bendelow 1998), touch(ing) is both widely spoken about and at the same difficult to verbalise. But the expectation that people 'cannot readily speak our own sensations' (Marshall [1996]1999:70) limits what can be said, because this repertoire is focused on generalities and on the untalkability of sensations. However, different repertoires do emerge in different contexts and using different vocabularies of embodiment. The pain scales explored by Bendelow (2000), which are used in medical settings to attempt to codify pain and to circumvent the solipsistic character of this experience, are examples of how this vocabulary emerges in a particular context. And while these codes may not provide rich description, fine distinction or evocative explanation, they articulate sensation in a manner of speaking.

Hence, those who do touching every day talk about it in largely general terms and in a way that stresses its untalkability, while at the same time talking a great deal about it. In doing this they negotiate between a powerful cultural discourse which frames touch as ineffable, and what they know and care able to say about it (and more is said of this in Chapter Six). It may be that the particular kind of touching that they do – touching which is sensitive, nuanced, multi-faceted and affective – is equally tricky to speak about in anything other than general terms, for doing so would in effect be to reduce or more strongly deny its nuanced and affective dimensions. Hence, much of what they say draws on a shared notion that bodily contact allows for communication that is seen as 'by nature' going beyond words, that it is 'something more' than can easily be verbalised. The argument that touch is seen in these term is supported not only by what is contained in practitioner-oriented literature on massage and touch, but in popular, healthcare and academic discourse alike (see Chapter One for a discussion of, amongst others, Classen 2005c; Field 2003; Montagu 1971; Van Dongen and Elema 2001). The notion of the ineffable 'something more' is developed and explored in later chapters.

A fourth, and more cynical, argument could also be put forward. This is that the interviewees generalise about what they do and explain it as very difficult as an act of resistance and a claim to professional status and knowledgeability. Their professional authority relies to an important extent on having exclusive access to the stock of knowledge and thus their knowing about something that others do not and cannot. What they know and do may therefore be as 'jealously guarded' (Stacey 1997) as other more schematised stocks of knowledge. They touch in particular ways to particular ends, whether that be improved wellbeing, the release of something 'held' in the body, or whatever. To give away too much detail about what precisely they do acts against their professional and pecuniary interests.[200] Reticence about touch acts in practitioners' favour, to maintain a certain air of untalkability, inexplicability, complexity, or even ineffable mystery around what they do and how it works. Preserving the position of what they do as 'more than' – and which is also seen as something people need – legitimises their position and validates their work.

This is not to suggest that the participants intended to mystify their work. On the contrary, as I have suggested, the majority of them talked about it using what might be called technical or loosely 'scientific' (and thus mainstream) vocabulary and emphasised its quotidianness. Moreover, they commonly expressed a desire to see massage explored and understood to a much greater degree, that its health benefits might be more commonly recognised. However, their hesitancy and their reliance on generalisations and untalkability in explaining what they do in terms of touching implies that there are limits to Holistic Massage being codified because of its ineffable, untalkable, 'something more' and 'tailored to the individual' characteristics. This has implications for whether and to what extent it might be standardised and regulated. Since some level of regulation would be required to move Holistic Massage into the mainstream, such characteristics both 'sell' and at the same time limit it to being a 'fringe' practice. Until either an alternative model of codification and/or regulation is put forward, or practitioners abandon the 'un-talkability' of what they do, this is where it is likely to remain.

A fifth way of understanding this issue is that while I may have understood Holistic Massage as being primarily about physical touching, this is not necessarily so for those

[200] That it was Carol who was the most willing to do this supports this, since she was also the least invested in these interests.

who do it. Hence, a question which I expected participants to answer by talking about touch, in fact led to responses in which the actual bodily touching part of the massage plays only a small role. This suggest there are aspects of 'doing' massage that may be just as important as touching, including not only other directly sensuous acts such as looking, but also having an 'awareness' of what is happening for the client, 'holding a space' for them, and 'listening' to their bodies.

What this points to is that it cannot be assumed that my approach and understanding match those of my interviewees, that there is any full 'reciprocity of perspectives' (Schutz 1962) or of 'motivational relevancies' (Goffman [1974]1986) between us.[201] While it is true that an assumption of common understanding is key to the way in which we accomplish social interaction, this assumption cannot be left unexamined. Indeed, it may be at the points where these typified assumptions fail that some of the most interesting things are happening. Archer (2007) develops a similar idea, around paying greater heed to the agency of the individual:

> 'Generically, we possess the powers of both resistance and subversion or of co-operation and adaptation. Clearly, our degrees of freedom vary in relation to what we confront, but whether or not and how we use them remains contingent upon our own reflexivity.' (Archer 2007:8)

That is to say, each interviewee not only brought their own biographically unique perspective to the interview interaction, and their unique position which results from being where they are, as Schutz suggests. They also brought their individual motivations for taking part in the research, and for responding to individual questions in particular ways. In the choices they made concerning what to say in interviews, they exercise their own power as appropriate to their own aims. The decisions they made would have been contingent not only on how they thought about my project, on a small-scale, but also their view of the project of their massage work on a larger scale. Either way, these are best understood as active interpretive choices, rather than straightforward uncritical responses to my questioning. Given the variation in perspectives (Schutz) or 'context + concern' (Archer), it would be naïve to assume that the participants' motivations and

[201] Schutz's conceptualisation of this incorporates two 'idealizations': 'that of the interchangeability of standpoints and that of the congruency of relevances' (Schutz 1962:11-12). Following directly from Schutz, Goffman highlights the potential for mismatch here 'When participant roles in an activity are differentiated […] the view that one person has of what is going on is likely to be quite different from that of another' ([1974]1986:*). See Chapter Two for more on each of these points.

understandings corresponded with mine. Participants' motivations could encompass any number of things, ranging from improving perceptions of massage, to helping out a former colleague now conducting research, to trying to find out what other practitioners say and do,[202] to simply having a forum in which to talk about what they do.

The 'how' of Holistic Massage

What this chapter has done is to address some of the key components of a narratively-informed phenomenological analysis of Holistic Massage, grounded in how my participants talked about what they do. To return to the quote from Riessman (1990) with which the chapter opened, the interplay between how a telling is told, what the participants intended to tell, and how I as a researcher heard and interpreted this has been examined, and this has drawn out some interesting contradictions. The ways in which the participants talk about Holistic Massage on the one hand suggest that only some of what they do can be known, and that they cannot talk about touch other than in a narrow and specific set of ways. On the other hand, what I heard and interpreted their talk to be about was a plethora of ways of talking about touching. Hence, this chapter contributes an exploration of the myriad complex ways in which talking about touch and touching work might be done, as well as highlighting ways in which the untalkable is spoken. One significant feature amongst this is the storied aspect of the tellings: while this does not represent the entirety of what was said, the stories drawn out in this chapter act as markers of some significant aspects of a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge.

What also connects the tellings is another characteristic of the shared stock of knowledge which they have to hand, and that is a relative acceptance of alternative world-views and understandings of bodies. There is variation amongst the interviewees regarding the extent to which they accept and draw on this aspect of the stock of knowledge, and they are all oriented to it in slightly different ways, given their individual biographies and experience. Some share a concern that they might present themselves using stigmatised or discredited knowledge forms, as 'too hippy', and that their ways of working may be seen as 'weird'. Hence, they show reluctance to draw on these resources. However, interviews such as Kath's suggest that it is also possible to give an account of a 'serious' occupational practice while explicitly rooting it in 'alternative' ways of knowing. While

[202] A distinct impression I got from one of the participants, who may have been disappointed since I could not give away many details of what others had said, in the interest of confidentiality.

the stock of knowledge which the interviewees draw on may not hold the same status as mainstream, 'rational' science, it does seem that it is possible that these practitioners are going some way, consciously or otherwise, to bridging the gap between (what Eve calls) the 'witch at the bottom of the road' and more mainstream healthcare practices. The ways in which they talk about the supposedly ineffable, untalkable topic of touch are indicative of how they might begin to establish a discursive space for Holistic Massage as a legitimate practice.

In addition to representing potentially innovative ways of talking about touch(ing), the examination of the 'how' of these tellings highlights wider influences on contemporary ways of knowing about and making sense of experience. Amongst the resources which the practitioners make use of are the (re)emerging acceptance of links between mental/emotional and physical aspects of embodied being-in-the-world, and the impact of the psychoanalytic/psychotherapeutic discourse which shapes a 'therapy culture' (Furedi 2004). Together these factors suggest a larger-scale stock of knowledge which is able to take account of, amongst other things, the long-term changes in embodied being which can accompany chronic illness – towards which there has been a significant shift in recent decades (Turner 1984) – and the increasing prevalence of health problems with a recognisably mental/emotional component (Bendelow 2009).

In looking to the factors discussed above, what this chapter has done is to address a narratively-informed phenomenological concern with meaning and context by considering what participants said as situated in a dialogic interview and in relation to aspects of their wider lifeworld. This means of analysis has drawn out a range of interesting features of the interviews, not least talk about the untalkable, but also the ways in which the supposedly unknowable begins to emerge as a recognisable stock of knowledge, and the components of this stock of knowledge are unpacked further in the chapters which follow, beginning with the detailed analysis in Chapter Four of the 'what' of Holistic Massage, that is, of the competencies which constitute this embodied knowledge.

Chapter Four
The 'What' of Holistic Massage

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to further unpack and examine the ways in which a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge was constituted through talk across the interviews I conducted. Since how participants talked about their experience of doing this work was the focus of Chapter Three, the current chapter moves on to consider in depth what was said, including the ways in which the interviewees typify Holistic Massage and an 'ideal' practitioner. Schutz's notion of the stock of knowledge is best understood as practical 'know-how', so this is done through an exploration of a number of embodied competencies which participants emphasised in their interviews. The significance of these competencies was underlined by both the frequency and the ways in which they were talked about. As with the previous chapter, the analysis presented here engages with a narrative inquiry approach. In this case it does so by seeking to present and critique these key aspects of a socially and contextually situated Holistic Massage stock of knowledge. In doing so, the chapter addresses the question of what Holistic Massage is for those who do it and what part ideas about holism and touch play in this. In exploring these questions, facets of the key existing literature are engaged with. These include the concepts of emotional labour and the 'commercialisation of intimate life' (Hochschild 1983, 2003); body work (Twigg et al 2011 and others); and phenomenological perspectives on embodiment (Bendelow 2000; Leder 1990; Leder and Krucoff; Williams and Bendelow 1998).

Responding to the question of what Holistic Massage is picks up on some of the central concerns of the previous chapter. Toward the end of Chapter Three I explored the ways in which interviewees grappled with 'talking touch', and posed a number of possible explanations for the emphasis given to generalities and also its claimed 'untakability', which it is useful here to briefly recapitulate. First is the possibility that I sought from participants a 'habitual' account where none was available, given the emphasis on 'individuality' and 'tailoring' in Holistic Massage practice.[203] Alternatively, it could be that aspects of touch are ultimately untalkable, and 'something more' than can be easily explained in everyday terms although they are at the same time prominent and frequently

[203] The latter being one of the key competencies drawn out in this chapter.

spoken about within the interviews. On the other hand, perhaps the quotidian and mundane character of touch renders it untalkable, or at least creates an expectation that it should be so. Hence, practitioners offer 'ineffability' as an appropriate characterisation of touch and touching work. I also proposed that their way of not talking about touch could be seen as an act of resistance, and of making a strong claim to professional status and knowledgeability, by not 'giving away' too much about what they do. That is to say, they may have portrayed the touching part of massage as ineffable apart from in preliminarily generalisations in a bid to maintain a level of mystery, or to defend their hard-earned practitioner knowledge. Or, I suggested, it may be the case that touch does not play the foremost, pivotal role in Holistic Massage that I had imagined it would, at least not in such a direct sense, and that the interviewees' talk about other issues was an indication of this. Given the messiness of talk, aspects of all of the above are likely to have shaped what participants did and did not say about touch. Crucially, what must also be taken from these different perspectives is that the interviewees did articulate things which they claimed are ineffable.

This difficulty or avoidance of talking about touch directly should not be overstated since the participants did address touch directly and in distinct ways. Hence this chapter begins with an exploration and analysis of what was said about touch. It became clear in the process of analysis that it was in fact easier for participants to talk in terms of embodied competencies which they see as necessary for effective Holistic Massage practice. Hence, the chapter goes on to give an account in the words of these practitioners of what else Holistic Massage involves: that is, the practical embodied stock of knowledge which they describe as making up Holistic Massage in actual practice.[204] What has become evident in analysing the interview data is that these interlinked competencies are not as abstract or ethereal as they may initially appear, and are in fact quite concrete and closely related to physical touching, in that they take place around and through bodily contact. Moreover, they also have an emotional affect and are thus 'touching' in a second sense. I will return, in the conclusion to this chapter and also in Chapter Six, to a further discussion of the ineffable and untalkable, and the paradox that these are in fact much talked about in the interviews.

[204] To reiterate a key theoretical idea from Chapter Two, a Schutzian approach understands individuals as constituting their everyday social lives through shared stocks of knowledge which are first and foremost embodied and practical (Schutz [1932]1967; see also Crossley 1996a).

In order to give a better indication of the kinds of things practitioners might reasonably be expected to say their work consists of, I would briefly like to consider the description of the practice offered by the main accrediting body for Holistic Massage, which is as follows:

> A holistic massage is an individual massage treatment that is specifically tailored to each client. A true holistic massage is unique, following no fixed routine and focusing on more than just superficial aches and pains.
>
> A holistic approach treats the body as a whole, and a holistic massage practitioner takes into account a client's emotional and spiritual well-being, as well as their physical body.
>
> For a holistic practitioner, a wide range of massage techniques must be mastered, including gentle massage, stretches, relaxation work and very deep tissue techniques. Flexibility in applying this breadth of knowledge is paramount since their appropriateness must be determined by the client's needs at that particular time.
>
> During holistic massage training, great importance is placed on how the practitioner communicates and interacts with the client. The therapist massages the person, not just their body, working 'with' the client rather than giving a massage 'to' them.' (http://www.massagetraining.co.uk/aboutus.php, last accessed 14/6/11)

Aspects of this 'official' description from the Massage Training Institute (MTI) appear across all the interviews, and the notion of Holistic Massage as something 'more than' a typical massage treatment, which is explored in this chapter, is congruent with this. The terminology which the participants used was varied but often related to similar concepts as those in the above passage, in addition to other competencies such as 'awareness' and 'presence'. Before these competencies are discussed, and in order to provide a concrete point of departure for this chapter, talk which did focus directly on touching is considered first.

A practical stock of knowledge

Touching

The ways in which touch was talked about were diverse: some examples related to touch in a generalised or abstract sense, others to more specific instances.[205] Some of it tended

[205] Since the interviews were loosely structured, when participants made direct reference to touch(ing) it was mostly of their own volition, but at some points it was in response to my prompting which is made clear in the text.

toward what might loosely be termed 'popular' or 'everyday' knowledge of touch. These were characterisations which are normative, widely accepted and rooted in general (Anglo-American) cultural assumptions about touch, such as the notion that touch between mother and baby is important and nurturing. Other examples tended toward 'scientific', 'pseudo-scientific' or 'practitioner-oriented' conceptualisations: knowledge which can be understood as comprising ideas that are relatively more specialised or technical and stem from training and practice-related literature.[206] Together, however, the typifications of touch which participants presented through their talk both inform and constitute the stock of knowledge, or embodied competency, of 'touching'.

Some baseline assumptions underpinning the way touch was conceptualised was that it is intrinsically 'good', 'good for you', and offers benefits which are in-built and pre-reflexive, existing prior to individuals' conscious understanding. That is to say, touch is seen as beneficial force from the moment we are born, as Claire suggests:

> we just know [that touch is good for us] and we know it from being BABIES don't we we just know it from way way back that it's really IMPORTANT and really essential to wellbeing (Claire, lines 376-8)

As this demonstrates, the participants assumed that I would conceptualise touch as 'good' in the same way as them. This may have derived from their understanding of the motivations behind my research. But it also suggests that these understandings of touch are taken-for-granted 'common sense'; that is, as components of a widely shared stock of knowledge accepted by all. Significantly, this knowledge is often situated using terms associated with a stereotype of motherhood, such as 'nurturing' and 'reassuring'.[207] Eve – one of the most experienced of the ten interviewees – further exemplifies this position:

> nobody's TOUCHED you like that apart from your MOTHER really y'know your naked BODY y'know your LOVER doesn't touch you the same way

[206] Given Schutz's definition of the stock of knowledge as a 'sedimentation' of an individual's own previous experiences as well as those passed on to them by teachers and so forth, practitioners essentially work with these two stocks 'sedimented' into one. While they have access to more specialised knowledge on massage/touch, they also work in a broad sense within the same cultural and social norms as anyone else. Clearly socio-economic differences are likely to come into play here, but given the relative homogeneity of the group of (white, middle class, all but one British, female) participants, this is not addressed.

[207] These tropes permeate CAM in general. Publicity materials for a range of CAM practices frequently draw on ideas of 'supportive' and 'nurturing' (mother) nature and the 'gentleness' of treatments. Many CAM practitioners see this as misleading, given the potential for harm from the misuse of, for example, medicinal herbs or manual therapy.

> y'know there's nobody but your mother that touches you in that sort of completely un- sort of judgemental un-expecting anything back. it's quite a big deal so it brings up a lot of kid feelings (Eve lines 252-6)

Eve's comment functions in a number of ways, including distancing massage from sex (a device which is further examined in Chapter Five), pointing to the ability of touch to awaken or activate deep-seated emotions, and aligning massage-touch with a non-judgemental ideal of mothering. Eve's allusion to an idealized 'mother' was recurrent and, as discussed in Chapter Three, she made direct reference to a good massage practitioner being like 'the perfect mother' (line 224). Her choice of metaphor is particularly interesting when considered in terms of the 'hypersymbolization of the mother' (Hochschild 2003:39) in the relatively unstable and individualist contemporary 'west'. Hochschild suggests that capitalism is not in competition with itself so much as with the family, and notes: '[t]he more shaky things outside the family seem, the more we seem to need to believe in an unshakable family and, failing that, an unshakable figure of wife-mother' (2003:39). Eve here positions an ideal Holistic Massage practitioner as this symbolic figure, who offers the 'haven' where 'we imagine ourselves to be safe, comforted and healed' (Hochschild 2003:39).

Carol similarly addressed who touches whom, contrasting the dancers of her immediate working milieu with the non-dancer students on her massage training course:[208]

> I'd been kind of practicing just my OWN attempts [at massage]. with the dancers.. but they're all used to being touched and being in a VERY physical space so significantly on THIS course. most people were talking about the experience as for some of them it was LITERALLY. the first time they had been TOUCHED other than perhaps by their husband. or lover. y'know it's like touch was a completely taboo THING and they were having these REVELATORY moments so that was intriguing for me (Carol, lines 38-43)

Carol highlighted the differential experience of embodiment between those accustomed to occupying a high-contact, interactive 'physical space' and those new to this kind of contact, at least in such a public space.[209] This comment also highlights the embodied aspect of massage training itself, and the fact that would-be practitioners must

[208] As explained in Chapter Three, in became clear in the interview that Carol identifies first as a dancer, and that her massage work is an adjunct to that.

[209] The location of Holistic Massage and touching work in general in the public rather than private sphere is one of its most problematic characteristics in relation both to the 'feeling rules' which apply and to perceptions of the work overall. See below and Chapter Five for more on this.

experience being touched as a means of acquiring skilled touch.[210] But, as with the previous quote from Eve, it also addresses the question of who touches in contemporary western society and why. Despite their specialised professional knowledge of touch, Eve and Carol's comments nevertheless reproduce broad social norms which dichotomise touch as either nurturing or sexual. In doing so, they emphasise the extent to which these attitudes to touch are accepted, normalised, even pre-reflexive. Interestingly in relation to their status as practitioners, both these characterisations of touch lie to the same side of the commonly cited affective/instrumental dichotomy. As noted in Chapter One, it is restrictive to rely on so stark a dichotomisation of touch, given that the lived reality of interpersonal physical contact is not so clear cut. However, this binary is a useful reference point. While these practitioners situate themselves ostensibly as healthcare workers – and thus might be expected to favour a procedural or instrumental conceptualisation of touch – the fact that they more frequently allude to its affective qualities is telling regarding how they understand what they do. Specifically, it raises the significant presence of emotional labour in their work: touching in the sense of emotional impact. The aim is to produce a particular emotional and physical state in the client, as well as being able to manage subsequent displays of emotion that this work may bring about.[211] The management not only of their own feelings, but also those of their client, comprises a substantial part of what these practitioners do and can be traced through the other embodied competencies discussed below.

Rather than focusing on who touches, in the way Carol and Eve do, other participants were more concerned with the absence of touch and with social groups for whom touching is potentially more problematic. Fi suggested that in elderly care homes 'you can look AROUND the room and see the people that are visited by their relatives and are TOUCHED and the people that aren't' (Fi, lines 355-7), while Rachel commented:

> I think there are a lot of lonely people out there who DON'T get a lot of touch a lot of elderly people don't get a lot of TOUCH you have to be careful with CHILDREN nowadays to touch children because that can be construed as handling them in the wrong way em I think its a basic human NEED and I

[210] A two-way tacit aspect of the learning process which is not exclusive to massage, but is in fact characteristic of training for touching work. Consider, for example, training in biomedical examination, blood-taking, hair and beauty work and gynaecological physiotherapy (see Cacchioni and Wolkowitz (2011) on the issues specific to the latter).
[211] Such displays may range from crying to hallucinations to voicing dissatisfaction with the treatment.

> think its GREAT that massage has become such a big industry and that people can get it if they NEED it (Rachel, lines 419-23)

With her passing reference to the need to be 'careful with children', Rachel both acknowledges and feeds into the nurturing/sexual dichotomisation, as well identifying a need for more touch for the groups she refers to.[212] Once she had established this lack of touch, Rachel underlined the positive role that the service she provides could potentially play here. In this way, as well as flagging interpersonal touch as an important feature of social life, Rachel also emphasised the utility of a commodified form of touch, once again speaking to the outsourcing of such formerly 'intimate' work.[213]

One aspect of the way touch was characterised which straddled, rather than conformed to, the instrumental/affective divide was with reference to its 'healing' properties, as in: 'I think touch is a brilliant HEALER' (Rachel, line 416). Such statements were typically evidenced by an anecdote or reference to a piece of research the participants had encountered. For example, Fi offers a hospital study as illustration of touch-as-healing:

> where they MONITORED people that were going in for surgery and the anaesthetic the anaest the anaesthetist went round and met the people before hand and some of them put their they held someone's hand BEFORE where they were talking about stuff eh what was gonna go on during the surgery and stuff like that and em the RATE of RECOVERY of the patient was SIGNIFICANTLY different from um that (Fi, lines 349-54)

Although Fi faltered a little on the detail of the study, she nonetheless spoke with conviction and enthusiasm, and intermingled a specialist orientation with more popular discourse on the benefits of touch.[214] In a similar way, touch was talked about as having transformative power over the embodied ways of being of individuals, particularly in the way it can help people to 'integrate' minds and bodies and thus 'EFFECT change in people which is quite ASTONISHING' (Ally, line 648). Ally attributes this to the effect that massage has of 'bringing people back into their bodies', saying that 'it's about….

[212] When the interviewees say these people are not touched, what they mean is that they are not touched affectively (with love and care), only instrumentally (as a means to an end).

[213] As well as echoing Hochschild's argument, there are parallels here with nursing work – which Atkinson et al have noted developed alongside 'a closing-down of the everyday physical intimacies of touch outside the bonds of familial or romantic affection' (2010: paragraph 7) – and domiciliary care (Twigg 2000a).

[214] A point to note here, however, is that it is not the touch of a practitioner (or anyone else) that heals as such: rather that touch is thought to 'facilitate' healing and to trigger the body's self-healing mechanism. Although the term 'healing' was used in relation to their work, the notion of a practitioner as healer was in fact referred to in relatively disparaging terms (see Chapter Five).

y'know people being more comfortable in their SKIN and giving them CONFIDENCE' (line 654-5). That is to say touch as utilised by these practitioners enables people to more fully experience their bodies emotionally and physically. This too sees touch talked about and used in instrumental and affective ways simultaneously, which suggests that touching, as an embodied competency in Holistic Massage, in fact bridges this dichotomy.

As well as challenging the dichotomisation of touch in an either/or sense, a significant amount of what interviewees said about touch outwith the immediate context of massage echoed much of the literature on touch over the last three decades, in both the natural and social sciences (such as Classen 2002; Field 2003; McCorkle 1974; Montagu 1971; Moore at al 2007; Sims 1988). For example, Eve described touch in relation not only to child development in general – as was the case with several of the participants – but specifically to the sense of proprioception (the sense of bodily co-ordination) of and the fundamental embodiment of human existence:

> Eve: to ME the touch thing is like saying this is where you ARE this is the space in the world that you occupy because you know how babies look at their FEET and they touch their feet and suck their feet and its like what are these things y'know this is amazing these little bits and aw they're attached to me […]
> Carrie: so it [the baby] has to learn where its edges are
> Eve: yeah… that's it exactly where its edges are so so if you haven't HAD that its like its very frightening I think its very it's a real existential thing like y'know a real what am I who am I and where am I y'know (Eve, lines 347-60)

For Eve, touch-as-self-perception is crucial in the development of individual understandings of our embodied selves – to borrow from Merleau-Ponty, our 'being-in-the-world' (Merleau-Ponty 1962), as well as tying into the notion of the skin as boundary to the self (Benthien 2002). In this way she brings together everyday, commonsense understandings (babies' self-exploration) with both philosophical and biomechanical stocks of knowledge (being-in-the-world in an existential and literally physical sense). It is impossible to establish the extent to which awareness of this literature has shaped the knowledge upon which Eve drew in her interview and utilises in

practice.[215] However, the fact that her comments are rooted in actual practical everyday know-how in some ways vindicates the claims these authors make.

Further to the relationship between touch and being which she highlighted, Eve noted later in the interview that the overall embodied experience of lying supine on a massage table and being touched can evoke powerful feelings via embodied memory, a point which Sarah echoes in the second excerpt below:

> touch reminds us of stuff […] you have someone lying on the table and they can be reminded of situations where they've been lying down which have been unpleasant like it might be sort of being in labour it might be going for an operation it might be y'know abuse y'know it might be all sorts of things so ah and when you put your HANDS on them you're reminding them of other times they've been touched and so I think that's why you have to have huge RESPECT for people's for what goes on in people in their minds and in their BODIES (Eve, lines 817-25)

> everyone has. areas of sensitivity because everybody's BODY is like a map of HISTORY em y'know if somebody's had an injured ankle then they're always gonna be or there may always be this sensitivity there em and for other people it's their NECK. um and they may have some history of y'know having a nasty experience when they were little or something (Sarah, lines 252-6)

The notion of embodied memory underpins the way bodies/people are approached in Holistic Massage. Key features of the touching work interaction – laying prone/supine, being partially naked, and perhaps overtly displaying emotions – can leave the client extremely vulnerable. The need for the practitioner not only to be 'respectful' of this, and to recognise what the client may be experiencing emotionally and physically – more often in a tacit, embodied rather than spoken way – arose in a number of the interviews. It is linked to the necessity for a skilled 'awareness' which goes beyond the ability to touch clients in a physically skilled, instrumental way, and to the overarching idea of Holistic Massage as 'something more' (both of which are explored further below).

[215] Since my interest lay in embodied practical knowledge, I did not ask specifically about which books practitioners and teachers use (and the only time books were directly discussed was in Eve's interview in relation to an anatomy book that she recommends to students). In hindsight an exploration of the interplay between schematised 'book knowledge' and embodied knowledge may have been helpful. See Lea (2009) for a discussion of this translation of knowledge forms in the context of Thai Yoga Massage.

What becomes clear through what was said explicitly about touch is that, while participants were willing and able to do so to a point, talking about touch outwith a specific context was presented as not being easy. As Ally noted:

> it's difficult to think of it just on its own as an ABSTRACT cos I think.. touch is obviously thorough your HANDS but it's but it's it's almost a kind of hand and MIND connection isn't it (Ally, lines 552-3)

That is to say, what touch is and does is in one sense tacit and embodied. However, as Ally demonstrated here with the phrase 'hand and MIND connection', what touch is in Holistic Massage can in fact be articulated and in interesting ways. This point is returned to below and also in Chapter Six.

Nevertheless, participants said they could not talk in depth beyond generalities about touch, which raises the question of what else they did talk about. The answer to this is a multitude of skills and practices which were framed as 'not-touch', at least not in an obvious or immediate sense. However, as became clear from the ways the interviewees spoke of these competencies, they do happen around and through physical contact. I therefore go on to argue that these competencies are not entirely distinct from touching and that the ways in which interviewees spoke about them can be interpreted as talking about the supposedly 'untalkable'. Before making this argument, this chapter looks closely at practitioners' presentations of these embodied competencies of 'tailoring', 'awareness' and 'presence'.

Tailoring

As description from the MTI quoted at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the notion of 'tailoring to the individual' is central to what Holistic Massage is. It plays a significant part in practitioners' stock of practical knowledge and in shaping how this is applied. The participants spoke of the need to approach each encounter with a client by taking into account how that particular client is on that specific day, since 'everybody's different every TIME y'know' (Ally, line 35). Kath stated emphatically that:

> there's no one set prescription for what we do the truth is there is no one set prescription for what we do for the person EVERY single client is an individual (Kath, lines 389-91)

And Eve expressed a similar view in relation to teaching Holistic Massage:

> we don't teach routines at all and funnily enough a couple of students have said oh don't you teach a routine like y'know and eh once they've understood why you SHOULDN'T do a routine cos it's not addressing clients it's very formulaic um…. (Eve, lines 420-3)

In this manner it is emphasised from the beginning of a student's training that a routine is not the appropriate way to achieve a successful Holistic Massage. Although students may initially expect or prefer this as a way of learning, a routine is portrayed as being too superficial and as a failure to treat the client as an individual. The participants present this as translating into practical tailoring. This involves different kinds of strokes for different physical and emotional states, as Claire and Lisa illustrated:

> just the other day I had one guy in who was real.. done a lot of SPORTS and very muscular BIG muscles y'know really well developed muscles and eh em and he he needed QUITE a lot of deep work you know and then the next client was COMPLETELY different […] she just really needed to let go relax a lot happening emotionally for her and it was really […] MUCH more just general sort of relaxation massage (Claire, lines 261-6)

> when people come for a treatment and I go through consultation I kinda work out exactly what it is that they're wanting and know how what's THEIR interpretation of how the massage what they're LOOKING for and people say no just looking for a really light RELAXING one which is fine other people say I want a really deep therapeutic MASSAGE (Lisa, lines 109-13)

Both participants here present their approach as being determined by the client's needs. While Claire did not specify, Lisa presented this as an interactive negotiation between practitioner and client. Lisa went on to emphasise the role of individual interpretation in this process, highlighting the difficultly inherent in understanding another person's embodied experience of touch:

> [some clients] like kinda really deep hard PRESSURE but whereas I I could think well that is actually the pressure I'm putting on's quite light they find it quite deep because it could be painful so it's no really a good y'know INTERPRETATION of it (Lisa, lines 113-16)

While Lisa aims to come to an understanding not only of how the client perceives the massage, but also of their embodied experience – literally how the touch feels to them physically and emotionally – she underlines the complexities involved in interpreting this experience. Terms such as 'deep', 'hard' or 'light' are ambiguous, and this ambiguity resonates with the linguistic issues associated with articulating pain (Bendelow 1993, 2000; Scarry 1995; see also Chapter Three).

Ally also described the process of negotiating an appropriate starting point for a massage, in her case using even more concrete terms:

> I'll say so why don't I start with your HANDS y'know and we'll kind of agree where to START how does that feel and they kind of relax now do you want me to stay with your hands or will I move to your feet y'know and just NEGOTIATE each stage WITH them so that cos the THING is about them being particular CONTROL isn't it (Ally, lines 271-4)

Ally's approach emphasised the need to find a starting point which is comfortable for each client – especially if they are new to massage – but which at the same time aims to empower the client by encouraging them to voice their feelings. These intertwined threads of tailoring and offering control to the client speak to the ideal of individual empowerment which runs through holistic discourse (Coward 1989), as well as marking the neo-liberal emphasis on individual responsibility for health and wellbeing which has come to characterise healthcare policy in the contemporary UK. Furthermore, the emphasis on individualised treatments, specifically designed for a particular person, is typical of a postmodern, fragmented market of health and wellbeing practices from which individuals are able to pick and choose treatments and maintenance programs to suit their individually shaped body projects (Shilling 1993). In this way the practice of Holistic Massage, and practitioners' understandings of it, both reflect and constitute a significant facet of contemporary attitudes to bodies and healthcare.

From a work perspective, it was suggested that the tailoring aspect of Holistic Massage is in fact what makes it enjoyable and sustainable as an occupation. The aim of doing something different every time creates variety and maintains practitioners' interest, as Rachel and Ally suggested:

> I NEVER do a ROUTINE on anybody and I know a lot of therapists work to a routine but I would go mad and I wouldn't have been doing this for so long if I had a specific routine that I stuck to every time imagine how BORING that would be it would drive you MAD and if the client came in EVERY week and got exactly the same massage THEY'D go mad as well [laughs] (Rachel, lines 595-603)

> I mean I love doing MASSAGE and so does MOST of the people I KNOW actually who do it I mean it's endlessly fascinating because there's always different y'know the same person next day is DIFFERENT and then you're different so it's always different y'know (Ally, lines 645-8)

So it becomes apparent that the competency of tailoring is not only crucial to doing effective Holistic Massage, but also to the job satisfaction of the practitioners themselves. The emphasis placed on the variety created by a holistic approach in work that might otherwise be fairly mundane ties into the (un)bounded nature of Holistic Massage and the way in which it is differentiated from other practices. As is explored in greater detail in the following chapter, Holistic Massage practitioners commonly emphasise the distinction between what they do and the 'mindless' forms of massage used in Spa/Beauty work, a distinction also found elsewhere in the touching work field. But it is also particularly interesting from a Schutzian perspective in that it is through this adherence to the rhetoric of tailoring that their resistance to typification is most clearly evident. For Schutz, everyday life is to a significant extent routinised – a situation which is posited without judgement and merely as the state of affairs – and laws and customs serve to typify behaviour in a 'socially approved' way (Schutz 1964).[216] But in relation to occupations, 'routine' speaks to the disengagement or monotony which is characteristic of vast areas of contemporary employment. In some cases this was a situation which practitioners had deliberately fled, and that they valued Holistic Massage being 'different every time' as an advantage both for them and for their clients was clear. Along with being 'different every time' and with a growing emphasis on the needs of the individual client comes increasing levels of emotional labour, however. This labour manifests in the competencies of 'awareness' and 'presence', which I now move on to explore.

Awareness

The competency I have termed 'awareness' is in fact a composite of a number of similar skills that participants referred to also as 'sensitivity', 'tuning in', 'feeling', 'intuition', working 'mindfully' and 'listening to bodies'. What these terms refer to is the ability to recognise what their clients may be experiencing in the course of a massage – which facilitates some of the features of tailoring – in addition to awareness of their own thoughts and feelings. This clearly relies at least in part on touch. The aspects which this competency is comprised of were nuanced and, as well as overlaps, there were some significant differences in how these terms were used by participants. Moreover, from what has already been said above about tailoring, it is clear that these embodied skills are

[216] See Schutz's (1964) example of the postman, cited in Chapter Two.

enmeshed in a fairly complex way in the day-to-day practice and in the constitution of a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge.

The practitioner's full attention was talked about as being oriented toward the client from the very beginning of the massage interaction, as Rachel described:

> I try and walk behind my clients as they go up to the room and then I'll open the door for them so I can watch the way they WALK I have a look at what CLOTHES they're wearing if they're a new client when I look at them I look in their face to see what how tired they are always looking for signs and signals of what's going ON (Rachel, lines 273-6)

While Rachel 'looks' for visual indicators of the client's corporeal state, this physical assessment is described in such a way that suggests not only looking, but an overall embodied appraisal. Through this, Rachel implies, more can be gleaned than from asking the client outright, although verbal questioning also has a significant part to play in the process (as suggested for example in Lisa and Ally's comments on how they 'negotiate' with clients).

Not dissimilarly, other participants referred to 'talking' and 'listening' directly to clients' bodies, and described this often as a supplement to what is actually verbalised, and as a more direct means of communication:

> I'm talking to the body I'm saying to the body look its OK my and I'm thinking this in my head I often will have a conversation with the body in my HEAD not aloud where I'm going its OK I really am here for YOU meaning the body and the being in that body I'm here and I'm going to listen to you as much as I can listen to you and whatever I NEED to do and WE need to do lets DO it (Kath, lines 215-20)

> 'I try and kinda listen to the BODY as well if you know what I mean I don't just NOT that I don't listen to like what people WANT but also what they say could be different from what they actually mean in their FEELING in their body so I try and so I try and work with the TWO like talking to the person and also kinda FEELING em just what's underneath my hands em' (Lisa, lines 122-6)

Although Lisa and Kath presented this talking/listening as a relatively straightforward conversation, these particular characterisations of it are noteworthy for the way in which they bypass the conscious awareness – and thus agency – of the client. Moreover, Lisa also commented that what goes on is 'probably SUBCONSCIOUS', and that it is an

'indirect way of communicating' (line 156). This means of communication works not only with reflexive talk but with a felt, embodied sense, and results in the client being positioned as perhaps not fully capable of recognising or conveying what they need, although their body does. This suggests that while Holistic Massage is pervaded with the notion of 'doing with, not doing to', the practitioners' stock of knowledge is nonetheless given more authority than that of the client. The client-practitioner relationship is perhaps not as balanced as the 'doing with' orientation might initially suggest.

Eve evoked 'awareness', in a way which also emphasised feeling:

> it's about being so AWARE of the client of the space that they're taking up uh of the way they're lying on the table of the way they FEEL under your hands its becoming so aware that you become a conduit almost and and they just get BETTER y'know (Eve, lines 294-7)

The 'feeling' Eve referred to suggested not only direct physical sensing, but also a more generalised, whole-body sensing of the client's physical and emotional state. This is accomplished via a kind of hyper-awareness which facilitates the client's own healing process.[217] With this level of awareness, practitioners are able to work in a less deliberate/conscious, more 'intuitive' way, as Lisa described:

> I try and switch off my head and just let my HANDS go and then I'm just CONSCIOUS side of my brain I try and just let my INTUITION work letting the hands DO it rather than kinda engaging in I suppose (Lisa, lines 138-40)

The physical reality of 'intuitive' working once again relates back to the notion introduced by Ally of a hand-mind connection. Touching as informed by their training and knowledge of anatomy and physiology[218] is expressed as meaning that where they touch and for how long is dictated, not by a routine or even by conscious thought, but by what feels right to the practitioner at the time.[219] As Rachel explained:

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[217] Eve described this hyper-awareness with an eminently embodied (although, interestingly, visual) metaphor of it being 'a wee bit like getting your eyelids cut off' (line 172). This resonates with Barcan's analysis of spiritual healers or medical clairvoyants, who have to 'manage' their intuition, which is always on, and decide when to tell or not tell about what they know from this.

[218] The extent to which their knowledge of anatomy and physiology informed how they touch also varied amongst practitioners, with several participants opining that this is essential background knowledge and, moreover, scientific knowledge which they can, for example, summon to justify how they have massaged the client, should they ask. Others suggested this requisite part of their training which they do not deliberately use in their everyday work.

[219] See Chapter Five for discussion of the precarious position in which this leaves practitioners.

> Rachel: you've got your ANATOMY so in your head you've always got a PICTURE of what is going on underneath you you're thinking all the time but you're FEELING all the time as well and LOOKING and HEAT and cold and all kinds of things..
> Carrie: so is it all those things in equal MEASURE or is feeling more important than looking or
> Rachel: oh EVERYTHING I think in a WAY that's a holistic way to look at someone as well so you're looking you're listening you're feeling kinaesthetic visual and auditory ALL of them (Rachel 536-43)

In this way, thinking and feeling come together with all the senses for practitioners to provide a holistically-informed basis for action. Others described the development of this skill of 'feeling' in roundly embodied terms, which roll together all the senses into one:

> the way I work is through TOUCH but you SEE with your fingers rather than just FEEL with your fingers if that makes any sense and you HEAR with your fingers (Fi, lines 151-3)

> you get a kind of ah. you get a NOSE for things really I mean I don't see it as any MAGICAL second sight-y thing I think you just y'know when you're working with things you start to see things much clearer and. and you see underlying things y'know and eh… and y'know people walk in and they're talking in a certain way or they're moving their hands in a certain way you KNOW you KNOW what it is that that sort of the UNDERLYING thing (Eve 158-63)

As at other points in her interview, Eve emphasises here the mundanity of this feeling-sensing: what she has learned to do over time is not magical or mystical, but merely a keen training of her senses through which she is able to know, tacitly, about the embodied experience of others. Eve also underlined this point later in the interview, saying 'you don't actually NEED to talk about stuff when you're doing massage. ah.. it's the very act of doing it. ah MINDFULLY I think is the word' (Eve, lines 289-90). This not only emphasises the significance in practice of such awareness, but also encapsulates the conflict between the supposed untalkability of the 'something more' and the fact that they do actually talk about the ineffable in fairly precise ways (a point which is taken up later in this chapter).

When participants were pressed on the question of what actually happens when they work intuitively, and what it is that they feel, there were a number of different things going on in their responses. Take this extract from Lisa's interview, in which she responds to my question on what she thinks is happening:

> I think I'm just picking UP what the person's what's going on for the PERSON and just trying to be aware of particularly an it's not just kind of physical touch there's stuff going on UNDERNEATH y'know em so I'm very aware of that that there's maybe more ENERGETIC work going on em so I think I'm just picking up stuff that the body's giving OFF em... (Lisa, lines 158-62)

Lisa alluded to the idea of bodies communicating directly and pre-reflexively, and to the notion of 'energy': drawing on the 'life-force' or 'vitalism' discourse which, in more or less esoteric terms, permeates a range of CAM (see Coulter 2004). Like many of the other participants, however, Lisa has no direct or concise explanation for what this exchange is – largely because, while a particular mode of 'rational science' dominates the way in which bodies are talked about and understood, there is no widely accepted understanding of such interactions. Hence, as noted in the preceding chapter, practitioners are reluctant to commit to explanations which could potentially be deemed 'quackery'. When I pressed Lisa on whether there is a physical side to this 'feeling', however, she was more forthcoming:

> Carrie: is it anything that you actually PHYSICALLY feel as well or is it more
> Lisa: EM.. I generally when people are really enjoying em getting a particular area massages I really enjoy it I feel like its getting done to ME its like aw that's really really NICE and I'll spend longer DOING it cos I feel that its nice so and then they end up saying that was great the way you were going so I feel that this feels really good and it just feels FLUID I suppose y'know it just feels quite natural but if there's points where I'm not happy working over a part of the body and it just feels like I shouldn't be THERE or I get a bit of a hands OFF feeling […] it feels probably just UNCOMFORTABLE I just get an uncomfortable feeling that THEY'RE uncomfortable with it em' (Lisa, lines 169-87)

Lisa here associates particular sensations in her own body with what are positive and negative experiences for the client. And while she expressed this as a combination of the 'illogical' and 'rational', Lisa was nonetheless able to describe these physical aspects in this way. She went on to reconcile intuition with rationality by commenting:

> 'it feels a bit illogical at times you think rationally why SHOULDN'T I do it [touch a certain area] cos it's kinda it's an area that could be good to work on or break up the SCAR tissue or whatever em but I just try and go with it just go with the feeling if it's ok y'know with the client' (Lisa, lines 198-201)

In these examples, 'feeling' becomes a more obviously concrete, physical aspect of 'awareness'. This was used in a way that melded together the dual meanings of physical

and emotional perception. For example, Lisa commented 'I'll just start with general strokes just to feel how the body is' (Lisa, line 262, my emphasis), and Kath talked about the way in which she can sense where problems lie:

> I can put my hands on [a person] and go oh does that HURT there and y'know one of the students will go it's so SORE and the student the other student who's giving the massage will go how did you KNOW that [laughs] but I can feel it and they'll put their finger and go but I can't feel THAT (Kath, lines 231-4)

The way in which Kath talked about feeling ties into the way in which the awareness that these practitioners use is situated: that is, somewhere between practical capability and a gift resulting from intuition, between medicine and spirituality. In response to my probing question on what this feeling or ability to feel is, Kath goes on to relate the ability to feel to both capability and intuition in a complex way:

> Carrie: so I mean what is that then do you think
> Kath: um I don't know I suppose you could put a WORD on it and say it's my intuition but its I think it's more than that in actual fact the TRUTH is I think everybody has this its just that in some ways maybe its not open for some people and I'm just lucky I'm one of the people I'm not saying I'm SPECIAL with this I'm just saying that I'm LUCKY cos that's how it is in my body
> Carrie: to be aware of
> Kath: yeah y'know what's his name I'm just trying to think of a tennis player is NADAL is lucky that he has a tremendous ability to play TENNIS I am lucky that that's where my my gift you could call it is we ALL have something and it just so happens I've worked in that and developed whatever my my my special gift is so I can use it (Kath, lines 239-50)

So Kath began by saying that this ability to feel the pains or emotions of others is something everyone has, then quickly moved to say it is something that she has, through luck, in her body. She framed it as in individual 'gift', which just happens to be the thing that she is good at, before moving back to saying it is not innate but is something anyone could potentially learn. On the whole, it seems that while Kath is no doubt well-versed in talking about what Holistic Massage involves, she is nonetheless pulled in different directions when it comes to explaining whether this is in fact a 'gift' or 'ability', innate or learned. It could be contended that, similarly to what she says elsewhere, Kath steers away from framing it as a gift here in order that Holistic Massage might be taken more seriously as a way of knowing and doing, and not as a more esoteric form of 'healing'.

‘Feeling’ was a feature of the interviews in the sense of both physical touching and perceiving emotions. But slippage became problematic when examining whether the participant meant feeling-touching (in a physical sense) or feeling-perceiving (in an emotional or ‘something more’ sense). This question was recurrent, and often required clarification in the course of the interviews. But clarification was not always easily achieved since dichotomising these two understandings over-simplifies what they represent in the context of Holistic Massage. The elision between these two concepts is common and by no means limited to Holistic Massage practitioners, and while I suggested in earlier chapters that those working with touch in this way might be better equipped to explain their use of such terms, this point remains ambiguous The complexities surrounding the articulation of such matters are returned to in the conclusion to the present chapter and in Chapter Six.

In relation to training for Holistic Massage, such awareness was not assumed to be a pre-given, innate capacity. Following her tennis player analogy and my question on this point, Kath stated quite emphatically that it could be learned:

> Carrie: do you think that is something that people can learn then or does there have to be something there
> Kath: no I think they can learn it absolutely I have ABSOLUTELY no doubt about that I think EVERY single person on this planet could learn it I mean that may not be where they want to GO but to a degree I think they could learn it absolutely (Kath, lines 250-5)

As with tailoring, in order that practitioners develop this skill, self-awareness and awareness of others is cultivated from the beginning of training, as Eve explained:

> I’ve found with students the more. self-aware they are the more able they are to be honest with themselves. the more they’ll pick up stuff from people I mean we do a lot of self-awareness exercises y’know certainly at the beginning of the course particularly just to get people to. little things like y’know how to listen to people y’know (Eve, lines 201-4)

So, while the capacity may be present in the individual before they begin training, having awareness of their physical and emotional state can be learned, and is actively taught to students, often via exercises based on mediation or Tai Chi for example, as well as exercises in which the aim is to listen attentively without interrupting or passing

judgement on the speaker.[220] A significant feature of this learning process was framed as the ability to acknowledge the needs and limitations of one's own body:

> 'I try to teach them [students] to LISTEN to their clients but you can't listen to a client if you haven't learnt to listen to yourself so I'm teaching them to LISTEN to their own body and then listen to their CLIENT'S body that's very hard for some students actually its not our western WAY to listen to yourself (Kath, lines 733-6)

Kath situates her own understanding of 'listen[ing] to yourself' in terms of her personal, non-western spiritual background, implying that she has learned to do this as a result of her spiritual education, much as she did with her interview overall (see Chapter Three). However, the fact that she and others are able to talk about this skill in serious terms demonstrates that Kath expects at least some level of acceptance of this as a legitimate way of knowing in the contemporary UK. This kind of 'awareness' was thus presented unapologetically and without obvious fear of derision.

Once established, this awareness then needs to be cultivated and maintained over the course of a massage career, which is often done through a continuation of these and other practices which promote personal development. The need for awareness of the practitioner's own body plays a part in some of the ways in which they protect physical and emotional aspects of their own wellbeing. Hence, practices such as Tai Chi, Yoga and dance also function at the level of body maintenance, that is, in keeping practitioners fit to do their job. In this respect they were cited by many interviewees as important, although almost as many admitted to not actually doing them as much as they should or would like to. This too contributes to the typification of an 'ideal' Holistic Massage practitioner, where the ideal does not necessarily equate to a lived reality.

So far in this chapter, the significance of 'tailoring' and the various facets of 'awareness' have been discussed. But there is another competency which is also closely intertwined with the first two, and which is in a sense brought about by 'awareness'; and this is 'presence', which I now explore.

[220] Interestingly, these are not dissimilar to exercises set to postgraduate students as they learn research interviewing skills.

Presence

In a particularly physical sense, the co-presence of the worker and the person being worked with is a distinguishing feature of the occupations which can be framed as body/touching work. Moreover, physical co-presence is a key factor in the devalued status of such work (McDowell 2009; Cohen 2005, 2010). In phenomenological terms, bodily 'absence' is put forward as the everyday norm until the body 'dys-appears' through illness and pain (Leder 1990; see also Williams and Bendelow 1998). Interestingly, my interviewees also emphasised the significance of the 'presence' of, in some instances, the practitioner, and in others the client. But in this specific context, 'presence' took on a different meaning. As with 'awareness', in the language of Holistic Massage 'presence' equates to a mode of attention, of being in the here-and-now, which is both mindful and very much embodied. In this was it resonates with Leder's (1990) 'absent body', wherein the body becomes present, not in this case through illness and 'dys-appearance' (although this too has relevance), but through a concerted effort to make it do so. Also like awareness, presence was talked about as something which has to be achieved, worked at, and done in an authentic way in order to achieve an effective Holistic Massage, as this section explores.

Of all the participants, Kath spoke in greatest depth about the 'presence' of the practitioner and of the ways in which it might be achieved. She suggested early in her interview that 'it's easy to say "I'm present" and actually there's a lot going on in your head' (Kath, line 120). In this was she positioned presence as a skill which requires a kind of mental focus on the task (or client) in hand. It can also be seen to require a kind of 'deep acting' (Hochschild 1983): it is not enough for the practitioner to <u>say</u> they are present, they must <u>feel</u> it. As Kath understands it, whether or not this is done effectively has a direct influence on the physicality of a practitioner's touch in a way which may be detected by the client:

> when I put my hands on somebody and I'm thinking oh god my BOYFRIEND'S leaving me and what am I going to do and blah blah blah and I'm not PRESENT and touch my client they don't know what's going on but it's kind of like they're a bit bitsy bitsy and antsy and yeah it DOES come across and it's just it's just not such a deep session and they're probably start talking to you about their haircut or something and that's why because you're not that kind of depth is not there in that and so I have had to learn that put it ASIDE and be present (Kath, lines 423-9)

There are several things going on in what Kath says in this excerpt. The first is that the client is not aware of what is happening for the practitioner and which is causing them to lose focus. However, she suggests that they would quite clearly sense a difference in the way they are touched as a result of the practitioner's wandering attention. It could be argued that the client would need familiarity with the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge (or something similar) to be equipped to identify this nuanced difference in touch. However, secondly, what Kath suggests is that this would not necessarily be a conscious recognition on the client's part, but instead a corresponding loss of focus which would result not only in their attention shifting away from their experience of the massage, but also to their talking about something such as their haircut. Thirdly, Kath implies here that not only is talking in itself to be discouraged during a massage (as several other practitioners agreed), but that a topic as superficial as a haircut is even more so. The example provided is especially interesting, given the bounding of Holistic Massage in relation to hair and beauty work (see Chapter Five), and the implication that a haircut is a less 'serious' matter. Lastly, Kath's comments also underline the particular way in which this difference in touching which a lack of presence can occasion is spoken about. She expresses this as resulting in her touch feeling 'bitsy bitsy' and 'antsy', which she sets in opposition to a feeling of 'depth': language which conveys her meaning around the context it occurred in but which is also ambiguous in its expression.

Further to the way Kath described presence having an impact on Holistic Massage in practice, she stressed that to her it is being present which makes the massage treatment practical, commenting that what she does is 'TOTALLY grounded and TOTALLY straightforward and totally PRACTICAL (lines 127-8). This mirrors the way in which other practitioners emphasised the everydayness of what they do (as Eve was seen to do earlier in this chapter, in saying that the way in which she does awareness is not a 'second sight-y thing'). But at the same time Kath also contradicted this claim to everyday mundanity by going on to say that:

> it just simply is the MORE that you're able to be present the MORE you're able to be aware that there is something else that goes on in this life what we're seeing is not the way it really IS if that makes sense (Kath, lines 128 -31)

So, while the ability to be present is not otherworldly, doing presence does result in a heightened awareness which goes beyond a more quotidian understanding of the world

around us. Hence, there is an inherent conflict between Kath's insistence that what she does is 'totally straightforward' and her reaching to an ineffable 'something more': a clash which resonates with the issues participants faced in explaining what they do. Further to this conflict, Kath went as far as to suggest, albeit hypothetically, that presence itself might be enough to accomplish a Holistic Massage treatment without touch, giving the example of a close friend with whom she works:

> sometimes I believe that if I came in and just sat BESIDE her if if that's what felt right I'm not saying I would just go and sit beside her and do NOTHING but if that's what felt RIGHT and it never has felt like that that that might be ENOUGH if I was really present she was really present so it is to do with TOUCH but its to do with what I do to myself and its not that I do anything but it's to do with where I AM before I touch (Kath, lines 153-61)

The number of positives, negatives and qualifiers in this complex passage – what 'it' is or is not about – suggest that Kath is negotiating with herself what she means as she goes along and is not entirely sure if she wants to (or should) say that touch may not be as essential to what she does as the need for presence. However, she does suggest this, at the same time as she reiterates the significance of the practitioner's emotional state.

Kath was not the only participant to refer to the practitioner's presence in the sense of a mode of attention or being. Sarah referred to a similar notion in terms of 'grounding'. In response to my question of what the most important aspect of her work is, Sarah responded:

> ok probably a REALLY important thing is for me to be grounded because how I'm feeling in mySELF is really important for the client and like.. I think people can really feel it when somebody's not not feeling grounded (Sarah, lines 362-4)

As with Kath, Sarah suggested that her own emotional state has direct impact on the way in which the client experiences the massage, and that having her 'head clear' and 'feel[ing] really earthed' (line 372) are essential to ensuring a positive experience. Sarah later went on to equate feeling 'grounded' with feeling fully embodied, and suggests that this is in fact a key motive for people seeking massage:

> I think people often come to massage. um because they need to be more they want they want to feel more grounded in their bodies.. em. y'know they want to feel their bodies more y'know and when people are kind of clenched up and stuff their bodies are uncomfortable em. and.. yeah its almost like there's this

> BATTLE going on between the mind and the body y'know there's this sort of stress between the two em. and its like I need to be really in my body […] and then I'll just help them with that yeah and its like I need to be my MIND and my body need to be at peace [laughs] (Sarah, lines 377-86)

Interestingly, 'holistic' in this practical stock of knowledge does not signify mind and body as existing as one: throughout the interviews, they were spoken of as separate entities. What 'holistic' does equate to, as Sarah explains here, is a process which takes place via grounding/presence, and which results in a peaceful mental-emotional state, harmony between mind and body, physical comfort and stillness. Hence, Sarah suggests, massage by a practitioner who is grounded and present can bring about a more immediate, effectively embodied experience of day-to-day life for clients.[221]

To enable such facilitation for the client, Sarah directly addressed the need to be 'authentic' and for the practitioner to confront and deal with their own feelings. Having been on a weekend CPD course immediately prior to her interview, Sarah reflected:

> I think what you CAN'T control is how you actually feel em like so recently I've just done this course and I'm feeling exhausted em and rather than me going ok I'm gonna do some yoga ant then I'm gonna feel just FINE or trying to be all fine rather its better to just accept how exhausted I feel em and y'know to get enough sleep but then if I'm just having difficult emotions to really let those emotions be. rather than to try and get rid of them. um so its like.. yeah em I feel like that encourages my clients to kind of.. be comfortable with themselves because I'm trying to be comfortable with myself and not just leave bits of me outside or something.. that's not very yeah mm and even just saying that I feel better [laughs] y'know so that's quite grounding that's quite a grounding feeling to have (Sarah, lines 440-51)

Sarah emphasised the notion of authenticity in her bid 'not [to] just leave bits of me outside' the massage room. Interestingly this directly contradicts Kath, who talked more in terms of setting aside her feelings, saying 'I know there is a place in myself that I can leave things I can leave things behind and be very very THERE' (lines 161-2). Sarah instead suggests that 'controlling' feelings in this way may be impossible, or at least have limited utility: for her the practitioner's feelings would be better to be confronted and 'authentically' experienced. Both Sarah and Kath are concerned with the extent to which practitioners must engage in emotional labour in their work. Making a conscious, self-aware decision to 'accept' and 'be comfortable' with their feelings, in the way Sarah

[221] This in turn resonates with Leder and Krucoff's (2008) suggestion that from a phenomenological and also from a therapeutic perspective, touch has the potential to re-integrate mind, body and self after the disruption caused by illness.

suggests, itself constitutes a feeling rule that could be termed 'grounded authenticity', whereas Kath's approach might be termed 'leaving behind'. The ability to do either of these forms another part of the practical know-how of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge.

Fi also talked about 'grounding', and elaborated on what she does to achieve this:

> well for ME um it's about staying in MY body so being aware of my body and my my physical body in this SPACE and feeling my FEET.. on the on the ground. it's VERY simple but incredibly EFFECTIVE [laughs] em and… I suppose ah I sometimes will try to feel my feet un UNDER the ground as it were. em to have a connection to. to the earth […] before I start a treatment I make sure I can feel my body physically and I and I'm as aware as I can be of the emotions that are going around the the thinking that I'm doing and what I need.. I also stay grounded by drinking water in between my sessions and EATING during the DAY um which are great they pull you back into your BODY (Fi, lines 330-40)

Fi's explanation brings together prosaic, everyday physicality – eating, drinking – with grounding and presence in a way that bridges the physical/emotional dichotomy. In a similar way to Kath, all this in combination creates a heightened state of being which is both present and aware, and which enables Fi to work effectively. She also cites the physical aspect of grounding as a tool which can be utilised against the more emotionally dangerous situations that this mode of attention might leave her open to in the course of a massage:

> if SOMETHING feels very full-on that's going on for somebody and I feel like I'm getting too sucked INTO it or something then I will find a way to REMOVE myself even if it's just for a moment even it's walking from one part of someone's body to another so that I come BACK and feel my feet again and so I'm not NOT being drawn in too much (Fi, lines 340-46)

By focusing on <u>physically</u> 'feeling her feet', Fi is thus able to respond to potentially overwhelming emotions. Rachel referred to similar techniques which enable her to be grounded and present:

> between each treatment you've very aware of hygiene so I'm off downstairs to wash my hands and that's a mental [makes 'pft' noise, indicates shaking off] let go of all of that write everything down its out of my head onto the consultation form its GONE I don't THINK abut it again I then go and see the next client and that's a way of blocking and letting GO (Rachel, lines 246-50)

These techniques are framed in primarily practical terms by Rachel, in that she makes reference to hygiene and the case-notes she has to maintain on clients. But these practical steps have taken on a dual meaning for her in that she also sees them as ways to process and let go of the emotional effects of her work. Like Fi, Rachel describes the way everyday practices such as drinking water take on a symbolic function:

> Rachel: water drinking WATER as well and em washing your hands it's a CLEANSING process it's a yeah a kind of grounding and it's also a way of cutting off the last client and moving on to the next because I do back to back so I don't have much time in BETWEEN but that gives me thirty seconds or twenty seconds on my own when I just go wheech GONE dry my hands get a glass of water come up stairs
> Carrie: mhm and is that something that you're doing consciously or does that come
> Rachel: yeah it is conscious NOW I I've done it for a long TIME but I'm aware if WHY I'm doing it now and that makes it even MORE powerful because I'm not then carrying a burden of everybody's RUBBISH on my shoulders [laughs] (Rachel, lines 313-22)

In a self-aware way, Rachel uses her practical know-how as a way of maintaining her focus on each individual client and as a protective measure against 'everybody's RUBBISH'.

While in these examples the interviewees in question did refer specifically to concepts such as 'grounding', some of the participants seemed to be self-conscious in using such expressions lest they seem trite.[222] In the following example, Claire reflects on her experience of <u>having</u> as well as doing Holistic Massage:

> [it] sort of CENTRES me and brings my back to myself takes me out of my HEAD if […it] just brings me BACK into my body and often I kind of have a sense of em… yeah just just being more CONNECTED with myself really and I feel I feel that also when I'm PRACTICING that also as well as when I'm receiving it actually really I mean its all these kind of clichéd terms like it GROUNDS me and it CENTRES me [laughs] but em I suppose but in a way those ARE the right terms because its sort of like I can sort of feel the energy DROPPING from my head and it's all up here and whizzing round and I feel very confused and the energy sort of drops DOWN into the body and em y'know and often things DO become a bit clearer (Claire, lines 423-32)

It could be that Claire is conscious of being judged by me – as already noted, something she may have been more susceptible to given her relatively lesser experience – or that

[222] Or, as suggested in Chapter Three, in order to avoid associating themselves with discredited knowledge forms.

she herself feels these terms in some way inadequate but is as a loss to find more suitable alternatives. Despite some reluctance to use these potentially 'clichéd' terms, Claire ultimately justified them as in fact being descriptive of what she actually feels as a client and practitioner, both physically and emotionally. In doing so, she concedes their place in the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge.

Other participants were not so concerned with the 'presence' of the practitioner as with that of the client, in the sense that the latter's ability to fully experience their Holistic Massage has significance for their healing process. This is another facet of Holistic Massage work which practitioners need to be aware of and able to manage, as Ally asserted:

> Ally: we do kind of myofascial stuff which sometimes can kind of release.. sensations or emotions or kind of other STUFF.. so you actually kind of WANT to keep them pretty much in the PRESENT SO if somebody looks like they're kinda slipping off into LA LA land or somewhere
> Jen: which is quite nice there
> Ally: it CAN be but then they're kind of NOT in their BODY y'know you want to just ask them how does that FEEL y'know (Ally and Jen 197-204)

As well as being another example of Ally gently correcting Jen (compare with the analysis in Chapter Three), this excerpt sees Ally emphasise what she perceives as the need to actively maintain the client's attention on what they are experiencing. She illustrates doing this by talking to them and directly asking them to think about what they are feeling. Ally later added that her inclination to keep people 'right THERE' may be tied to her own experience of massage, in that she has experienced 'weird HORRORS and stuff' (line 216-7), triggered by touch. However, she was not the only interviewee to highlight the need to keep the client present. Fi also stressed the important place of this skill in her stock of knowledge:

> people can drift off and that's that can be a really LOVELY thing but quite a lot of the time people are. not actually drifting they're dissociating so my I feel part of my job is to keep. people present its not to its not to stop them falling asleep but if there's something going on that what they're doing is they're falling asleep to shut down and shut out from the world then I'm not REALLY doing them that many favours so I will just spend a little time keeping them PRESENT (Fi, lines 115-20)

Fi frames this loss of presence in terms of the neuropsychological concept of 'dissociation', which reflects her additional training but also suggests an aim of aligning her knowledge with a more scientific stock. She also suggests further nuances in her embodied skill as a practitioner, regarding her ability to distinguish between 'drifting', dissociation and sleep, and to establish reasons for the client's doing this. When I pressed for detail on how she actually differentiates between these states, Fi responded with this:

> Fi: EM well the BODY reacts in a slightly different way so um […] people can go into a rapid eye movement or their FACE will change a little bit or and usually you can tell when if the body is generally OPENING […] I think it's usually much more GRADUAL really but when somebody dissociates it's it's very quick and you can have a sense that they are no LONGER in their body they're just not there you're touching a a body and there's not really anything deep inside ENERGETICALLY they're not there any more
> Carrie: mm so is that something that actually FEELS different to you then
> Fi: I don't know I don't um it MUST do because you can SENSE it I don't know if its physical. a physical feeling… but I might. I might see if I can FEEL that actually… yeah I suppose what you can FEEL is a sense of EMPTINESS but I don't know quite how that feels PHYSICALLY (lines, 137-51)

The abundant use of the word 'feel' in this passage flags up the overlaps between feeling-as-touching and feeling-as-perceiving, which were at times difficult if not impossible to untangle. Interestingly, Fi interprets my question as referring to physical sensation, whereas she seems mostly to imply a more generally embodied 'sensing' akin to the competency of 'awareness'. The overall lack of specifity around 'feeling' once again points to the complexities of verbalising tacit embodied knowledge in a suitable way, as well as feeding into the idea of Holistic Massage necessitating a skill which is 'something more' than can easily be explained.

Lisa experienced a loss of presence in a client early in her training, which she found very unsettling, but which she expressed in physical terms:

> it felt like they had no really any MUSCLE tone y'know it was like there's no really anything UNDER here it was just a really bizarre feeling […] it felt as if they weren't THERE y'know it was really BIZARRE just couldn't really feel anything under the SKIN and [her tutor advised] y'need to make sure they're PRESENT know how bring them back talk to them how's that feeling em so they're there and NOW em and the next time I done a massage on the same person it was completely different I could feel MUSCLE tone and it was like I didn't imagine that because this feels like a DIFFERENT BODY all together (Lisa, 328-38)

Similarly to Fi, Lisa described this loss of presence as though the person inside the skin has in some way disappeared. The 'feeling' Lisa described relates to tangible flesh and to a more generalised energetic absence. Lisa experienced this before her familiarity with a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge was as developed as it is now, and thus she was at that time unable to draw on and operationalise this knowledge. By the time of the interview, however, she was able to present this as an anecdote which illustrated her understanding of presence – and absence – in a vivid way.

Whichever way the loss of presence is picked up on, these practitioners represent it, to differing degrees, as being part of their role as practitioner to prevent the client from wandering in this way. For example, Fi was clear that part of what she does is manage a client's emotions on their behalf, emotions which they may not themselves understand or even be aware of. She does this using a range of methods. As with Ally, she asks clients to think about what they're feeling – in some ways quite physically, as in feeling their heart beat – in a way that keeps their attention oriented toward their own embodied experience in the course of the massage. And while Fi qualified the need to maintain presence by adding that 'it depends what's HAPPENING to them' (line 131), this too adds to the impression that the practical know-how which Fi possesses enables her to make this decision. Lisa, on the other hand, was less forthright about her role in deciding whether the client should 'drift', 'snooze' and so forth, pointing out that for some people such inward-focused attention on themselves might simply be 'too INTENSE'.[223] But on the whole she presented the need for presence on her behalf and on the clients as being the ideal state in which to do Holistic Massage.

From this it can be seen that presence is not only a state to be maintained within the immediate context of the massage interaction. It is also spoken about as a practical know-how, a way of knowing about the work, about the client, and about the self, and was presented by these practitioners as necessary to effectively accomplish Holistic Massage. As with awareness, presence appears to require a significant amount of

[223] The question of whether or not background music was played during the massage was cited in relation to this by several interviewees, with the consensus being that while it may be appropriate for those who do find silence and introspection too intense, practitioners favoured silence as it allows them to be more fully present. Cf. Pagis (2010) who suggests, in a phenomenological take on meditation, that effective feeling necessitates silence.

emotional labour, which is discussed below, after some attention is given to the notion of 'holism' and its role in the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge.

What of 'holism' in all this?

It was suggested earlier that 'holism' in Holistic Massage is in some ways best understood by its practitioners as a process via which harmony or integration of mind and body is achieved. Coward (1989) understands a 'holistic approach' to signify 'a quality of personal attention', which certainly fits with the competencies of tailoring, awareness and presence. The various competencies discussed above are significant in facilitating this process, and in constituting a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge. However, this does not fully account for the ways in which the terms 'holistic' and 'holism' were used in the interviews. Oerton and Phoenix suggest that, in the context of massage, holism can 'be seen as offering a more intuitive and experiential feel to the giving and receiving of therapeutic bodywork', as well as 'tap[ping] into popular discourses on self-awareness and self empowerment in health and healing' (Oerton and Phoenix 2001:409, note 8). The ideas of awareness and empowerment echo the above discussion and can be related to further examples of the ways in which 'holistic' was used by my participants.

These uses varied and, moreover, were in some cases different for one participant at various points in their interview, reflecting both the complexities of the talk and the unbounded character of 'holism' and the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge overall (see Chapter Five). Some interviewees began to explain what holistic means in relation to their work with what at first seemed to be a fairly concise definition, as in these examples from Rachel, Carol and Fi:

> you look at the the WHOLE body you're looking at an approach that em treats an individual rather than a specific POINT.. (Rachel, lines 71-3)

> I think Holistic Massage is a wonderfully woolly baggy all-encompassing term em meaning treating the whole self and in a way it's as straightforward as that (Carol, lines 270-2)

> em it's working WITH it's working with um.. a WHOLE. PERSON how they present and how they present at that moment (Fi, lines 534-8)

However, when asked to elaborate, it became clear that articulating how holism is practiced is not so straightforward. While it does signify whole bodies, people and/or selves, they also suggest that what holism is is open to individual interpretation:

> em it's difficult because everybody's interpretation of what a type of massage is different from the next PERSON'S and even with practitioners em (Lisa, lines 102-4)

> it DEPENDS I think em it's difficult to define cos I think everyone has a different. IDEA. of how they treat holistically (Rachel, lines 105-6)

The 'everyone' of these extracts are practitioners, rather than clients, and Rachel went on to specify how she understands a holistic way of working:

> how I treat holistically three things really trying to get people's ENERGY better trying to get people's MINDS in a better place trying to get their BODIES in a better place and if you can.. treat all three together you're gong to get BETTER results long term longer lasting long term results I think (Rachel, lines 106-10)

Rachel presents these three components clearly, as well as suggesting the value for the client of working in this way.

A significant aspect of what 'holistic' equates to here was presented as allowing for <u>what the client wants</u> from the treatment. This was commonly conveyed in individualised general ways (similar to those discussed in relation to tailoring), such as 'it depends from person to person', as well as more specific comments. Some examples are:

> I'll ask if y'know they want a relaxing or we'll discuss whether they'll have a relaxing or a more stimulating massage (Sarah lines 105-6)

> I kinda work out exactly what it is that they're wanting and know how what's THEIR interpretation […] what they're LOOKING for (Lisa, lines 109-11)

> I. will. always ask them what they're WANTING from the treatment what they're WANTING to get out of the treatment and I think that has an ENORMOUS effect if people are able to IDENTIFY what it is that they want (Fi, lines 391-3)

As they do this, practitioners also have to be able to maintain their professional authority. Fi also noted that it is important not to allow what they do to be 'dictated TOO much' by what the client says they want, since ultimately 'someone's coming to see me because I've done the training and the learning' (lines 449-50). While maintaining

flexibility and aiming to please the client, practitioners must also work to maintain the precarious authority that they have as (would-be) healthcare professionals. Given the entirely practical concern with establishing repeat clients (particularly for those who, like all my participants, are self-employed), they must manage a stock of knowledge which in its flexibility and unboundedness risks carrying less authoritative weight.

Crucially for most of the practitioners, however, and as the third quote from Fi also suggests, establishing what clients want from a treatment amounts to a keen awareness of and engagement with the agency of the client, and an approach which empowers clients to take an active role in caring for their bodies. Ally communicated this clearly:

> I think we focus a LOT on… ESTABLISHING that relationship and that kind of.. y'know you bring what you bring they bring what THEY bring and actually nothing happens until you meet somewhere in the MIDDLE. so […] it's not about you DOING something and the other person getting something.. it has to be BOTH of you doing something (Ally and Jen, lines 13-26)

Later in the interview, Ally consolidated this, saying that the holistic aspect is about 'working with the client so they come to it [ie. their health problem] rather than you just saying well actually it's this' (Ally, lines 537-8). Carol provides an interesting counterpoint to this, by debating with herself the extent to which the client can or should influence what the practitioner does:

> I make a decision which MIGHT need negotiation.. say if the client said oh my SHOULDER'S really sore. I just want you to work on my SHOULDERS I might at that point think I'm ABSOLUTELY convinced. it would be more useful to start on the calves and THEN I'll have a discussion […] and sometimes they say [puts on voice] no I absolutely want my shoulders rubbing and that's FINE.. and so I'll go with them but that's a kind of negotiation point perhaps or it's a DECISION point for me (Carol, lines 518-26)

While Carol presents this as a 'negotiation', she also says 'I'll have' (not 'we'll have') a 'discussion', and seems to be caught between whether the way to proceed is in fact a point for negotiation with the client or a decision that she – as the practitioner equipped with the knowledge of Holistic Massage – must make. This again reflects the fluidity and unboundedness of what a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge actually adds up to, which is explored in the following chapter.

The idea that client and practitioner together come to an agreement, and also that the clients should take an active role, resonates with the MTI definition of Holistic Massage cited at the beginning of this chapter, general CAM discourse, and also the notion of 'self-empowerment' raised by others such as Oerton and Phoenix (2001). Furthermore, the extent to which 'holistic' involves catering to individual needs of whole people means that what a Holistic Massage actually amounts to in practice is to some extent be shaped by the client and what they want. However, there remains 'something more' to be said about the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge, which the final section of the chapter explores.

Holistic Massage and the 'something more'

This chapter has thus far established that Holistic Massage is constituted by and accomplished through an embodied stock of knowledge, that is, by the range of competencies discussed above and more. Holistic Massage is touching; is tailoring to the needs of individuals; is having and doing awareness; and is maintaining presence. Taken together, the stock of practical, embodied knowledge outlined above becomes more than the sum of these competencies, however. A refrain throughout the interviews – to varying degrees implicit and explicit – was the notion of Holistic Massage as 'something more' than what participants could easily convey or explain. This was an integral part of participants' presentation of these competencies: what they do is about touch but also 'more than' touch; awareness requires 'more than' just attention to the physical; and presence necessitates 'more than' corporeal presence alone. But the 'something more' can also be drawn out as an additional analytical theme of the interview accounts. In this respect, I suggest this refrain can be understood from two perspectives.

In the first instance it reflects an ('holistic') understanding of bodies and/or people which underpins Holistic Massage, and which takes account of 'more than' physical concerns. Rather than considering 'carnal', physical bodies alone, practitioners instead aim to work with feeling, emotional, spiritual, energetic beings.[224] In the second instance, the refrain of 'something more' is tied to the resistance to typification (in the sense of codification) which seems to be integral to Holistic Massage in practice. Both these perspectives have significant implications for Holistic Massage and so I address each in turn. The ways in

[224] That people are also thinking beings is recognised although, as noted in Chapter Three, often seemingly worked around rather than with. This foregrounds the interesting way in which knowledge attained through sensing-feeling is more highly valued relative to 'rational' thought: an inversion of the more typical contemporary western valuing of thought over feeling.

which practitioners distinguish Holistic Massage from other practices via these markers is addressed in the next chapter, and so the point here is to consider this last form of embodied know-how.

Further to the general sense conveyed in relation to the earlier competencies, the interviewees spoke about Holistic Massage as 'more than' in a range of ways. Primarily it was 'more than' physical:

> I honestly don't really know what goes ON apart from I'm doing the massage and I do think it works more that just at the physical level but I don't really know what goes ON em.. so it's really interesting I wish I could know MORE (Lisa 683-5)
>
> it's WAY more than just the sort of physical.. relief of sort of symptoms of things (Fi 758-9)
>
> there needs to be a greater communication between western MEDICINE and and massage […] it's about people beginning to listen uh to each other and ah really REALLY looking into the real BENEFITS of it and there is lots more [to it] than just the physical but it's just so difficult to quantify (Fi 730-4)
>
> I think a training that was just that was really just emphasised the kind of phys PHYSICAL side of it I don't think that would have suited me although I think that's REALLY important as well but em yeah it needed to be MORE than that (Claire 508-11)

While they may not be able to precisely pinpoint what the 'something more' is, they try to speak about its elements in a variety of ways and it is nonetheless something. For Fi, it is the reason why there should be more communication between massage professionals and mainstream healthcare, as well as being the dividing point between different paradigms of efficacy. For Claire, the very reason why she chose the training that she did was because it offered education in something 'more than' straightforwardly physical knowledge alone. However, the problem of pinpointing this 'something more' persists.

One particularly clear expression of this 'more than', which incorporates an attempt to ground it in the physical interaction taking place in Holistic Massage, came from Ally and Jen:

> Ally: if you pick up somebody's FOOT they're just lying on the table and you pick up their foot and you're just LIGHTLY feeling and just thinking about what's going on up their leg and THROUGH the leg just you maybe only got your hand on their HEEL but actually you start to become aware what's

> happening at the ANKLE what's happening at the knee what happen at the HEAD […] that's gotta be about MORE than touch cos you're only just touching very lightly
> Jen: it's more like sensing something y'know THROUGH touch you you're sensing something ELSE aren't you
> Ally: mhm mhm (Ally and Jen, lines 570-80)

Significantly, Ally talks in the specifically physical terms of touching body parts. However, when I probed for a qualification of what that 'more than' or 'something else' might be, Jen first responded somewhat nervously 'I don't KNOW I haven't really ANALYSED it [laughs]' (line 581),[225] and then reluctantly suggested that it might be 'muscle tension', keeping her explanation within physical bounds. Ally did not respond at all while Jen continued, with reference to 'tension' and 'relaxation' of muscles, for several lines more.

Eve acknowledged the vagueness of the term 'holistic', and at the same time made a claim for Holistic Massage to be understood as 'more than' the esoteric practice that popular associations of the term might suggest:

> it's a word that's really bandied about holistic they talk about holistic and sort of like burn incense and stuff and we're all very sort of chilled out and cool and all this and it's holistic and it's SO much MORE than that (Eve, lines 291-3)

That is to say, Holistic Massage is more than the symbols which holism might be narrowly and stereotypically represented by. But perhaps even more significant than this is the comparison which Eve drew later in her interview, between the 'something more' and what is, in idealised terms, the contemporary emotional state par excellence: romantic love. She suggested:

> when you fall in love I mean it's not a kind of. ah.. I mean sometimes you just see people and you think I KNOW them and there's this energetic exchange it's MORE than just oh yeah he looks nice I fancy him or y'know he's into sort of tennis or so on it's more than that its more than that and I think um.. you know you you have to have experience it (Eve, lines 323-7)

[225] A claim which reflects the fact that Jen has been doing Holistic Massage for a relatively short time and has thus had less opportunity to develop a reflexive orientation to her work.

Here the something more for Eve becomes an 'energetic exchange'. But at the same time it is 'more than' that and, ultimately, something that cannot be conveyed in language but has to be experienced and lived in order to be understood.

It becomes apparent that this ineffable 'something more' is something of an ambiguous and tentative 'residual category'. This has been created in part by my own categorisation of the embodied competencies discussed in this chapter, and in part by the persistence of the 'something more' refrain in participants' tellings. Hence it is not residual in the sense that it should be 'silenced' or sidelined in analysis: far from it.[226] The ubiquity of the 'something more' sees it become a form of typification, to return to the Schutzian term, in its own right. Moreover, the more that is seen to be covered by this category, the more analytical weight it carries. Given that the 'something more' was alluded to in some way in each interview, it has to be taken seriously. What it may be facilitated by is the particular kind of touching work involved in Holistic Massage. As suggested by the stock of knowledge analysed in this chapter, the practice can be understood as involving both 'surface' and 'deep acting', which make possible an effective and 'authentic' state in the practitioner. Significantly, however, rather than resulting in alienation from the self – the negative side of emotional labour which Hochschild (1983) has been criticised for over-emphasising (Bolton and Boyd 2003, amongst others)[227] – the touching work these practitioners engage in can be seen as resulting in quite the opposite. In cultivating awareness of their own bodies and of those around them, an embodied presence which heightens their physical and emotional experience of being-in-the-world, practitioners may in fact become more 'in tune' with their selves in a way that is the polar opposite to Hochschild's alienated workers (as well as to Leder's (1990) notion of the 'absent body').[228] The feeling rule of 'grounded authenticity' put forward earlier may offer a particular advantage, at least in this form of touching work.

[226] See Star and Bowker (2007) for a detailed discussion of the silencing of 'residual categories' (a concept which came originally from Parsons (1949)). The 'something more' fits with a number of the reasons the authors suggest for residual categorisation, including its being 'unknowable', 'unspeakable' and perhaps just 'too complicated' (Star and Bowker 2007:274).

[227] In the sense that the feeling involved 'comes to belong more to the organization and less to the self' (Hochschild 1983: 198). Conversely, Bolton and Boyd (2003) and Wharton and Erickson (1995) have argued that the products of emotional labour can in fact be positive and empowering, and should not be assumed to be uniformly negative.

[228] This can also be interpreted as an example of the 'awareness of one's own body' which Foucault suggests 'can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power in the body' (Foucault 1980:56), that is, via a particular form of bodily training. Unfortunately, as Crossley (1996b) notes, Foucault does not expand on this fleeting reference in any explicit way.

Similarly, a comparison raised by Oerton and Phoenix (2001) concerns the embodied 'doing' of sex work and massage work, with the former involving a 'switching off' which separates body from mind and also 'prostitute-selves' from 'real/authentic selves' (Oerton and Phoenix 2001:399). This 'switching off' seems in direct opposition to the embodied competencies presented by my participants. In Holistic Massage, practitioners manage their emotions in order to produce an authentic, effective and 'integrated' experience for the client. In other words they must be very much 'switched on', 'tuned in', present – fully and awarely embodied – in order to accomplish a successful Holistic Massage. Anything less than this is what my participants regarded as the arena of the relatively ineffectual Spa/Beauty therapist. These practitioners were very much aware of doing this and, even though it may become a reflex for the more experienced, they still have to work to achieve the appropriate physical and emotional state to give a Holistic Massage. Moreover, they expressly champion this as an important and indeed almost definitional facet of their work.

The flip-side of this must also be considered, which is that the reality of touching work may not all be as positive as this perspective suggests. The rhetoric of 'authentic' feeling may create additional pressure on Holistic Massage workers to be constantly and consistently self-aware. It is easy to imagine that, while this offers the possibility for positive self-fulfilment, it could equally result in emotional burn-out.[229] That their own physical and emotional state has an impact on their practice also has implications for the way Holistic Massage work in 'professional' terms, and it may be taken to imply that they cannot offer a guaranteed standard of treatment, in the sense that they may be better or worse at doing what they do on different days. However, the more experienced practitioners would argue that, while the practitioner's state is significant, there are ways of dealing with this. In particular this requires the practitioner to set aside 'their shit' (to

[229] There is reason to believe that 'burn out' is potentially the most significant factor in practitioners giving up massage, and advice on how to deal with this has a notable presence in practitioner oriented literature. One practitioner advice website suggest that practitioners 'can suffer from compassion fatigue and secondary PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) that results of absorbing other people's pain' (see http://www.thehealers.org/articles/_0206burnout.html, last accessed 30/06/2011); while another forum suggests (appropriately) that preventing burnout requires more than taking physical care of oneself, and also necessitates a high degree of self-awareness (see http:// www.thebodyworker.com/psych_burnout.htm, last accessed 30/06/2011).

use Kath's idiom) in order to prioritise the client and fulfil their role as a responsible and effective practitioner.

Tentative conclusions and typification revisited

On the whole, the competencies addressed here point to the fact that body/touching work is work done 'on both an object and a subject', and which thus requires both knowledge and acknowledgment 'of the materiality of the body and an awareness of the personhood that is present in that body' (Twigg et al 2011:172). From a phenomenological perspective, what this account of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge can be seen to add up to is a challenge to the 'dys-appearance' of the 'normally' functioning body (Leder 1990) in Holistic Massage and elsewhere in CAM practices. The necessity of bodily absence for day-to-day living which 'absent body' argument posits is based on the assumption that '[a]wareness of the body is linked to dysfunction' and that [e]mbodied self-awareness involves dys-appearance' (Crossley 2007:84). But this is not necessarily always so, since the body in fact 'rises to the foreground of conscious experience in everyday social life for a variety of reasons' (Crossley 2007:84). What is cultivated through the doing of Holistic Massage, for both practitioner and eventually client, is a heightened awareness of their bodily state: in all senses ranging from muscle tension to embodied emotions. The fact that CAM 'enhances bodily awareness' is put forward by users as a benefit of the treatments and a reason to continue with it (Baarts and Pedersen 2009). Hence, the cultivation of 'awareness' means that, while the client's body may no longer be 'dysfunctional', it does not in Leder's (1990) sense 'dys-appear'. Rather, through having and doing awareness, '[t]he client's mode of bodily understanding is transformed from the tacit to the explicit. The body is indeed 'present' (Baarts and Pedersen 2009:724). The 'presence' which my participants refer to can thus be read as decidedly phenomenological notion, but one which is contrary to the concept of bodily absence as an everyday norm. From this perspective, and in light of the embodied competencies discussed above, Holistic Massage and other CAM practices can be understood as providing the narrative resources or stock of knowledge via which clients, but perhaps even more so practitioners, can understand and shape their embodied experience in an active and empowered way. It also echoes Wolkowitz's (2009) take on the leakiness of boundaries around work and the unsustainability of binary conceptualisations of work/life (see also Stacey 1981). The impact of this stock of

knowledge is not confined to a particular sphere of the practitioners' lives, but influences their embodied ways of being overall.

To return to a point made toward the end of Chapter Three, something that the narrative inquiry approach I have used highlights is that, in asking participants to give an account of what they do, I have solicited what Riessman (1990) would call a 'habitual narrative': in effect I have asked them to typify this situation. This creates something of a clash between what I ask and what they do, in that while they may be able to typify their practice to some extent, they are nonetheless keen to stress that every client is approached as an individual, and that the treatment is always 'something more'. And significantly, this something more may itself be in a sense 'residual category' brought about by the twin issues of the kind of language used in articulating the sensory and restrictive 'western' understandings of embodiment. What the analysis of talk presented here draws out is, on the one hand, readily communicable ideas about touch (and touching work) and, on the other, more complex expressions of things which are supposedly untalkable, or at least difficult to adequately convey in language. Moreover, I suggest that this analysis highlights that the 'something more' is key to both Holistic Massage and to how the ineffable can be spoken about.

Another analytic lens which has been diffuse throughout this chapter is that of touching work. It has become apparent in this analysis that the trope of untalkability or ineffability may in fact be a key feature of how Holistic Massage, and other work which centres on touching, is constituted. Whether this is mobilised as a claim to or in defence of practitioner knowledge, the ways in which this rhetoric is presented by these practitioners may well be transferable to other work which focuses on bodies and touching. In particular this would have relevance to the distancing from bodies which Twigg (2000b) suggests is characteristic of body work – in the sense that practitioners are able to create distance from bodies by refusing to talk about how they touch them – and thus contributes to the effacing of potential stigma in this work (Wolkowitz 2006). Further discussion of these issues and of the lens of touching work follows in Chapters Five and Six.

Despite its supposed untalkability, this chapter has demonstrated that it is possible to begin to establish a practical and embodied Holistic Massage stock of knowledge by

examining the typifications of which it is comprised and which practitioners speak about and articulate in a ready way, albeit with some hesitations and ambiguities. What remains unclear is the extent to which these typifications are available to non-practitioners, in particular to clients. That is to say, despite the clear ways in which this stock of knowledge emerged is shared by these practitioners, what Holistic Massage 'is' continues to be only loosely and fluidly defined in the wider world. Where typifications of massage more generally do exist, they may not fully correlate to the perspectives of those who do it. Moreover, a conflict is emerging between what practitioners say of the typification of their work – 'our work is not routinised and is different every time' – with the fact that Holistic Massage can be talked about and taught, and therefore must be typifiable to some degree. It is these concerns, and to the bounding of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge which the next chapter turns.

Chapter Five
Bounding Holistic Massage

Introduction

Having discussed the simultaneous ubiquity and elusiveness of the 'something more' in practitioners' accounts in the previous chapter, I now focus, not on bodies per se, but on the 'unboundedness' (see below) of Holistic Massage and its associated stock of knowledge, through close attention to both the 'how' and the 'what' of the interviews. The unboundedness of Holistic Massage practice came through in the interviews as a feature which had just as much weight as the practitioners' understandings of bodies, and it ties in to the overall concern of this thesis with touching work.[230] It is also significant to wider perceptions of Holistic Massage and to its professionalisation project, as is discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

Alongside the concept of unboundedness, I also draw on the concept of 'boundary work', primarily as conceptualised by Gieryn (1983, 1999).[231] Gieryn recognised the boundary work done by the scientists he studied as being crucial to establishing and maintaining their epistemological authority, and subsequently as underpinning responses to various challenges to their reputations and professional status presented by non-scientific (often framed as religious) ways of knowing. As well as having topical resonance, Gieryn's approach fits well with a phenomenological sociology-narrative inquiry methodology, since it looks at the discursive construction/production and mobilisation of a particular stock of knowledge or ideology. From this perspective this chapter continues with the phenomenological-sociological concerns of the thesis, and with the idea of competing knowledge forms which are of key significance to Holistic Massage and many other CAMs.

As suggested in earlier chapters, routinisation as a social-scientific concept is simply and without judgement the way of the social world (Schutz [1932]1967). Every individual relies to a greater of lesser extent on routine to accomplish day-to-day living: it is a 'pragmatic necessity' (Crossley 1996a:87) for social life. However, the practitioners I

[230] As in the preceding chapters, this chapter continues to apply a narrative inquiry lens in order to draw out key features of the stock of knowledge in a way that would be recognisable to my participants.

[231] Need note on the extent of lit on boundary work, goes far beyond Gieryn, but his of particular relevant here.

interviewed appealed against the idea that their work is routinised, in the way that they see other types of massage or body/touching work, which they understand as being lower down the hierarchy of skill and effect. For them, routine as an everyday concept equates to 'mindlessness' and is anathema to how they perceive the embodied competencies presented in Chapter Four. I have suggested that their work is nonetheless typifiable, and one way in which they might be interpreted as having a rather different typification of it is through an appeal to the elusive 'something more'. This point is returned to later in the chapter, following an exploration firstly of what is meant by the term 'un/bounded' in relation to Holistic Massage and, secondly, of how the term 'holistic' is applied by practitioners in labelling their work.

The unbounded in Holistic Massage

The term 'unbounded' as used here is developed from Lawton's (1998) study of hospice care and the 'sequestration' therein of people whose bodies are dys-integrating. Lawton identifies a key role of the hospice as being the restoration of bodily integrity to dying patients wherever possible, so that some aspects of selfhood can be maintained. This has some resonance with those Holistic Massage practitioners who spoke in their interviews of 'integrating' their clients, and also of 'disciplining', in the sense of organising, those who had not conformed to expected standards of personal hygiene, although the latter was a more practical concern for them.

The notion of unboundedness relates to Holistic Massage in three interconnected ways: namely the 'physical', the 'energetic' unboundedness of the bodies involved, and also the unboundedness of the practice itself. Firstly, Holistic Massage can be understood in Lawton's sense as work which deals with unbounded bodies, bodies that are always in some way 'leaky' (Shildrick 1997). This first form of unboundedness is primarily physical, relating to the ways in which an individual's embodiment might extend beyond commonly accepted boundaries of a self-contained unit, via fluids or smells, for example. One of my interviewees addressed this issue explicitly and couched it in terms of the disciplinary role of the practitioner:

> if somebody's very. em DIRTY physically DIRTY.. […] I would suggest that they were a bit cleaner next time.. just for THEM to benefit and if somebody's very SMELLY I would also address that too its one of the biggest DILEMMAS of massage therapists actually […] because it's em it's a really

> hard.. its really HARD its very DIFFICULT to say you've got very strong body odour and […] actually if they've got very strong BODY odour its your responsibility to tell them that however hard it IS because you might be the ONLY PERSON.. that's in a situation where it's actually OK to tell them (Fi, lines 576-88)

For Fi, the concern with leaky bodies is in part practical: dirt and nasty odours are unpleasant for the practitioner. It is also in part disciplinary in the Foucauldian sense: she is in a position to be able to advise the person on how they should present themselves in a massage interaction and more generally.[232] However, it has been suggested that, in comparison with some other forms of body/touching work, massage deals for the most part with 'clean and continent' bodies (Wolkowitz 2006). Since Fi was the only interviewee to raise the issue of dirty or smelly bodies, this generally seems to hold true of the expectations of my interviewees: hence the physical leakiness of bodies may not be at the forefront of practitioners' concerns. Given that they touch only the boundary of the skin and not its openings, the bodies practitioners deal with can in this sense be understood as bounded.

Having said this, a second way in which bodies are unbounded in Holistic Massage, which had a stronger thematic presence in the interviews, was in the sense that people are understood to be more than the relatively narrow ('western') conception of a physical being. Rather they are also energetic and spiritual beings whose emotional/spiritual/energetic[233] state can 'spill over' into the practitioner. The energetic leakiness and 'merging' which can take place between practitioner and client is addressed by Oerton (2004a, 2004b), who frames it as 'energetic dissolution' (2004a:555) and as a significant hazard in the practice of massage:

> 'In particular, [practitioners] are constantly at risk of what has become popularly known in therapeutic bodywork discourse as 'merger' […] For, whilst massage practitioners clearly value the mutual connectedness that can be engendered through hands-on touch, excessive merger is seen as dangerous, because it involves practitioner and client becoming too much in touch […] Hence merger has come to be understood as over-rapport, over-sensitivity and being too much 'in tune' with clients.' (Oerton 2004a: 555)

[232] In this latter sense, Fi also demonstrates her 'responsibility' as a practitioner. She aligns advice on personal hygiene with pointing out a mole that has changed shape or a lump that has appeared on the client's body.

[233] It seemed to be a matter of preference which of these terms was used by interviewees, and thus they are used here interchangeably.

As with the previous example, it was primarily Fi who addressed the need to avoid 'merger', saying that:

> when I'm working with somebody. w w w I suppose you can.. em MERGE to some degree but I think you need to maintain a bit of. ability to separate cos otherwise its like jumping into a river with someone to try and save them really (Fi lines 220-3)

While Fi seemed hesitant about using the term 'merge' here, she returned to the river analogy in line 350, using it to account for the need to maintain awareness of one's own body whilst working (as discussed in Chapter Four).

The conflict between understanding bodies as physically and energetically leaky and 'contemporary individualistic constructions of the person as a stable, bounded and autonomous entity' (Lawton 1998:134) is a significant sticking point for the mainstreaming of Holistic Massage. Just as physical leakiness is anathema to contemporary conceptions of personhood,[234] so is the 'unstable', 'unbounded', 'more than' physical understanding of bodies favoured by Holistic Massage practitioners. However, energetic unboundedness did not emerge as a particularly strong or recurrent theme in Fi's, or in the other interviews at all. Hence, rather than viewing it as a thematic thread on its own, it is I think best understood as a feature of the 'something more' of Holistic Massage. There is 'something more' to massage because there is 'something more' to people.

Rather than the physical or energetic unboundedness of bodies/people, what is therefore the focus of this chapter is the extent to which Holistic Massage is unbounded as a practice, and the ways in which practitioners work to set out boundaries around it when talking about their work. These two issues – unboundedness and boundaries/boundary work – are not entirely congruent: where unboundedness indicates a quality of the stock of knowledge, doing boundary work can be understood as a way of shaping and constituting the stock of knowledge. I return to this point in the conclusion to this chapter. What I will elucidate here is that what constitutes a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge is not tightly bounded and recognisable as such at a shared, societal level in

[234] The gendered character of this conceptualisation of embodiment is addressed in Chapter Six.

the way of some other occupations.[235] While typifications of massage practitioners do exist, they may not take a form that many of those who do this work would readily recognise and identify with.[236] This situation means that practitioners have to more or less constantly enact the boundaries around their practice and to negotiate, amongst other things, claims to professional knowledge, potentially 'spoiled' identities, and associations with discredited ways of knowing. This state of affairs became evident in the analysis of the interviews I conducted,[237] and which is presented below.

Labelling an elusive practice

What 'holism' signifies in Holistic Massage was outlined in Chapter Four as in one sense referring to the treatment of whole bodies or selves, and as varying according to the needs of individual clients. Hence, holism in this applied context is a multifaceted concept. In contrast to this complexity, one relatively clear way that the participants' understandings of 'holistic' came through was in talking about what they call their practice when describing it to others and also presenting it in marketing materials and listings.

As noted in Chapter Three, Claire suggested that the main difference in what various types of massage are called is a matter of 'perception', rather than anything more tangible. To recap, she explained that some colleagues prefer the label 'Holistic' and others 'Swedish' or 'Therapeutic', and went on to say:

> it's actually more kind of difference of PERCEPTION rather than y'know I think the technique is is much the same really with SWEDISH massage em yeah I think eh I think there's lot of similarities with SWEDISH massage as well and in fact that term was sometimes used on our course as well or

[235] To ask a member of the lay public to provide a rough account of what a Holistic Massage practitioner does or is might be more challenging than asking them for the equivalent account of a GP or hairdresser, for example.

[236] Three representations of massage practitioners in recent popular culture spring to mind here. One is 'Phoebe' in the American comedy series Friends: a 'ditsy' character who on one occasion has sex with a client and on another admits to having looked under the towels which supposedly protect a client's modesty. In another US series, Sex and the City, a male spa-massage practitioner becomes known for providing oral sex to his female clients. While this example is interesting in that it reverses the typical gender stereotype of this interaction, it nonetheless sexualises massage and massage workers. A more representative portrayal appeared recently in legal drama The Good Wife, in which a hotel masseuse came forward to report a sexual assault by a high-status client, only to drop the case when the impending investigation questions her 'believability'. While fictional, this last example at least highlights the precarious status of massage workers. Each exemplifies the potential for stigmatisation in massage work.

[237] This illustrates yet another advantage of the loosely structured approach taken to the interviews, in that a more rigid method would not have allowed this to become apparent.

> certainly TECHNIQUES from Swedish massage incorporated into Holistic Massage em….. yeah (Claire, lines 70-5)

While this similarity and interchangeability may be the case, it still begs the question of why practitioners then choose one label over another. Lisa had experienced some conflict around what to call the work she does, having been advised by a senior colleague that the term 'holistic' is currently overused and – similarly, she suggests, to the label 'organic' – has therefore lost much of its descriptive impact or meaning in its ubiquity. Lisa is here caught in a conundrum because she would rather describe her knowledge using the terms in which she learned it, but is encouraged to work under another label (although not to change her practice in any way):

> using that kinda TERMINOLOGY it's not describing what you're DOING em so [a colleague] suggest using Therapeutic [as a label] and I thought ah FINE because the HOLISTIC massage is a mixture of Swedish and Therapeutic TECHNIQUES so em.. that's fine but I suppose I would if anybody asks I would PREFER to call myself Holistic just because that's y'know I TRAINED in it and I really enjoyed the course and I'm really PROUD of it if y'know what I mean [laughs] (Lisa, lines 92-9)

However, as with Claire, she plainly stated that since 'HOLISTIC massage is a mixture of Swedish and therapeutic TECHNIQUES', it is not problematic to change the label. This suggests that it is not the label which designates what they do, and that Holistic Massage practitioners may be working under a range of titles. Moreover, this is suggestive of a flexibility of boundaries around the practice, both practical and discursive. Because what Holistic Massage <u>is</u> is not fixed and schematised, practitioners are consequently free to work under different titles without the concern that, for example, they are misleading clients. Instead, what the 'holistic' of Holistic Massage is seems to be more down to individual interpretations and understandings. When asked to elaborate, Lisa went on to talk about this issue of interpretation:

> Carrie: so do you think it makes much difference what it's actually CALLED or is it more about
> Lisa: em it's difficult because everybody's interpretation of what a type of massage is different from the next PERSON'S and even with practitioners em SO I think [the label] Therapeutic's kinda working just now cos I think when people come they usually have an area that they want WORKED on em and I think just the term Therapeutic means that they'll get something in particular em to FOCUS but em with the Swedish massage some people think that's the vigorous really intense deep muscle and it's NOT em so it's just I'm quite happy to keep it as THERAPEUTIC (Lisa, lines 100-9)

From this, it seems that Lisa is happy to call her work 'therapeutic' since she has clients who can identify with this, meaning that from a marketing perspective this may be the more effective choice for her.[238] Carol, on the other hand, saw 'holistic' as in some ways being a useful label because of its ambiguity:

> I use it to SOME extent in DESCRIBING to people [what she does] because many people seem to be at ease.. with what THAT ['holistic'] suggests to them. ah.. that it's got an aspect of mmm of a uh gentler APPROACH perhaps than Sports Massage seems very applied. physical. direct. um holistic as a word seems to offer that sort of SPACE for them to be a many-faceted person.. so body mind spiritual BEING (Carol, lines 270-6)

What these different perspectives amount to when read in light of the embodied competencies outlined earlier is that the most significant aspects of Holistic Massage vary from practitioner to practitioner, and that the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge is far from being fixed in stone, as I go on to elaborate below.

Bounding Holistic Massage

The competencies outlined in the previous chapter go some way to fleshing out what Holistic Massage is. But there is a fluidity to these competencies which reflects the fact that Holistic Massage is not tightly bounded. It should be acknowledged that there are ongoing moves by professional organisations to develop 'official' definitions of what Holistic Massage is, such as in the MTI definition quoted in Chapter Four. Nonetheless, it is clear from my analysis that what Holistic Massage practitioners can be expected to know and do, and what its everyday practice consists of, remains largely unaffected and (relatively) unbounded.[239] Hence, the ways in which my interviewees delineated the boundary around their work is worth analytical consideration.

The performance of boundary work has been examined in a number of settings (see Chapter One), but the idea in its original application is pertinent here since it relates specifically to the 'demarcation of science' from non-science:

[238] Given the preference expressed in the preceding excerpt, it is unsurprising to note that when working from home Lisa advertises as 'Holistic'.

[239] In specific terms, I derive this claim of 'unboundedness' from what interviewees said spontaneously about defining their work, including the 'something more' discussed in Chapter Four. It is also based on responses to probing questions on the same, as illustrated in the following section.

> '"Boundary work" describes an ideological style found in scientists' attempts to create a public image for science by contrasting it favourably to non-scientific intellectual or technical activities.' (Gieryn 1983:781)

In phenomenological terms, then, boundary work equates to a way of shaping or constituting the stock of knowledge. The 'non-science' activities Gieryn refers to are chiefly religious practices and concerning those healthcare-related practices such as phrenology which were marginalised or excluded by mainstream medicine.[240] This relates closely to the professionalisation process, since this usually has the aim of 'expansion of authority or expertise into domains claimed by other professions or occupations';[241] 'monopolization of professional authority and resources'; or 'protection of autonomy over professional activities' (Gieryn 1983:791-2, original emphases).[242] Aspects of each of these three are present in what was said by my interviewees, who demarcated what they do from other practices in their talk in quite striking ways. Occupational boundaries were enacted via a number of strategies and the competencies and knowledge forms discussed in the previous chapter are integral to these, since they comprise the ways in which Holistic Massage differs from other kinds of massage and other touching work practices.

A number of component parts of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge have been drawn out and explored in Chapter Four, and what has been discussed here is the bounding of Holistic Massage work in a more explicit sense, where the interviewees actively made more direct comparisons and drew lines between what they do and other practices. These were related not only to abstract aspects of the stock of knowledge (that is to say, that which is removed from the immediate context of practice), but to differences in actual 'hands-on' practice. There were three main areas of comparison, between: Holistic and other kinds of Massage; Holistic Massage and other types of touching work (including mainstream medicine); and Holistic Massage and sex or sex work. In each of these areas participants can be seen to use techniques of boundary work in relation to a range of factors including time, cost, levels of attention (the awareness

[240] Phrenology is a pertinent example in the present context. Its position somewhere between scientific/medical and religious ideas means it is not leagues away from those holistic CAM practices which incorporate healthcare with spiritual beliefs.
[241] In which case 'boundary work heightens the contrast between rivals in a way flattering to the ideologists' side' (Gieryn 1983:791-2).
[242] In which case 'boundary work exempts members from responsibility for consequences of their work by putting blame on scapegoats from outside' (Gieryn 1983:792).

and presence of the practitioner), and how the massage should feel. These techniques are now considered in light of the Schutzian questions of why people might use them when and in the way that they do, and if/how they explain this.

Demarcating the massage field

The embodied competencies of 'touching', 'tailoring', 'awareness', 'presence' and the 'something more' can be taken together as constituting significant components of what Holistic Massage is in practice and for practitioners. However, what was also frequently talked about – and at times seemed easier for participants to pin down – was what Holistic Massage is not, in a way which parallels Gieryn's (1983) discussion of the literary 'foil'. The skills discussed in the previous chapter were frequently linked to concrete, although often also somewhat fuzzy or tentative, examples of other massage practices: in particular Sports Massage and Spa/Beauty Massage. In some respects this was a response to my line of questioning, in that I asked them to talk about how Holistic Massage differs from other kinds of massage. However, the hierarchy which became evident from what was said on this theme was surprisingly distinct and also common across the interviews.

A hierarchy of types of massage was portrayed as problematic in that it is only properly understood by insiders:

> there's a very CLEAR understanding that within the MASSAGE world that there is lots of different GRADES and that there is a big difference between beauty therapy and say sports therapy and you end up getting a different kind of DEGREE and stuff like THAT (Fi, lines 727-9)

While this understanding was portrayed as clear to those in the know, it was not thought to be commonly held amongst conventional medics in particular or the lay population in general. Eve directly links this to steps which are being taken by some professional groups in order to more clearly demarcate the massage field:

> what we're trying to get is massage separated into the RELAXATION which is fine but CALL it that don't call it holistic don't call it sort of therapeutic don't call it remedial so you get the relaxation you get the the more REMEDIAL stuff you get the SPORTS massage y'know (Eve 487-90)[243]

[243] A longer version of this quote from Eve is given in Chapter Three, where it is discussed in terms of the 'we' she uses to imply consensus beyond her own opinion. This gives this statement more authority than it might have if she had used a singular 'I'.

While ‘relaxation’ is a key trope in presenting and promoting massage – both amongst the general population and in mainstream healthcare[244] – Eve clearly sees mere ‘relaxation’ as subordinate to the outcomes she can produce through her holistic and therapeutic practice. On the whole, what she implies corresponds with Fi’s earlier comment, that there are distinct grades or modes of massage practice, but she also proposes that these need to be more concretely and officially bounded.

Rachel offered the most overt and unequivocal characterisation of a pecking order in massage practice:

> Rachel: if you’re insured for holistic massage you can be a therapeutic massage therapist a Swedish massage therapist that’s the kind of TERMINOLOGY and then the next level up form that would be remedial and SPORTS and the next level up from that would be advanced remedial and I don’t know what comes after that perhaps some kind of super-hero or something [laughs] I don’t know but em in the TIERS of massage therapy that’s how it works so someone who’s done a holistic or therapeutic massage would NOT be using muscle energy techniques MET they wouldn’t be using neuro-muscular techniques either em.. they probably WOULD stick to a routine rather that being which I don’t know how holistic that is but anyway so yeah don’t know how holistic that is but anyway so yeah
> Carrie: mhm so you see holistic or therapeutic as kind of the the kind of BASIC then or
> Rachel: no massage by a BEAUTY therapist is the basic (Rachel, lines 622-33)

The tiers of practices which Rachel presented resonate with what the other participants said, in that she sees Holistic, Therapeutic and Swedish massage as more or less equivalent, and Spa/Beauty massage as requiring less individual technical know-how. But Rachel’s perspective differs slightly when she says those who do Holistic Massage are likely to ‘stick to a routine’, which is the antithesis of the emphasis placed on ‘tailoring’ by the other interviewees. This is indicative of Rachel’s slightly different orientation to massage: while she did call her practice ‘Holistic Massage’ at that time, she was also working toward a Sports Massage qualification so that she might be able to use that label instead. In line with this, Rachel also diverges from the others by placing Sports and Remedial as ‘the next level up’ from Holistic Massage, since the majority of

[244] Indeed, limiting the benefits of massage to ‘relaxation’ alone could be viewed as a key discursive tool via which conventional medicine perpetuates the former as an unthreatening or marginal practice (cf. Cant and Calnan 1991).

participants described Holistic and Sports as equally complex and effective, via different means, as Ally conveys here:

> Ally: I've got a guy who says oh I want to be beaten UP y'know
> Jen: I wanna be PUMMELLED
> Ally: I'll say OK we can do that but can I try doing it slightly differently to see if we can get the same EFFECT cos I think SOMETIMES the pummelling is about not really FEELING it y'know its more challenging to do to work at the same DEPTH but more slowly (Ally and Jen, lines 605-11)

Ally suggested that the way she works can in fact be more 'challenging' than a Sports Massage, in both a physical and an emotional way, thus positioning her Holistic Massage stock of knowledge as equal to a more scientistic one. Rachel, on the other hand, placed greater value on the use of 'muscular energy' and 'neuro-muscular' techniques. However, what Rachel said on this point was framed in terms of insurance, and it is the case that practitioners require a qualification further to a Swedish/Therapeutic/Holistic diploma in order to be insured to practice specifically Sports or Remedial Massage techniques. This point is interesting in itself: as Ally demonstrated, advocates of Holistic Massage understand it as capable of equivalent impact via the different means employed, but it is not measured in this way in terms of risk-assessment. One way of seeing this is as a significant marker of difference between Sports and Holistic Massage. The focus of the former can be understood as more obvious physical change which is in some ways quantifiable; whereas the orientation of the latter is toward less observable mental/emotional change, which is harder to measure by conventional methods. This is of course a generalisation, as neither practice is 'purely' physical or mental/emotional. But it does go some way to account for differences in insurance practices and in perceptions in general.

It follows that, given the lack of a definitive, official distinction extending beyond the milieu of the practitioners themselves, interviewees persistently felt the need to emphasise boundaries between their own work and that of other types of massage practitioner, in particular those who do Sports or Spa/Beauty Massage. These two practices were repeatedly and in different ways positioned as polar opposites to Holistic Massage. The clearest instance of a line being drawn between Sports and Holistic Massage came from Carol, who did so in direct response to the question of what 'holistic' means for her:

> I think Holistic Massage is a wonderfully woolly baggy all-encompassing term. em.. meaning. treating the WHOLE SELF and in a way it's ah as straightforward as THAT.. […] it's got an aspect of mmm of a uh gentler APPROACH perhaps than Sports Massage […] um holistic as a word seems to offer that sort of SPACE for them to be a many-faceted person.. so body mind spiritual BEING (Carol, lines 270-6)

Although Carol is somewhat hesitant about how to express what it is about 'holistic' that makes these people at ease with it – as the non-lexical utterances suggest – she nonetheless speaks with conviction that it is the case that people <u>are</u> comfortable with this idea, however vague and 'woolly' it might be. Moreover, she states that Holistic Massage may be a 'gentler approach' than Sports Massage (line 273), and thus spontaneously uses Sports as a foil for Holistic Massage, in order to emphasise what in her opinion the latter is not. While she does not seem to intend flattering or denigrating Sports Massage, and while this is a generalised distinction, it is a distinction nonetheless.

The way in which Kath perceived this difference was in specific relation to talking, and the amount of talk she would expect a Holistic Massage to involve, as compared with a Sports Massage:

> I suppose with holistic massage I mean I SUPPOSE if you're coming to me if you read my advertising as a massage therapist and you were COMING to me [I] talk about things like silence.. so it is. that. you would already know it's not just you're not just going in for a sports massage you're not going to be pummelled around while somebody talks to you about that great game of SQUASH you had and I don't talk very much I BARELY talk at all when I'm massaging I really want the experience to be for the PERSON and then I can be present.. (Kath, lines 177-83)

So the difference which Kath presented ties in to the 'presence' competency and to the 'something more', the notion that Holistic Massage is more than 'just' a physical 'pummelling'. In Kath's way of working, talking more than she judges necessary only serves as a distraction from the work in hand.

Shifting the focus away from the practitioner, Sarah talked about the Sports/Holistic distinction in relation to types of client. She indicated two types: one group who tend to specify a particular part of the body to be worked on, but who 'open up' to more than that once on the table; and another who do not open in this way and who she therefore

finds it more difficult to work with. She attributed this difficulty to their wanting a 'technical' rather than Holistic Massage:

> I get people who em they can be quite like em. hi there yeah I'd like to just have a technical massage em y'know I'm looking for sports massage type thing and they know exactly what part of the body they want work and they're very em y'know exact […] so that's been a really interesting learning curve is finding those people who seem to want a really technical massage but actually. it's almost like I'm just talking to their bodies and they're actually very in touch with their bodies. em. somehow when their minds not engaged or something I don't know what it is eeh but there are also those people who I see who em who DO want a technical massage and and they're quite still when they're being massaged and I think THOSE those are the clients that I probably find most difficult because em something there's almost like they find something quite hard to let go of and. its hard its hard for me to work because. em they're quite tight like they're holding something in' (Sarah, lines 578-92)

Compared to Kath, what Sarah said here seems to be neither expressly disparaging nor flattering to 'technical' massage. Rather, it relates to her own capabilities as she perceives them: what Sarah does is not-Sports, not-technical, and so she draws the boundary there. This ties into a particular type of reflexive 'awareness' done by these practitioners, in the sense of the competency discussed in Chapter Four, but also in that some (although not all) of them incorporate a humility into their way of thinking or talking about their work. Furthermore, while they have often extensive knowledge about bodies and people, these practitioners often expressed acute awareness that the forms of knowledge they draw on and the way in which they use them do not have the same status as those of mainstream healthcare. Hence it may in some cases be more difficult for them to assert a level of confidence about what they do.[245]

Like Sarah, Ally also addressed the bounding of Holistic Massage from the clients' perspective, but in relation to their expectations of what different types of massage should be like:

> Ally: I had one woman who came to me for one of these kinda one-off gift voucher things and I said what kind of massage would you LIKE relaxing I go to a sports massage therapist she said he's VERY very good she [laughs]

[245] Their awareness of the potentially stigmatised or discredited status of these knowledge forms was suggested by the ways in which they talked about them (see Chapter Three). However, their drawing on marginalised knowledge does not have to be interpreted as a limitation to what they do (see Chapter Six).

> Jen: well what are you doing here
> Ally: and ah she said AH she said but I'm going on holiday tomorrow so I DON'T want you to do any of the SPORTS stuff she said because I'm always VERY sore for several days afterwards I said OK so what happens AFTER the several days well then its back to where it WAS so she's been going to this guy for YEARS getting really SORE for a few days [laughs] and not resolving the problem but he was BRILLIANT apparently I thought that was ODD y'know […] but that's the expectation that if you want your muscles done it has to be really sore and painful (Ally and Jen, lines 618-30)

The example Ally recounts here with gentle derision typifies the expectation – held, to her mind and others, by lay clients and some Sports Massage practitioners – that Sports Massage or massage in general must be painful to be effective. While she leaves implicit the contrary point that this is not the case with Holistic Massage, she does express disdain for this way of working. Also worth noting is Jen's interjection, through which she suggests her surprise at someone who usually has Sports Massage coming to Ally in the first place, since this is so incongruent with the way Ally works. As with the previous examples, this brief exchange is once again useful in highlighting the distinctions – both implicit and explicit – which practitioners make between different types of massage.

Where the previous two excerpts saw a line drawn between Sports and Holistic Massage in terms of the people who seek it, a key distinction between Holistic and Spa/Beauty Massage[246] is very much focused on what the practitioner does. Jen cements this boundary by saying of Spa/Beauty practitioners that 'they do NAILS they do other stuff it's it's a different DISCIPLINE I think' (Ally and Jen, line 369). This comment resounds with the earlier distinctions made by Eve and Fi, this time citing the diversity of 'treatments' that Spa/Beauty massage workers might offer – particularly treatments that are cosmetic rather than health-oriented – as a marker of difference. Jen went on to say:

> I don't know how SPAS work but I always feel that you're kind of wheeched in and HERE we go this is the treatment you're getting and it's usually got a NAME and its got a DESCRIPTION whereas how we work with clients DOESN'T its we work with clients as individuals so its you cant really it's not got a LABEL on it the same (Ally and Jen, lines 31-5)

[246] In reality, massage treatments in health spas and beauty salons would not be labelled 'Spa/Beauty Massage', but are more likely to have descriptive titles such as 'Chill Out' or 'Wake Up' Massage (Clarins Spas - see http://fr.clarins.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/skin-spas-products_10201_11751_-11_signature-treatments_2_6 , last accessed 14/6/11). However, I use the term 'Spa/Beauty Massage' for the sake of brevity and in accordance with the language used by my participants.

Jen immediately distances herself from Spa/Beauty work here with her admission that she doesn't 'know how they work', which also highlights that notions of what Spa/Beauty Massage is may be based on untested assumptions and perceptions rather than actuality, as much as are the assumptions of others about Holistic Massage. Nonetheless, Jen is keen to convey a general sense that this is definitely not what she does, especially with regards to the time and attention given to the client. The fact that treatments seem to be boxed and labelled also sets Spa/Beauty Massage apart from what might be seen as the more nuanced, complex and unbounded characterisation of Holistic Massage.

Where they were more directly critical of Spa/Beauty Massage, the participants (other than Jen) couched their criticisms in terms of personal familiarity. This works to legitimise the criticism as they ground it in their own embodied and fundamentally unsatisfactory experiences. For example:

> I just I hate these massages that you go and they do the same thing to every PERSON I just get really frustrated with it now I think because I've been trained in something different [laughs] and I hate it when anybody gives me a massage you like go away tae a SPA day and I just feel that they're not THERE they're not having any awareness of what's going on in my body there kinda aye looking elseWHERE and I get really frustrated at that y'know I just it ANNOYS me so I end up becoming agitated [laughs] (Lisa, lines 429-35)

So, for Lisa, the key distinctions are: that Spa/Beauty practitioners treat everyone the same, rather than tailoring the treatment to the individual; that the work is routinised; and that workers do not seem to focus on the client or engage with them to the same extent as practitioners of Holistic Massage. And as with Kath's characterisation of Sports Massage, Lisa too underlines the absence of the qualities of 'awareness' and 'presence' in Spa/Beauty Massage. As explored in Chapter Three, Rachel emphatically accounted for her dislike of Spa/Beauty Massage in similar terms, and it is worth examining another excerpt from this, one of her longest turns at speaking:

> if you go for a beauty-trained MASSAGE therapy I had one I got given one before I got married which was very nice but em she actually massaged me for half an hour and it was an hour's appointment and I just felt like I was having oil rubbed into my SKIN […] she had a ROUTINE she did three strokes of this four strokes of THAT and because I'm a massage therapist I know she wasn't THINKING about what she was doing she was slurping oil on everywhere it was AWFUL I hated it it makes me feel ILL THINKING about it and its maybe because maybe I'm a perfectionist I don't know but I I

> couldn't I couldn't be live with myself and sell SELL that to somebody as a as a massage (Rachel, lines 640-59)

Rachel's main criticism – that the practitioner was not 'thinking' about what she was doing – is consistent with the previous comment from Lisa. Both emphasise the need for a particular focus on the client and have experienced this as wanting in Spa/Beauty Massage. As in the earlier comment from Jen, time is also a key factor for Rachel in setting apart Spa/Beauty and Holistic Massage, with both citing the hurriedness and brevity of the treatments as a criticism. Interestingly, Rachel also touched on time in relation to recent training she had undertaken in Sports Massage, noting that while her tutors were adamant she would not have enough time to 'balance' the client (by which she means working on their left and right sides), she felt on the other hand that:

> you MAKE time to work both sides so I would rather have somebody in for an hour and a HALF and give them a more HOLISTIC yes ok it's a sports massage but give them a more HOLISTIC treatment so they FEEL a bit more balanced than just going in sorting out a specific problem (Rachel lines 73-80)

Allowing an appropriate length of time to treat a person in this way thus allows time for a more thorough massage, and even for the possibility of melding Holistic and Sports techniques. Jen, on the other hand, framed the issue of time in the more prosaic terms of 'customer service':

> THAT person on the table is your CLIENT and and even just in simple customer SERVICE terms that person's your client you're there for that person that's not your TIME well it is but they're PAYING for your time so its their time (Jen lines 349-51)

Jen also emphasised this issue of time with reference to another massage worker she knows who works in a spa:

> she's always in a RUSH she's all kind of up TIGHT and she'd done 10 massages that day like maybe between the hours of ten and five now I that sounds STRESSFUL to me I'm NOT I'm not criticising how they WORK however I don't think I could work LIKE.. that do you know what I mean I think its quite.. and you wonder how much.. time can they can someone GIVE to someone like that when you're all you look quite HARASSED.. I don't know (Jen 355-60)

As with many of the others, Jen's remarks here echo the competencies of 'presence' and 'awareness', and their relative absence in Spa/Beauty Massage. But, in a slightly different sense, it seems that the need to focus fully on the client may have implications

for how long practitioners can work at a time. As Jen suggested, it would be difficult to maintain focus for hours on end and, in fact, none of my participants (with the exception of Rachel) regularly did more than five or six hours massage work in a row. This emphasis on the time allotted to a client is also reminiscent of the argument that increased time for practitioner/client interaction is a significant advantage that CAM has over mainstream medicine (Coward 1989; Saks 2002; Sharma 1992). In addition to their own belief in its importance, an acknowledgement of the power that this aspect of the popular stock of knowledge on CAM has may play a part in these practitioners citing the importance of time. What these references certainly add up to is another key way in which they distinguish what they do from other types of massage practice.

In one further illustration of the Beauty/Holistic boundary, Eve had a quibble, not with Spa/Beauty Massage in and of itself, but rather with the amount clients pay (and practitioners earn) for something that she understands as relatively insubstantial compared with her own work:

> there's a PLACE for [Spa/Beauty Massage] is fine you go to a beauty salon you ask for a massage that'll be ABSOLUTELY adequate that'll be fine but to charge like I charge forty QUID for a massage [… and…] to have to pay forty quid for that [Spa/Beauty Massage] and forty quid for what I do with the amount of training I've had in my different skills like it seems to me kinda DAFT and you find that different SPAS and things I checked out the spa down at [large shopping mall] um I was seeing how much massage was it was sixty pounds and I said if I was looking for a job y'know I said how much of that would I get and she said oh well quite a bit less so I said how much about twenty quid […] and she said oh no less than that y'know its something like ten quid an hour they pay their people to work in their spas and they're making sixty QUID so y'know its ridiculous and you're going to get a sort of lightweight massage (Eve, lines 472-82)[247]

In this excerpt, it seems that Eve is irked by the fact that clients pay more for Spa/Beauty Massage than for the kind of work she does, or because practitioners earn such a small proportion of this, or both. Nevertheless, while many of my interviewees were quick to make the distinction between what they do and Spa/Beauty Massage, they were also largely quick to defend and justify the inclusion of the latter in the massage field, albeit on a lower rung of the hierarchy, as Eve does here. Beyond this stratification, what Eve also did here was to justify the fees that she charges, based on the level of training and

[247] At time of writing £40 was the average fee for a one hour Holistic Massage, so Eve's account of the market is representative on this point.

experience she has and which, in contrast, Spa/Beauty workers do not. Moreover, she highlighted a significant difference in the employment relations and the organisation of massage. While Spa/Beauty Massage attracts higher fees, it is work largely done by employee spa or salon workers who are paid an hourly rate. My interviewees, on the other hand, charged less but may take home a higher proportion of that fee, overheads such as room rent aside. Conversely, however, Holistic Massage workers rarely work full time given the physical and emotional demands of the job, and thus experience a limitation on their earning capacity.[248]

What these views on Spa/Beauty massage are based on is the strong shared response of these practitioners to the routinisation of this way of working. As suggested in the previous chapter, and as is illustrated by the comments presented here, my interviewees were emphatic that Spa/Beauty Massage is constrained in a way that their work is not. One could go so far as to say they consider Spa/Beauty Massage to be the 'McDonalds' of massage work, in the sense that Kang (2003) uses this term. Kang's map of the nail work field is useful here in that it highlights the differences between 'expressive' and 'routinised' forms of what might otherwise be assumed to be similar work, as well as the varying forms of bodily and emotional labour they entail. Crucially, the degrees of routinisation are proportional to the level of predictability: that is, routinised work is 'standardized and predictable in both its physical and emotional aspects' (Kang 2003:832), and vice versa. The very fact that Holistic Massage takes place on bodies always makes it to some degree unstable and unpredictable: the practitioner does not know in advance exactly how clients will present themselves (what they will look or smell like, how they will behave) and how they in turn will respond to this, emotionally and physically. Spa/Beauty Massage attempts to manage this unpredictability by offering a more standardised massage which is, in my practitioners' words, 'four strokes of this and three strokes of that'. Holistic Massage on the other hand works with this unpredictability, and the ability to adapt to these possibilities, as well as to the person, is another important facet of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge. To move on, however, it is not only between different types of massage but also between massage and other forms of touching work that boundaries are enacted and maintained.

[248] See Chapter Four on the potential for 'burn-out', and also Marks (2010) for an up-to-date overview of earning capacity in massage work.

Boundaries with other forms of touching work

Delineations of practices in the interviews I carried out extended beyond the field of massage to other forms of touching work, health-related and otherwise. One which I expected, given the way massage and other CAM practices are most often contextualised (that is, what they are thought to be complementary or alternative to), was between CAM and conventional healthcare. The border between CAM in general and mainstream biomedicine is most frequently demarcated, in a public sense, from the more powerful conventional-medical side. As Tovey and Broom note, boundary work 'has almost exclusively been focused on the methods by which different occupational groups (particularly biomedical stakeholders) have attempted to disrupt processes of CAM legitimisation and professionalisation' (2007:2553, original emphasis). From this point of view, conventional scientists and medics are often seen to use the popular and academic press to exercise their epistemological hegemony.[249]

The ever-present conflict between CAM and conventional healthcare did arise in the interviews, with Fi, for example, suggesting that this would be eased by more open and patient 'communication' between each group (line 730). Participants made reference to conventional doctors in relation to similarities and differences in what they know and do, and how they know and do it. The clearest example of this came again from Fi, following her comment on the need for better dialogue, when she suggested that while interactions between GPs and massage practitioners may be improving, there is a case for the latter having more specialised knowledge of their area of expertise. She noted that the overall approach of mainstream medicine operates via:

> a MODEL that actually it unless it's a drug it cant fit into the model yeah yeah but I think it IS CHANGING it is change if I I yeah and em some GPs are much more open minded and th thing is when people can't… register that… y'know GPs are trained to learn whether there's a disease in the body they don't know anything about soft TISSUE so if something is soft tissue they should be working with someone that knows about soft tissue yep (Fi, lines 737-42)

This excerpt sees conventional medicine being simultaneously criticised and praised, as was the case above with different type of massage. And, as with those earlier examples,

[249] One of the most prominent recent examples of this morphed from a public condemnation of Chiropractic by science writer Simon Singh in The Guardian newspaper into a debate over freedom of speech and libel laws in the UK (see Singh 2008, Ghosh 2010).

what Fi does here is to stake a claim to an area which is currently monopolised by another practice (mainstream medicine) and to suggest that her knowledge is more appropriate to it. This parallels, and at the same time challenges, larger processes of boundary construction and maintenance by parties on both sides of the conventional/CAM divide. CAM practices can be seen to either stake a claim to or to be allotted certain areas of healthcare.[250] The latter is frequently done in a way which attempts to set relatively rigid boundaries around practices, as they are set by health professionals of higher status than CAM practitioners. It is then up to individual practices as to how/if they challenge these boundaries.[251]

It has also been suggested that comparing their work to that of medical practitioners may be one way in which body/touching workers might 'efface the sexual connotations' of their occupation (Wolkowitz 2002:503), and the ways they do this are explored shortly. However, while what my interviewees said about mainstream healthcare did relate to the status of the work, it was not always explicitly related to such associations with the sexual. Eve's comment here relates more to the way in which Holistic Massage work is valued monetarily:

> I mean it's nice that people do voluntary work but you can ONLY afford to do it if you've got money and you wouldn't expect DOCTORS to do it voluntarily and that says it ALL I think (Eve, 692-4)

Eve purposefully stated that the expectation to provide voluntary services does not seem to fall upon higher status mainstream healthcare workers to the same extent. The argument which Eve addresses here is significant in relation to the way Holistic Massage and other touching work is (de)valued, and understood as an innate ability rather than a more obviously saleable skill. As Eve suggests, doctors may in theory be in a more comfortable financial position and thus able to offer some of their time and expertise for free. However, their work is as highly valued socially as it is remunerated, meaning

[250] For example, massage is most often portrayed in terms of 'relaxation' and 'stress relief', Acupuncture with pain relief, and Chiropractic or Osteopathy with back problems. Overall, CAMs have so far received greatest mainstream medical recognition in the UK in the treatment of chronic conditions and in palliative care. They are also used by significant numbers of people with cancer (see Bendelow 2009). Their concentration in palliative care may point to something interesting about the limitations of mainstream medicine and perhaps the devaluation of dying bodies, but this is beyond the immediate scope of this thesis.

[251] See Chapter Six for one way in which this might be done, and a space be created for Holistic Massage, through the mobilisation of language.

doctors may not often meet with this expectation. Holistic Massage, on the other hand, is not a high-status occupation, but rather one that is more closely aligned with caring and other work done for 'love'. Hence, despite the extensive (and expensive) training and experience practitioners such as Eve may have undergone, there is an expectation, in some quarters at least, that they will be willing to work without pay. While a number of my participants (including Eve) were involved in working with charities at the time of the interviews, Eve was also firm that she does not 'get [her] goodies from helping people y'know I help people for money' (Eve, lines 711-12).[252]

Sarah also talked about mainstream healthcare practitioners, this time in the context of bodies and specifically of touching. In describing the need to be firm and confident when touching a client, she said that this requires:

> just that confidence of touch almost like a DOCTOR I think I think that's also how it can be quite comforting. because it's like. y'know when a doctor touches you it can be incredibly em. intimate if somebody's giving you a smear test but it feels ok hopefully because the way that they touch you will be very kind of not hard but just firm and without hesitation (Sarah, lines 324-8)

Sarah's choice of comparison on one level seems obvious enough, given that she is trying to convey the different ways touch may feel – 'threatening', 'sexual', 'hesitant', 'professional' – and how it feels so, and the way in which 'feeling professional' is achieved. Moreover, since she is specifically talking about a certain kind of touch 'feeling professional', it makes sense for her to draw on a profession of high standing. On the other hand, the comparison is curious in that one of the main critiques of conventional medicine in recent times has been the rationalised and distanced non-

[252] Eve also raised questions around the safety of newly qualified and student massage practitioners being approached to work with the terminally ill. This may tie into the wider ways in which CAMs are presented as 'safer' or more 'natural' options, and sidelines the fact that they may be dangerous in less experienced hands. If learning Holistic Massage is not only about the initial training but also the accumulation over time of tacit, embodied knowledge, it is doubtful that inexperienced students would be the most appropriate practitioners to be working on people who are dying. The fact that there is relatively extensive research on CAM use in palliative care underlines what is to an extent the corralling of CAM in a particular area where conventional medicine has limited effect. Conversely, and in a somewhat cynical view, it may also be indicative of the social (including medical) devaluation of the dying body. Given that there is little or nothing more that can be done medically for the terminally ill, these people are passed on to CAM almost as though mainstream medicine is no longer concerned with what happens to them and is therefore happy for them to be marginalised through these practices.

touching on which it has come to be based.[253] While the example Sarah alludes to obviously does involve touch, this is (ironically) usually mediated by tools and latex gloves.[254] Further to this point, I might have expected participants to distance themselves from what may be seen as the more instrumental – rather than sensitised and affective – touching of doctors. Clearly the picture is complex in this respect.

It has been suggested that there is a strong tendency in occupations which can be considered 'touching work' for occupational status to be directly proportional to the proximity of the body of the worker to the body of the worked-on person (Twigg 2000a). That is to say, the closer the physical interrelation between the bodies involved, the lower the status of the work. As outlined in Chapter One, this point can be illustrated with reference to the hierarchy extant in mainstream medical professions. Holistic Massage is more difficult to asses in this light, however, given that there is little room for formal career progression, other than to become a teacher. And even then, training for Holistic Massage necessitates a significant amount of hands-on demonstration from teachers. It is also unlikely to provide full-time employment since the majority of courses operate on a one weekend a month format, meaning that teachers frequently continue to work with clients as well. Hence, I would argue that 'dematerialising tendency' suggested by Twigg (2000a) is not a typical characteristic within Holistic Massage.[255]

Remaining within healthcare, connections were also drawn by the interviewees between Holistic Massage, counselling and other so-called 'talking therapies'. For some, this boundary was relatively watertight and hence they tended to actively discourage any talking in the process of massage treatments, other than what was strictly necessary.[256] For others the boundary was more permeable since their training had incorporated some counselling techniques. However, those who mentioned this component of their training nonetheless (perhaps even more so) felt the need to maintain as clear a boundary as

[253] That is in the relationship between doctors and patients. In nursing on the other hand, the possibilities of touch have been recently examined and championed (see for example Estabrooks and Morse 1992; Routasalo and Isola 1996; Van Dongen and Elema 2001, amongst many others). This situation in itself speaks to the gendered divide between these two professions.

[254] For examples of the techniques used by mainstream health professionals to maintaining an appropriate level of 'non-intimacy' in physical interactions see Atkinson et al (2010); Brown et al (2011); Evans and McNaughton (2010); Henslin and Biggs (1971); Royal College of Nursing (2006).

[255] Neither is it typical of the even more devalued category of 'dirty work', given the generally 'clean and continent' (Wolkowitz 2002) noted earlier in the chapter.

[256] For example: in the initial consultation; where 'checking-in' about pressure is necessary; or when clients are thought to be drifting and need encouragement to become 'present' (see Chapter Four).

possible between what they do and do not offer: that is, touching not talking. Sarah made reference to this division directly, in the context of what and how much she asks in the initial pre-massage consultation (the portion of a massage session which is always explicitly given over to talking), saying:

> basically the main point is that they are there for the massage that was what they intended to come for they don't necessary they didn't come to talk they weren't paying to talk if they wanted to talk they'd go to a counselling session mmm and so I'd definitely bring in counselling. skills but it's not about. it's not a talking therapy it's a body therapy (Sarah, lines 84-8)

However, the difference which Sarah sets out here is not necessarily clear to all clients, and therefore requires active maintenance by practitioners. In some instances talk during the massage may be unproblematic, but it can end up with a client 'talking to you about their haircut or something' (Kath, lines 427-8) which, as explored in Chapter Four, Kath presents as undesirable. Kath acknowledges the benefits of talking on a more serious level, but maintains:

> I see that tons and tons of talking is y'know it can be quite gratifying to talk forever but it doesn't necessarily sometimes its just better to lie DOWN and just receive and to feel what's going on with you sometimes silence is WONDERFUL healing and absolutely wonderful I think I've kind of become more AWARE of that as time goes by of a kind of healing quality of silence and just letting things BE (Kath, lines 770-5)

Given their focus on – and, crucially, their qualification and experience in – non-talking practice, a client who persistently wants to talk may need to be referred to a 'talking therapist', especially when their problems are more complex than the massage practitioner is trained to deal with. As with the bounds of Holistic Massage in general, these limitations are not 'officially' specified, but require a certain awareness and professional judgement on the part of the practitioner.[257]

Having recounted one of her clients asking 'what would I want a counsellor for when I've got you' (line 739-40), Ally noted:

> some people probably respond to that [massage/touch] better than sitting talking about not everyone wants to TALK about how they feel do they and

[257] Although, once again, guidelines on referral are provided by the professional bodies and steps are being taken toward national standards in this respect.

> and actually MASSAGE can be a way to help release some of that (Ally and Jen, lines 743-6)

What Ally says here speaks to a separation of talking and touching, and of therapies which utilise each, which was common in the interviews. But because Holistic Massage does, for many of my participants, involve some use of counselling-type techniques, it is more liminal than other practices, falling in-between a body and a talking therapy. This means that practitioners may have to work even harder to maintain a line around what Holistic Massage is, and this highlights another of complexity in the boundary work that they do. Ally differentiates massage from talking therapies, but also positions touching/body therapies, and Holistic Massage in particular, as another alternative to counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), psychotherapy and the other widely accepted psychological therapies which have come to have so much popular appeal in contemporary 'therapy culture' (Furedi 2004; Illouz 2008). Hence she aligns herself with the relative status of these. But at the same time Ally acknowledged the need for practitioners to refer clients on when an issue is beyond the bounds of their practice, as in referring those with deep-seated psychological problems to those with psychological or psychiatric qualifications. This has the effect of maintaining a boundary around what Holistic Massage practitioners can be expected to know and do, which separates it from these other practices.

Participants also drew comparisons with what they do, and other practices such as hairdressing and beauty work, and often in ways which suggested a value judgement. Continuing on the theme of talking, hairdressing was spoken of thus:

> I don't have any expectations some people talk some people don't do what you want to DO but occasionally I WILL TALK to you [laughs] um.. so but you don't need to entertain I'm you're not at the HAIRDRESSERS this is YOUR TIME (Ally, lines 176-8)[258]

Echoes can be heard here of the ways in which the boundary between Spa/Beauty and Holistic Massage was enacted, and of the emphasis on time. Ally's comparison is also interesting in that it highlights a crucial difference in perception of what a massage is and is not. In one way it suggests, simply by using this as a comparison, that massage and

[258] Lisa made a similar point in relation to beauty salons in which clients may be more used to music and chatting than being quiet and still for the length of the treatment, and thus find the latter either too 'uncomfortable' or 'intense'.

hairdressing are in some ways comparable: for example, they are both forms of (usually) one-on-one touching work. In other ways, including in the kind of performance expected of the client, they are emphatically different. The implication that when someone is at the hairdresser they are expected to engage in creating conversation makes the distinction clear.

Another example of a boundary being acted out by participants comes this time from Carol's interview. As has been noted earlier, Carol self-identifies first and foremost as a dancer.[259] Not surprisingly, given the particularly physical nature of dance, and given its prominence in her experience of work, Carol's experience of the world is very much shaped by this activity: that is to say, she knows of the world through a dancer's body (cf. Aalten 2007). Hence, when talking about other people she tended to divide them into dancers and non-dancers since, to Carol's mind, this is highly significant for how people understand and experience their embodiment. This particular boundary was referred to at various points in Carol's interview, but was flagged most clearly on two occasions, in relation to what she initially asks clients, and how she views her practice overall :

> the level of MEDICAL history. I need actually can be.. it just depends on CONTEXT. if somebody's a dancer or a SPORTS person very IN their body very AWARE of their own issues. they sometimes say ah I don't. there's nothing to say [about their medical history] and as long as they've signed the form I kind of I'll WORK with that. with CAUTION obviously I don't plough in presume they've been HONEST I'm gonna presume they're not IDIOTS (Carol, lines 475-80)

> I guess it's it DOES feel quite important. for me to emphasise that the massage work grew OUT of. and is now sort of umbilically LINKED to my dance practice. um.. which doesn't diminish the importance of the MASSAGE work but it is certainly a strand of my practice rather than the core of my IDENTITY and I I think that does make me have.. a different relationship to it and perhaps slightly less PRECIOUS if that doesn't sound too judgemental (Carol, lines 603-8)

The second comment here was made in response to my question of whether there was anything else she wanted to add, asked towards the end of the interview. The fact that she raised this issue again, when it had already been mentioned two or three times, indicates its significance for her orientation to massage and work. Carol is by no means

[259] Interestingly, a number of other participants (Sarah, Fi and Claire) were also involved in dance and other movement practices (as a hobby rather than professionally) as a means of grounding themselves and fully experiencing their bodies. Unfortunately there was not scope in the interviews to explore this more fully.

the only participant to have her embodied experience of the world shaped by different forces: Claire made reference to musicians and the particular way they use their bodies, straining specific muscles over and over, Kath to meditation practice and Eve to motherhood. These name but a few of the possible narrative resources they could have drawn on, since every individual's embodied experience is influenced by innumerable factors. However, none of the other interviewees made such an absolute categorisation, and the prominence and particularly physical, body-oriented nature of the dancer/non-dancer distinction Carol draws makes it especially interesting.

'Women of pure ideas'

One significant feature of the bounding of Holistic Massage that is yet to be addressed is the drawing of a line between massage and sex work, a line which cross-cuts issues of gender, devaluation and the sexualisation of women and women's touch. That the boundaries of Holistic Massage are not fixed means that in some sense that they can be more easily transgressed. Practitioners may be open to sexual impropriety precisely because of the fluidity of the boundaries around Holistic Massage, because some aspects of the work they do may 'mimic' sexuality (Twigg et al 2011), and because how and where they touch is to an extent guided not by routine but by 'intuition'. Touch is dichotomised as either nurturing or sexual in everyday knowledge, including by the interviewees. This dichotomy also maps onto western cultural stereotypes of women exemplified by the 'madonna/whore' binary (which is taken up in Chapter Six). Add to this the suggestion that 'touch in modern life has become increasingly confined to erotic relations, so that adults, particularly men, live in a world that is largely atactile except for sex' (Twigg 2000a:47), it follows that such confusion or transgressions in touching work may often fall into a sexual category.

As discussed in Chapter Two, I felt that to raise the issue of sex and sexuality in interviews was somewhat problematic, and thus it was only explored where participants brought it to the fore, which did happen on several occasions. As well as the boundary between massage and sex work, what practitioners said also tied into the notion of 'inappropriate' behaviour and the relationship between sexuality and touch. That a connection with sex, sexuality or sex work is relevant in a discussion of Holistic Massage as an occupation speaks to the above-noted nurturing/sexual binary, to the close correlation between the sensuous and sexuality in the contemporary west, and to 'popular elisions between

massage and sex work' (Oerton 2004a:550) which have long been a significant concern for massage practitioners. The sexualisation of massage is intertwined with its categorisation as work which is assumed to be dependent on essentialised feminine attributes (caring, nurturing and so on). This takes place in a broader social context in which women are more available to touch and be touched (see Chapter One), and in which women who do touching work in the public sphere are stereotyped as sexually available. Problematic as such stereotypes may be, I suggest that they are so ingrained that practitioners tend to reproduce them as often as they challenge them.

Existing research comparing massage and sex work has justified the comparison on the premise that they occupy 'a similar discursive space' which is concerned with touch, pleasure and stigma (Oerton and Phoenix 2001:394). Of particular interest here is their suggestion that:

> 'Embodied, potentially erotic, intimate, physical encounters are perilous because if women are seen to be doing them outside a narrowly circumscribed set of contexts (namely, with one man, in private and as an expression of desire) then they risk imputations of disreputability and immorality.' (Oerton and Phoenix 2001:387)

That is to say, massage done in a market context can therefore be seen as inherently problematic in a similar manner to sex work, because it is done in the public sphere with numerous different people and for money.

Half my participants made fairly direct reference to sexuality in the interviews, and that the other half did not may be read either as it not being of particular concern to them or that they preferred not to discuss it.[260] Those that did raise it indicated an acute awareness of the issues raised by the marketisation of massage, as noted by Oerton and Phoenix. For example, Sarah said the following regarding what she usually discusses in supervision sessions:[261]

> Sarah: like issues with money as well as like what it feels like to be paid for your massage and how much you should be paying and and EVEN stuff like

[260] Of course, given the loose structure of the interviews (and factoring in the interviewee's orientation to their work at that precise time) it was unlikely that every possible issue would be covered in each interview.

[261] Meetings with a more experienced practitioner in which the less experienced is able to discuss problems and receive guidance on their work.

> how people give you money like all these things how you respond to it is its really sensitive stuff
> Carrie: that's things you go through in the supervision
> Sarah: yeah uhuh everything (Sarah, lines 639-644)

Sarah initially seemed reticent to elaborate on what she meant in this passage, but after some gentle prompting she explained:

> hmm yeah it's yeah like everyone ok so everyone has different relationships with money and like I was brought up with it being slightly slightly DEGRADING and I guess I also thought of it it almost felt like PROSTITUTION like going and em and yeah and also.. how much I was WORTH what does it feel like for somebody to charge y'know £40 am I really worth that much y'know issues of self ESTEEM (Sarah, lines 657-62)

Sarah first situates this relationship as particular to her, as being down to her 'upbringing'. But the explicit connection she draws between massage and sex work goes well beyond her individual experience. Furthermore, what Sarah says is suggestive of the way questions about what exactly these practitioners do, and whether or not it is sexual, seem to bubble under the surface. Sarah's reservations about her work stem directly from the question of what it is that she is paid for, and her framing of this as being tied her to her feelings of personal worth also shows how closely these issues are intertwined with practitioners' self-identity. The question posed here is not whether Sarah's work is worth the money, but whether she is. In addition to this, it underscores that it is in a sense the experience of their 'authentic' selves that the practitioners are selling.[262]

Interestingly, while Sarah presents this as a current concern for her, other participants suggested that the conflation of massage and sex work in general is in fact less of an immediate problem now than it may have been in previous decades. If this is the case, it points to a significant change in the field even in the decade since Oerton and Phoenix's (2001) research was conducted. Change over time, both in perceptions and in actual everyday experience, was something several participants were quite insistent on, as in these passages from Kath and Carol:

> Kath: things have changed since the nineties y'know when I first became a massage therapist y'know there's massage parlours there were MASSAGE parlours all over the place y'know people used to talk about extras all the

[262] See Chapter Four on the notion of 'grounded authenticity' and the relative advantages and disadvantages this offers as a feeling rule for Holistic Massage work.

> TIME they don't now there's Holistic Massage is much more acceptable and there's many more therapy centres and than there EVER used to be
> Carrie:
> so is there more distinction now
> Kath: there's a MUCH better distinction than there ever used to be [but] it still happens (Kath, lines 599-605)

> um obviously in twenty years general attitudes have CHANGED.. but nonetheless there was that WARINESS of touch [in the 1990s] and a concern with a lot of women about working with MEN and potential for their work to be misconstrued. and I think at THAT point Britain was just sort of coming to AWAREness that um. not only was DANCE not about prostitutes nor was massage. you know. you know [laughs] so I in every field I work in I have to kind of defend my status [laughs] woman of PURE IDEAS [laughs] (Carol, lines 291-7)

Carol suggests that this change has taken time to acknowledge, while Kath identifies the change with the increase in dedicated spaces for health-oriented massage. On the one hand, such comments can be seen as reflecting a general sense that there have been positive changes in perceptions of massage work in recent years, changes which may in turn be representative of wider shifts in the status and understanding of this form of touching work. On the other hand, the need for a dedicated space can also be read as highly significant to the development of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge: take the example of the 'birth of the clinic' as facilitating the rise of mainstream medicine by allowing it the social space to develop as a new form of knowledge at that time (Foucault [1963]2003). In addition, these comments can be read as attempts by Carol and Kath to constitute Holistic Massage as non-sexual and legitimate, 'effacing' potential stigma in the way Wolkowitz (2006) suggests.

As noted in Chapter Two, many of the 'backstage' discussions amongst other massage practitioners to which I have been party indicates that the majority of massage practitioners have anecdotes of situations where they had been treated like a sex worker by a client. That only half my participants commented on such things, and that those who did were usually the longest practicing among the sample could be attributed to their greater confidence in voicing this. Alternatively, more experienced practitioners possess more elaborate stocks of knowledge that they can draw upon to present their occupation as legitimised, including narrative resources passed on from others. Hence there is more they can say about their experience. In reality, elements of these different explanations can be seen to play a part here.

As Kath's comment above suggests, place was a significant factor for participants when situating Holistic Massage as 'not-sex work'. Kath and Carol both suggested there is now a clearer spatial location for health-oriented massage: 'therapy centres' as opposed to 'massage parlours' or backstreet 'saunas'.[263] Lisa also saw place as a factor in the different clients who come to her in the two locations from which she works:

> Lisa: I would generally say [I] DEFINITELY get a lot more BLOKES [in CAM centre than when working from home] and I think that's probably partly because if guys want a massage they don't want to go see go anywhere DODGY [laughs] they're probably looking for a clinic SETTING em cos a few of them have said that em
> Carrie: rather than going to somebody's HOUSE then
> Lisa: I THINK so em..
> Carrie: why is that
> Lisa: em… I THINK they're worried in case they get like a MASSAGE parlour y'know some of them have SAID that they found it quite difficult to find somewhere but this looked all above BOARD (Lisa, lines 592-602)

Lisa's interpretation of this situation is that the place itself symbolises the legitimacy of the interaction for these clients.[264] Her comment that some clients had trouble finding a place that was 'above board' is also indicative of the sex/massage conflation capitalised on by sex workers in listings in print directories and online.[265]

The idea that her work might be 'misconstrued' as a sexual service led Carol to behave in a particular way toward clients:

> when I started I made a really very conscious point of emphasising to clients to ANY clients but particularly male clients um that what I did was strictly non-sexual et cetera and I very quickly felt really awkward because it was almost like as soon as I'd said it I'd like flagged up the possibility that something else could be the case (Carol, lines 300-4)

[263] The latter two terms being widely recognised code for venues for indoor sex work which are tolerated and regulated to varying degrees in cities across the UK.
[264] This is interesting in terms of one of my very first questions about massage, that is why it is done in different (public/private) places and what this says about the cultural context in which it takes place. This question is returned to in Chapter Six.
[265] This code is also utilised in the recruitment of sex workers. For example, in response to my enquiry regarding an advertisement for 'male and female massage staff' on a local listings website, I was advised by return of email that the clients in question would usually be male and would 'expect a "happy ending" service', and that earnings would vary from £20-£60 per hour 'depending on the type of massage provided'.

Here Carol expressed a key problem which relates to the fuzziness of the boundaries around what massage is. Because Holistic Massage is not bounded in a universally accepted way, practitioners have to maintain their safety and clarity about what it is they are offering on an ad hoc basis. Given the stigma attached to sex work, the need to create and maintain this particular boundary has potentially unpleasant implications for practitioners. As Carol's experience grew, she began to feel that verbally 'flagging' that sex was not on offer was an inappropriate approach and she could instead perform the boundaries of her practice tacitly and tactilely:

> so I quickly established for myself [that] I felt UNcomfortable having to.. define the territory that I was WORKING in that way and realised that my touch could have that. clarity of INTENTION and to be honest I've never ever HAD an issue at all I think there was ONE instance working with a male client.. where there was perhaps a little. question on his part of what he was expecting to GET out of this session and just by placing the hand. on. his shoulders it was like giving that message that this is strictly a NON-sexual thing (Carol, lines 305-11)

In this way Carol aimed to physically distance herself from the stigma of sex work by touching and intending to touch in specific ways, utilising an understanding of touch as communicative. For many of my interviewees, especially the most experienced amongst them, the implication was that while the border between sex work and massage can be delineated verbally, this is in fact more appropriately, subtly and affectively done through touch. Given the embodied/tacit nature of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge – and their preference for touching over talking – it makes sense that this aspect of what practitioners do should be conveyed by like means.

Another way in which participants addressed sexuality was in relation to 'in/appropriate' behaviour, both actual and abstractly imagined.[266] Rachel made reference to guarding against litigation from clients who might potentially say 'I went for a massage and she PERVED' (line 204) by providing appropriate privacy and bodily cover for them. Kath spoke of knowing appropriate boundaries, saying 'who knows you might meet your

[266] Dealing with 'inappropriate' behaviour from clients is usually covered in Holistic Massage training and textbooks (from the perspective of both client and practitioner) as another aspect of the competencies which a Holistic Massage practitioner needs to develop. For example, for '[d]iffusing feelings of sexual arousal', one popular textbook suggests, amongst other things, that practitioners should '[s]top working with your hands and use your forearms'; '[a]djust the intent of the session to stimulate a more sympathetic output response by using stretching, compression, joint movement, and active participation by the client'; and '[c]hange the music, lighting and conversation and the client's position' (Fritz 2000:60).

future SOUL mate they might come to you as a client but the massage room ISN'T the place to explore that' (lines 606-7), and reinforcing this with an anecdote about a former student who slept with a client and then felt unable to work for several years because the line between practitioner/client and sexual partners had become so unstable for them. More often, however, inappropriate behaviour referred to clients, and usually to men.[267]

The most disturbing passage in any of the interviews in relation to the issue of sexuality was the story Kath recounted about the client who evoked in her the image of a fictional serial killer (see Chapter Three). The inappropriate behaviour in this instance is not directly pinpointed, but is nonetheless physically real for Kath (as much as it was unsettling for me to hear her tell). The story is couched specifically in terms of the client's sexuality:

> I began to massage his legs and I knew it was something about this guy's sexuality and did not want to go NEAR it so I massaged his lower legs and I massaged his CHEST and his arms and I missed out his abdomen and I finished the massage and its very rare I've ever done that normally I massage the whole BODY […] and he said well… why wouldn't you massage my stomach and I said.. because I said I feel LIKE to be honest there's something not CLEAR around your sexuality and I'm not I'm not qualified to DEAL with that an he didn't LIKE what I said to him (Kath, lines 550-66)

The way Kath talks about the client's 'sexuality' is interesting here, because the term is not only used in the abstract sense of his personality or desires, but also in the directly physical sense of his genitalia. She literally avoids his 'sexuality' by refusing to touch too close to this area: his abdomen becomes out of bounds for Kath. This is suggestive of the fluid way in which in/appropriate touching is defined in massage – on another occasion with another client, the abdomen would have been acceptable and safe – and reflects the flexibility of the boundaries around Holistic Massage in a way that highlights the specific problems this may leave practitioners open to. While sexual impropriety may occur across the spectrum of touching work, the convergence of issues raised in this chapter does seem to leave Holistic and other – and particularly female – massage workers in a vulnerable position.

[267] As I discovered in previous research, this applies not only to female but male practitioners. In one instance a male practitioner also gave an account of what he felt to be inappropriate sexual behaviour from a female client, showing that this is not unheard of (Purcell 2009).

Existing research suggests the unstable situation these women present receives little help from existing guidelines from professional groups. Oerton (2004a), for example, suggests that ethics codes used by the majority of massage organisations make reference to 'professional misconduct', without specifying outright and in detail to what this refers. While affording individual practitioners a certain amount of autonomy, Oerton argues this lack of specifity allows for the perpetuation of the massage/sex elision:

> 'this failure to explicitly define violations of professional codes of ethics means that the slippage between massage and sex work must be continuously managed and negotiated by therapeutic massage practitioners in the course of their everyday encounters with clients.' (Oerton 2004a: 553)

The MTI (the professional organisation representing Holistic Massage) does in fact make the unequivocal statements that '[p]ractitioners must not engage in sexual activity with their client' (Code of Ethics point 3.4) and that they 'must not advertise in any way that implies that they are offering sexual services' (point 4.3). These measures may produce change over time since they are indicative of a shift toward greater clarity, albeit one which has been ongoing for over a century.[268] However, until they are more concretely codified and widely recognised, their impact may be relatively minimal.

Of all my interviewees, Kath talked most about sexuality, and the final excerpt on the theme underlines the ways in which all three strands – touch and sexuality, in/appropriate behaviour and the massage/sex work interface – are so closely intertwined. Early in her interview, Kath commented that her experiences of working in what she alternately calls a 'spa' and a 'sauna house', were highly significant in the development of her 'understanding of touch':

> because one part of TOUCH.. and the part that um… a lot of MEN in particular get very caught INTO is they relate touch with being SEXUAL.. so anything around y'know what you call. um. caring TOUCH is this immediate sort of immediately becomes something that goes off in a sexual area and in that 9 or 12 months working in this y'know it was kind of a sauna house […] and APPARENTLY I didn't know this when I went there but apparently before the guy.. who had it at this time ran it previous to that there had been women working there taking TRICKS y'know prostitutes working there I didn't know this and so I very quickly had to learn to DEAL with guys that were because it was mostly men I was massaging which was fine with me I

[268] As noted in Chapter One, the Society of Trained Masseuses (later the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists) was established in the late nineteenth century as a means by which women massage practitioners could distinguish themselves from sex workers.

> just wanted to massage as many BODIES as I COULD […] it was hard WORK but. it was i it was.. very very good WORK and I had to learn to DEAL with guys and I would be walking upstairs and I would know there's just something about the way that they came upstairs I got a a NOSE for kind of.. dealing… with expectation which was a FABULOUS learning for me it really was (Kath, lines 65-85)

Kath's example underlines the fine and fluid line between massage and sex work: this location was one which had been used, although not contemporaneously, for both sex work and Holistic Massage. Unprompted, Kath described a key problem for massage workers, especially women, whose practice may be 'legitimate' – in the sense that it is health-oriented – but who nonetheless have to be prepared to deal with clients who may (at least initially) expect otherwise.[269] Moreover, Kath couches this, not judgementally but in a matter-of-fact way, in terms of what she sees as a fundamental aspect of male sexuality. While she and the others quoted above may see clearer distinctions between 'therapy centres' and 'massage parlours' as having improved their situation, the implication is that this aspect of male sexuality is fixed and therefore something that has to some degree to be managed.[270]

The 'symbolic slippages' between massage and sex work which permeate common-sense and legislative representations of the two are significant. But what Oerton and Phoenix (2001) do not draw enough attention to is that these slippages can be far more readily capitalised on specifically by those involved in organising indoor sex work, since this enables them to circumvent laws regarding the sale of sex. The highly visible 'massage parlour'/'sauna' (both heterosexual and homosexual) scene in the city in which my research was conducted is a disturbing testament to this. While this offers some advantages to sex workers, the slippage is highly problematic for massage practitioners because some clients continue to bring with them expectations of sexual services.

The comparisons with other forms of touching work presented here have proved fruitful in drawing out similarities and divergences in these forms of work, particularly in the case of sex work, which has to date been the subject of significantly more research than Holistic Massage. Having given an account of the comparisons with the other forms of

[269] Interestingly, Kath expressed the way she learned to detect this in very embodied/sensory terms of getting a 'nose' for it.

[270] At time of writing the 'man as sexual predator' stereotype had been strengthened by the recent conviction of a male massage worker in England for sexual assault of a number of female clients (Press Association 2010).

work highlighted by my participants, I conclude the chapter by considering the implications of the fluid boundaries around Holistic Massage for its position vis-à-vis mainstream healthcare.

Implications of an unbounded stock of knowledge

The aim of this chapter has been to take use the conceptual hook of 'unboundedness' as a starting point for addressing how and where practitioners feel the need to draw lines between what they do and other practices. As is clear from the above analysis, my interviewees set boundaries around what they do; and how they did so suggests a number of things about Holistic Massage and its social context more broadly. It is important to note that in the process of writing this chapter, it became apparent that the unboundedness of Holistic Massage as a practice is a separate issue to the boundaries which are drawn around the stock of knowledge it comprises. While these boundaries may be flexible, even permeable, they are nevertheless drawn in distinct ways by these practitioners. Yet there remains something unbounded about Holistic Massage which persists even as these boundaries are maintained. This ties closely to the fact of their suggesting that Holistic Massage is 'something more' and 'different every time', and it is equally elusive and as difficult to pin down in a sociological/research sense as it is in the everyday world of these practitioners. Nevertheless, this unboundedness is a state of affairs which the practitioners in some respects wish to maintain.

But the question of bounding Holistic Massage can also be approached in terms of the claims which practitioners can make about their work and what it does. In other practices which have more established and thus recognisable boundaries, there is probably not the same perceived need for practitioners to explain what that occupation and what its associated stock of knowledge does and does not comprise. Hence the loose boundaries around the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge leave practitioners in the unstable position of having to explain and justify not only their embodied competencies, but their claims to this knowledge. They are caught between maintaining the unbounded 'something more' as potentially the most significant aspect of what they offer as touching workers, and the desire to be more clearly understood as 'not-sex workers' and also as healthcare workers. This conflict underpins almost everything these practitioners say about their work.

As demonstrated above, the ways in which the interviewees set their work apart from other kinds of massage and touching work were complex. In the process of delineating the field, they both criticised and defended these other practices, no-doubt influenced to some extent by 'real or imagined dialogue' with practitioners of each. Moreover, they simultaneously expanded their own areas of expertise, heightened the contrasts between their own and other practices, and monopolised authority on health-related massage, in ways which fit with Gieryn's (1983) model. While they did not make overt attempts to protect their autonomy (in the way Gieryn suggests happens), it is possible that Spa/Beauty Massage has become something of a 'scapegoat' in this regard. Indeed, lower overall standards of massage in the UK were attributed to the majority of training available being in Spa/Beauty Massage, as Fi suggests here:

> there's a lot of different STANDARDS of massage therapists all over Britain and Scotland in fact it's much LOWER in Britain than standards are shite compared to America the KNOWLEDGE and the training that people have to do.. and the difficulty is that in in seeing the effects the real benefits and of OF massage is that the TRAINING is mainly in BEAUTY therapy massage (Fi, lines 709-13)

This comment highlights a further implication of moves to bound Holistic Massage. The ever-increasing use of CAMs by the general public and the growing acceptance of holistic approaches to healthcare, wellbeing and life on the whole, mean that those who do practices such as Holistic Massage have a greater chance than ever before of being taken seriously as health professionals. Hence, and perhaps above all, what these practitioners do within the bounds that they set out is to position themselves as healthcare workers. In drawing a distinct line between Holistic and Spa/Beauty Massage, and aligning their knowledge with other healthcare workers, they are able to locate themselves in this field, and contemporary understandings of health and wellbeing make it more possible than ever before for them to do so. Significantly, however, a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge will have to become much more concretely schematised for this to proceed much further. Just as contemporary conceptions of personhood are 'intolerant' of unbounded bodies (Lawton 1998), contemporary paradigms of occupations are equally biased not only against understandings of bodies as energetically unbounded, but against professional practices which are lacking in clear and distinct delineation, and official codes (laws, regulations) which keep them thus.

As noted earlier in this chapter, certain similarities can be seen between the discursive/ideological devices employed by Gieryn's (1983) scientists and the Holistic Massage practitioners discussed here. My penultimate point, however, is that some significant differences are also worth highlighting. One immediately obviously difference is the scale on which this boundary work is being done. What has been discussed here is based on data from one-to-one interviews, rather than the public discourse which Gieryn considers. It seems likely, however, that practitioners would set out their boundaries similarly with prospective clients or other interlocutors. Moreover, it was clear that when they spoke it was not always and/or only to me, but to other imagined audiences. Hence, while the impact of the bounding done by my participants is more locally-oriented, nonetheless it has implications beyond the immediate interview context. Where boundary setting and maintenance did become more explicitly oriented toward larger-scale concerns was when they touched on the CAM/conventional medicine debate. For the most part the interviewees did not actively seek to separate themselves from conventional healthcare – to be an 'alternative' in this sense – but instead to position themselves alongside it. Hence, these practitioners use a combination of 'expansion', 'monopolization' and 'protection of autonomy' in order to make a space for themselves within an inclusive healthcare model, more widely and 'holistically' conceived.[271]

What this chapter has also done is to explore the usefulness of framing Holistic Massage as 'touching work'. In addition to elucidating interesting similarities and differences between Holistic Massage and the other occupations mentioned above, I argue that the fact that practitioners talked about the work of hairdressers, doctors, and other practitioners vis-à-vis their own practice suggests that a touching work lens is an appropriate tool for analysing these occupations. Exploring Holistic Massage as touching work – and especially as work which involves 'assessing, diagnosing, handling, treating, manipulating, and monitoring' other people's bodies (Twigg et al 2011:171) – enables a better understanding of what the embodied relationship between practitioner and client involves (in this case from the practitioner's perspective). Exploring commonalities and differences across occupations which require the same 'handling' and so forth also

[271] I say 'inclusive' here rather than 'integrated' given the problematic nature of the integrated model as it is so far (see Chapter One). The extent to which Holistic Massage and other such practices might be 'integrated' in the future, and the impact this would have on what practitioners actually do, is beyond the scope of this thesis, but would be an interesting area for future research.

serves to highlight the ambivalent aspects of this work, which relate closely to the boundaries/bounding explored here. Rather than being an academic imposition, research participants are in this case drawing these comparisons themselves. While maintaining an interpretation close to the original data, this lens draws out analytical threads relating to the practitioners' own understandings of the status of their work, the social value of this work, and the similar ways in which it and other touching work practices are discursively framed as 'women's work' and what the implications of this might be. Having examined the ways in which Holistic Massage can be understood as un/bounded, the next and final chapter of this thesis revisits the concept of touching work in relation to the thesis as a whole, before focusing on how the interviewees talked about things they said were untalkable, and how a phenomenological orientation to talk has drawn this out.

Chapter Six
Towards a phenomenology of touching work

Introduction

This final chapter takes a step back from the close examination of my interview data undertaken in earlier chapters so as to highlight the more general implications of my research. Its purpose is to reflect on the overall approach I have taken in investigating Holistic Massage via a narrative inquiry informed by phenomenological sociological concerns, and then to come to some general conclusions about what has been achieved in the thesis. This chapter therefore examines the epistemological and methodological questions raised and responded to in the course of the preceding chapters. These questions relate to what can be known from the lens of touching work, from a Schutzian phenomenological sociology, from talk as a way of knowing about touch and touching work, and overall from a phenomenological-sociological perspective operationalised through narrative inquiry, about Holistic Massage as my interviewees practice it. Taken together, these interrelated components interrogate the value of the research produced in this thesis and, overall, they point to a narratively-informed sociological phenomenology of touching work in Holistic Massage as not only descriptive but also analytical, and which enables consideration of some fundamental sociological questions and contributes to defensible responses to these.

Before moving on to consider these implications, I would briefly here like to return to the questions posed in the Introduction to this thesis, which were the basis of my sociological interest in massage. Reflecting on these questions in light of the preceding analysis, I suggest that Holistic Massage is practiced in private in the UK precisely because this kind of touching work is unbounded. It therefore needs to be contained in an allotted space, lest it leak into or become something else. The need for 'safe' distance between bodies in massage can also be attributed to the need for boundaries (professional and bodily) in a commercialised form of something which may otherwise be interpreted as intimate or even erotic. Where and how bodies can meet, in what way and how much they can touch each other, is tightly regulated by culturally-specific normative boundaries. Although some of these boundaries may be approached and tested in Holistic Massage, to fully breach them risks turning it into something else. My own feelings about doing massage pertain to this same issue and to the fact that the areas

available to be touched on friends and relatives are for the most part relatively limited. For me to touch them would have required not only an appropriately defined space, but a re-drawing of boundaries which framed these people as 'clients', rather than 'friends and relatives', a reframing which I was not, in my brief training, prepared for. The fact that, as I have noted, I had no problem doing this with my partner serves to underscore the confinement of touching to the sphere of 'intimacy'. A consideration of these questions in hindsight underlines their relevance to the key components of this thesis, and it is to an examination of these that I now turn.

Revisiting 'touching work'

At the beginning of the thesis I made a case for the conceptual tool of 'touching work'. This concept, I suggested, would be a means by which this research could contribute to a sociology which considers emotional labour and which also does 'not ignore the materiality of workers' transformation of people's bodies through touch' (Wolkowitz 2009:853). While emotional labour and body work are both of clear relevance to the subject matter explored, I have argued that considering aspects of each of these together would be more appropriate here, especially given that touching and feeling are so indivisible with respect to a 'Holistic' practice. Rather, they are best understood in this context as two sides of the same coin, and have been brought together in this thesis under the rubric of touching work so that a more roundly embodied sociology might be achieved. The perspective of touching work has brought into focus several concerns of this work, by sensitising the investigation in particular to issues of gender and sexualisation, to status, to understandings of embodiment, to the complexities inherent in attempting to pin down and bound such a practice, and regarding a range of considerations relevant to researching the sensuous/sensory.

The lens of touching work has been markedly effective in drawing out the gendering and sexualising of Holistic Massage practice and of (particularly women's) touch. For example, the 'madonna / whore' binary which continues to dominate 'everyday' portrayals of both women and touching is borne out through work which draws on stereotypically 'feminine' traits, and whose practitioners have to perpetually negotiate and redraw boundaries between sexual and nurturing forms of touch. A particularly interesting facet of this is that practitioners do not attempt to challenge the dichotomisation of touch, but instead work to one side of it, positioning themselves as

nurturers. In this sense, the role of the 'ideal' massage practitioner is removed from the realm of the sexual and the stigma that comes with this, via a form of boundary work which female massage practitioners have most likely been doing since this work began to be marketised, and have certainly been engaged in for at least a century.[272] But this is also a distinctly feminised and conservative typification, operating within essentialised notions of womanhood. So, while CAM practices may be in some ways associated with 'alternative' lifestyles, this does not equate to their being overtly politicised in this sense, nor to a primary goal of challenging the conventions of gender.

Where the idea of touching work does pose more of a challenge, I argue, is to occupational stereotypes, in the way practitioners are remunerated precisely for their touching skills. It may not always be marketed thus, or understood as such by clients, so this remains something of a moot point. But what practitioners charge £40 or £50 pounds per hour for is, as far as they are concerned, their combined skill in (what I as a sociologist call) body and emotion management.[273] This tests the assumption that emotional labour, by its nature, goes unrewarded. It also challenges Hochschild's (1983) suggestion that emotional labour is intrinsically alienating, bringing about a 'transmutation' which detaches the individual from their emotions and their bodies on the whole. While the work that practitioners do in order to cultivate the appropriate emotional and physical state in themselves and their clients is without doubt emotion work, the end result is articulated by practitioners as a (present, aware) being-in-the-world transformed for the better. To suggest that this is not the case, that they are dupes of some other imperative, would be to undermine their agency, their professional practice and experience, and their understandings of their own embodiment.

The gender of those who do touching work also plays a significant part in larger-scale, shared understandings of the competencies which comprise Holistic Massage and the intuitive knowledge which practitioners embody. While I argue that it is their touching skills which Holistic Massage practitioners sell, there are significant associations of this form of knowledge which need to be addressed here, particularly in respect to whether supposedly 'feminine' skills are understood as skills at all. As Belenky et al have noted:

[272] Which the example of the Society of Trained Masseuses noted earlier demonstrates.
[273] And, as noted earlier, while they may not charge the £60 upwards which is common for Spa/Beauty Massage, these fees go directly to them rather than to an employer.

> '…the commonly accepted stereotype of women's thinking as emotional, intuitive, and personalized has contributed to the devaluation of women's minds and contributions, particularly in Western technologically oriented cultures which value rationalism and objectivity […]. It is generally assumed that intuitive knowledge is more primitive, therefore less valuable, than so-called objective modes of knowing.' (Belenky et al [1986]1997:6)

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, Holistic Massage is a site in which the conflict between 'objective'/mainstream and 'subjective'/subjugated knowledge forms is particularly evident. While practitioners are charging for touching skills, these nevertheless do not to attain the same recognition as skills with a 'rational' basis because their competencies are seen to stem from devalued feminised knowledge forms. When talking about it, even practitioners themselves struggle to decide whether their Holistic Massage competencies are acquired skills or innate abilities; and this conflict is supported by the need felt by practitioners to be able to justify their actions with reference to hard sciences such as anatomy and physiology.[274] The centrality to the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge of embodied and intuitive knowledge – of touching as a means of knowing – creates significant problems with regard to the status of the work and the recognition it receives. Practitioners may well sell skilled touching, but the persistent devaluing of touch in the hierarchy of the senses, and of feminised ways of knowing, means that this work continues to be relatively marginal, regardless of how elaborate and extensive its stock of knowledge may be.

There is a complicating factor in the argument which says practitioners are rewarded specifically for their touching work skills, however, and this relates to the labour intensiveness of Holistic Massage work. That practitioners can charge upwards of £40 per hour for their skills means that Holistic Massage compares favourably with other forms of body work (care work, or the more routinised areas within hair and beauty work, for example) and is comparable with other CAM practices. But the nature of their skills and of the work as a whole places definite limitations on their earning capacity. The combination of intensive emotional and bodily labour which makes Holistic Massage 'touching work' means it is all but impossible to do in a full-time capacity, which in turn means that what practitioners can potentially earn from it is significantly reduced. This is the case even when compared to other CAM practices such as

[274] Although this expectation is of course also built in to the structure of massage training courses, with the prerequisite of a practice-related certificate in these sciences.

Acupuncture or Osteopathy in which practitioners can and do work eight hour days, five or six days a week. In this sense, looking at what the financial rewards of Holistic Massage add up to in terms of full-time earnings, the extent to which it is financially rewarded is debatable.[275]

Another complexity which the touching work lens has brought to the fore relates to the ideally typified Holistic Massage practitioner, who has a distinctive orientation to their own embodiment, which is highly aware and in-the-moment. The stock of knowledge with which they operate represents and facilitates this. However, this is not to say that their knowledge is implemented in a universally holistic way, in the sense of always treating mind-body-spirit as an integrated 'whole'. In fact, in many instances of practitioners' talk, clients become 'bodies' rather than people, in a way which is suggestive of a somewhat disembodied selfhood in which the body is a container for, rather than embodiment of, the self.[276] While notions of embodied memory and emotion play a significant part in how practitioners talk about bodies/people, the expression or release of emotions is often articulated as something which takes place through the body, positioning the body as a channel rather than the embodiment of emotions in and of itself. However, the broad aim of Holistic Massage, as articulated by my participants, is to create a whole: to (re)integrate mind and body.[277] This work is an ongoing process in which clients are more-or-less always in a state of dys-integration, a state of being which can be improved via Holistic Massage. Talking about Holistic Massage in this way creates a discursive space for Holistic Massage, and resonates with the concept of the 'body project' (Shilling 1993), which is also an ongoing processes without a definitive end point.

In actuality, practitioners do identify endings to treatment for individual clients, such as when their needs go beyond the practitioner's expertise. However, the absence of a more clearly established, generally recognisable end point which is identifiable to a lay person may create a problem for Holistic Massage. This issue is common to many CAM and is

[275] This underlines the fact that Holistic Massage is not commensurable with rationalisation.
[276] Interestingly, this idea of a container is more reminiscent of the 'masculinist' perspectives on bodies presented by Johnson (1990) and others, which practitioners talk in some ways challenges and in others conforms to.
[277] This is comparable with Leder and Krucoff's (2008) idea that people may need or seek reintegration of mind and body after a period of illness, which can disrupt the relationship between them or the operating of the two as one.

intrinsic to the notion of 'well-being', conceived not just as an absence of illness but as the potential for some kind of ideal state of being. The unboundedness of Holistic Massage as a course of treatment feeds into a scepticism around private CAM practices that financial incentives may influence whether or not practitioners will suggest ending a course of treatment (cf. Bendelow 2009;[278] Coward 1989; Sered and Agigan 2008). Of course it is in the practitioner's interest to maintain a steady flow of clients. However, it would raise significant ethical questions to suggest that the open-endedness of Holistic Massage and other marketised touching work practices is of a (solely) pecuniary origin. It would also be somewhat one-sided to suggest that this is exclusive to CAM, as it could equally be applicable to any health-related practices in which 'patients' become 'clients'. The fact that there may be more suspicion toward CAM practitioners reflects the fact that paid-for healthcare is not the norm in the UK. It is also indicative of lingering associations with 'quackery', from which even the most regulated and controlled CAM practices continue to suffer, and from which the more esoteric do little to protect themselves. But crucially, this open-endedness also points to the body-as-project: a process which, while grounded in material bodies, is unbounded and potentially limitless.

This focus in this thesis on one touching work practice amongst an array was a deliberate choice in order to allow for analytical depth rather than surface-level comparison, and it has proven a fruitful one, given the specific issues which this close examination of Holistic Massage has brought out. One further point relating to touching work is that this lens has enabled an examination of the utility of 'holism' as a concept in the context of a nominally 'Holistic' practice. What holism translates to in practitioners' day-to-day work is not straight forward, as previous chapters have shown. It does mean that mind and body are both considered, and Holistic Massage does differ from other practices which are less concerned with mental/emotional wellbeing in the ways practitioners have suggested in earlier chapters. On the whole, however, it seems that 'Holistic', even with a capital 'H', is a broad category with porous boundaries, and which denotes an overall orientation as much as a specific set of practices.

[278] In which a CAM user notes that practitioners 'never say don't come back' (Bendelow 2009:115).

There remains significant scope for comparison with contemporary research which uses the key concept of body work, in particular that which focuses on healthcare in general (see Twigg et al 2011) and CAM in particular (such as Gale 2011; Tarr 2011). These examples are suggestive of the intriguing sociological directions which might be taken in terms of talking about the active interaction of bodies which work on bodies, of attempts to overcome dualistic thinking and, crucially, of the social meanings of CAM practices, for the practitioners who make up this occupational group and whose perspectives are under-researched. The benefits of the methodology used here mean that there is rich potential for future research to be achieved through further close examination of talk in these other aspects. Gathering together the issues and conceptual points made here and moving forward with them, I argue that the lens of touching work has drawn out a range of sociologically interesting issues. By underscoring the indivisibility of mind and body, it also offers a possibility for going beyond dichotomous thinking about touch(ing), and it contributes to an embodied sociology: one which takes embodiment as the grounds for, rather than a sub-discipline of, sociological research, and which takes account of power relations in and hierarchies of senses, forms of work, and ways of knowing.

Schutzian sociology in practice

What has been presented in the preceding chapters is an embodied phenomenology that considers the intersubjective and intercorporeal interactions between practitioners and clients from the embodied perspective of practitioners. A phenomenological orientation has meant focusing on the composition of the intersubjectively shared knowledge which constitutes Holistic Massage as a social phenomenon, and which underpins it as a social practice. Most significant has been the aim to make explicit what is usually tacit or considered ineffable, so that what Holistic Massage 'is' might be better understood, and so that the embodied skills through which it is accomplished might be made more sociologically visible or, rather, tangible.[279] In Schutzian terms this has involved explicating the everyday knowledge which is usually taken for granted by those who do this type of touching work. Elucidating a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge has foregrounded a range of issues, including what it is possible for practitioners to say about it; how it is typified and why; and how its constituent competencies fit together. It has also drawn out interesting phenomenological-sociological questions in the

[279] The idea of drawing out the unspoken – and the potentially untalkable – has been pivotal, and more will be said on the significance of the 'talk' component of this thesis in a moment.

examination of talk and specifically talking about touch – questions which I return to in the closing section of the chapter.

An embodied phenomenological approach to doing this research has been effective in highlighting the complexities inherent in attempting to disentangle and label different stocks of knowledge. Take, for example, the question of the 'spiritual'. While I have discussed the integration of mind and body in touching work above, the spiritual element of the holistic triumvirate has been somewhat neglected and requires further comment here. Earlier in the thesis I questioned the conflation by some researchers of CAM practices with religion and 'faith healing', and I suggested that the characterisation of CAM as comprised by primarily 'spiritual' practices is ultimately misleading. Moreover, I debate the claim that:

> 'the simplest – and indeed the most significant – thing that can be said of this alternative [CAM] knowledge regime is that, by and large, it inverts the valuation of the mainstream binary between reason and intuition' (Barcan 2010:131)

While this may be the case for Barcan's 'spiritual healers', it is certainly not so for Holistic Massage practitioners, who work eclectically with both 'rationalist' and 'intuitive' epistemologies. Which is valued more varies in different contexts and times, and for different practitioners. This is not to say there are no resonances with this type of healing: there clearly are, particularly in 'disrupt[ion of] the type of binary logic that sharply distinguishes the physical from metaphysical, matter from spirit […], I from Other' (Johnston 2010:69).[280] Moreover, aspects of awareness-enhancing body practices which deal with the metaphysical (such as meditation and Tai Chi) do feature in Holistic Massage training, as explained in earlier chapters. But I would argue that this is not done in a way which necessarily involves commitment to a different lifestyle or form of spirituality per se. And, significantly, it does not necessarily draw on the 'spiritual' in the sense either of religiosity or, crucially, of disembodiment. Hence, I maintain that associating Holistic Massage primarily with spirituality, 'alternative' lifestyles, or even 'new social movements', is too limiting.

[280] See Johnstone for a fascinating account of spiritual healing in which he proposes the concept of the 'subtle body' as 'an embodied interface between the metaphysical and the physical' (2010:69).

Aspects of such practices are instead used pragmatically, alongside aspects of other forms of being and doing, including those of mainstream science. What results is an embedded, local way of knowing which combines relevant parts of different bodies of knowledge – including anatomy, physiology, psychoneuroimmunology, psychotherapy, Taoist, Buddhist and Hindu philosophies – into a workable, applied holistic practice.[281] There are paradoxes in this knowledge. It can on the one hand be understood as a pragmatic uniting of strands of different ways of knowing about bodies in a way that enables practitioners to use the 'best bits' of each, a combination which seems likely to be part of its appeal to practitioners and clients alike. The range of sources drawn on also means that practitioners can tailor their explanations of what they do in a way that they judge best suited to their clients. But the eclectic make-up of this stock of knowledge, being neither entirely one nor the other, may also maintain the position of the practice as marginal.[282] The unboundedness of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge may be in this sense an inherent limitation to the wider appeal of the practice.

What a Schutzian perspective on the social distribution of stocks of knowledge has done is bring to light the over-simplicity of any attempt to draw a line between one kind of stock and another. Just as there are aspects of 'common-sense' in mainstream science, so there are aspects of scientific, holistic, and common-sense thinking in the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge utilised in the day-to-day work of practitioners. These touching workers thus use ways of knowing about, and being-in, the world which blend aspects of scientific understandings of people with epistemologies which are more esoteric but which are nonetheless grounded in practitioners' embodied experience. And while there are aspects of Holistic Massage knowledge which can be 'pinned down' without being damaged or reduced, it must also be understood that this is an open and fluid stock of knowledge, rather than one with closed or fixed boundaries. Approaching a Holistic Massage way of knowing as an embodied stock of knowledge allows for the multitude of influences which are built into a practice that is over time interpreted

[281] This 'combination, hybridisation and customisation' of knowledges is characteristic of many CAM and underlines the fact that an 'inflexible taxonomy' of these practices neither desirable nor possible' (Barcan 2010:129).

[282] Indeed, given the hegemony of biomedical/scientific knowledge, it is perhaps a wonder that these other means of knowing are able to get a foothold at all. Although doctors also draw on 'intuitive' knowledge (see Adams 2000; Illich 1976), they do so from a position of higher status, and with the established power of their profession behind them.

through/by differently embodied people, and also for the dynamism and potential for change in this group of embodied competencies.

I maintain my earlier assertion that understanding Holistic Massage as spiritual, in the sense of being either 'disembodied' or 'religious', may be specious. But, having said this, the persistence of the 'something more' which has permeated the discussion in preceding chapters may point to the 'spiritual' in a broader sense. Rather than signifying the discarnate and disembodied, the 'something-more-as-spiritual' can be seen as a distinctly embodied, inter-corporeal phenomenon: an acutely embodied intersubjectivity. That is to say, it is a way of knowing that, whether or not it is easily articulated, is shared through touching and through the controlled and negotiated presentations of self associated with emotional labour and body work (cf. Crossley 2008) and, of course, through talk. This is most clearly exemplified in the communication which is articulated as taking place pre-reflexively between bodies/people in massage, but is diffuse throughout the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge. Understanding the spiritual component of mind/body/spirit trio in this way contributes to an understanding of Holistic Massage as underpinned by an orientation to human embodiment which attempts to account for its multifacetedness and indivisibility of these components.

An exploration of typifications in the context of Holistic Massage has also proven sociologically enlightening, particularly in what it has allowed me to say about routinisation and the un/bounding of the practice. From a practitioner's perspective Holistic Massage is typifiable in some interesting ways, and particularly in the sense that it comprises a set of habits, physical actions, even 'customs', which are shared and recognisable at a local level amongst practitioners (see Schutz 1964). Contrastingly, however, they also argue that it is not typified in the sense of being routinised: as has been noted earlier, this is anathema to the way in which practitioners talk about and present their work and ties closely to their job satisfaction. Neither is Holistic Massage typified in a standardised, institutionalised way: that is to say, it is not associated with a socially approved set of laws or regulations, or at least not fully so. Furthermore, it is notable that the notion of typification articulated in how the practitioners talk, which emerged in interviews primarily as quite detailed specifications of the nature of their work, tied in to its unboundedness and inarticulability.

It seems likely that there will be further attempts to schematise Holistic Massage, as is increasingly the case with many CAMs as their practitioners attempt to become more accepted mainstream healthcare workers, and the conflict between this and a continued resistance to routinisation and standardisation is clear. Holistic Massage cannot progress much further in the socio-political process of becoming a 'profession' until it has full control over the stock of knowledge of which it is comprised (see Freund and McGuire 1995).[283] Not only this, but also, while Holistic Massage continues outwith 'socially approved' standardisation (Schutz 1964), its practitioners will continue to have to work doubly hard at maintaining boundaries for themselves, in order that they achieve the desired interaction between themselves and their clients.

At the same time this begs the question of the extent to which it might be possible for practitioners to take ownership of a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge without diluting a dynamic phenomenon. How standardisation might be done whilst maintaining the essence of what Holistic Massage is, as its practitioners articulate it, is a significant question for future research. Hanging on to the trope of the 'something more' may, in practice, involve toeing a legislative line in order to gain recognition, whilst practitioners quietly do as they have always done.[284] What this points to is that, on the one hand, CAM practitioners can be characterised as 'reluctant professionalisers' (Cant and Sharma 1995) who purposefully elude the bureaucratisation of their work. On the other, it begs the question of what the aims and expectations of professionalisation and regulation are for CAM practitioners. Is mainstreaming and integration an end in itself, or might the concern lie more in the recognition and legitimation of their (currently devalued, stigmatised, discredited) knowledge? In the case of Holistic Massage I would say there are aspects of both these concerns. The impact of statutory regulation on those CAM practices which have in the UK already been subject to it (Osteopathy, Chiropractic, and imminently, Herbal Medicine) is as yet un-researched, although significant lessons for other practices could be drawn from this. Sociologists of CAM

[283] Should professionalisation be the aim, this would involve: '(1) achieving standardization and cohesion within the profession; (2) convincing the state at various levels to grant a monopoly […]; and (3) gaining public respect and persuading the public to accept the profession's definitions of what problems properly should be brought to it for service' (Freund and McGuire 1995:208).

[284] If Holistic Massage and similar CAM do proceed to statutory regulation, a fruitful area of investigation would be the compromises required, how these are negotiated, and the extent to which they do or do not water down metaphysical components of the stock of knowledge: the 'muting of metaphysical overtones' which Adams et al (2009:796) suggest may be necessary for the successful integration of CAM into the mainstream.

have a responsibility to pay attention to activities and practices which might negatively impact on the 'something more', and to critique not only the knowledge bases of CAM practices, but also the directions in which they might lead themselves or be led by outside forces. This is particularly interesting in a time in which biomedical hegemony is increasingly challenged, and where there is potentially greater space for alternative knowledge forms to (re)emerge.

Overall, a phenomenological orientation has facilitated the exploration of Holistic Massage as an embodied phenomenon and of touch as a way of knowing about and being in the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Schutz 1967). Having explored in detail the ways in which practitioners know about themselves and others through touch, I continue to see this as a valuable perspective. Although my initial thinking on the matter stressed the relevance of touch in a narrow or direct interpretation, touching – in the dual senses of physical and emotional contact and affect – has in fact proven pivotal to all the aspects of the Holistic Massage stock of knowledge which have been set out in this thesis. The penultimate section of this chapter will address what has been gained from researching touch through talk.

Talking about touching in a narratively-informed Schutzian phenomenology

A narrative inquiry approach has been the overall orientation to the research taken in this thesis, and has been implemented through the examination of talk. This has involved the close analysis of detailed transcripts of interviews,[285] made possible by the cooperation of the extremely helpful women practitioners, to whom I am indebted for their willingness to talk frankly about their embodied experience of working.[286] Throughout this thesis, talk has been positioned, not as offering access to some inner 'reality' but, within a phenomenological framework, as the key way in which the social world is

[285] The detail of these transcripts combined with an analysis of both the form and content of interviews, has created a space in which I have been able to present a significant amount of the interview data. This has the added advantage of allowing the reader to judge for themselves as to the representativeness or trustworthiness of the analytical claims made (see Riessman 1990).

[286] It has been suggested that to bring the research participant's body in as the focus of discussion in an interview 'is almost like asking someone to get undressed in front of you' (Cunningham-Burley and Backett-Milburn 1998:145). While this may have been the case to some extent in my interviews (somewhat ironically given that this is what practitioners ask of their clients every day), that this was not a significant stumbling block could be attributed to the fact that these practitioners are accustomed to a reflective, metaphorical undressing in their day-to-day work, as they go through the body and emotion work required to bring about an effective Holistic Massage.

constituted and/or intersubjectively known and, to borrow Crossley's (1996a) phrase, as the 'fabric of social becoming'. The examination of practitioners' talk has made explicit the intersubjectively shared typifications related to their work; their perspectives on what Holistic Massage is, how it is successfully accomplished and what it means to do it; and more generally their ways of knowing about the social world. Bearing in mind the Schutzian concern with context, this has also involved attending not only to what was said, but how and why reasons or explanations were given.

A significant advantage of a focus on the 'typifying medium par excellence' (Schutz 1967) is that it has allowed for a robust examination of the ways and means by which practitioners understand their work, using their language, and contextualised in how they account for their lifeworlds. What remains to be discussed from the point of view of narrative inquiry – which, as I have emphasised, need not focus solely on the small-scale whilst sidelining bigger concerns – are the connections between local issues and the larger-scale sociological and methodological questions these may raise and/or offer responses to. By drawing together phenomenological sociology and narrative inquiry in the way I have, I have explored a range of wider resources drawn on by practitioners to explain what they do and, in so doing, I have made explicit at both an individual and a societal level the potential of the accounts offered by my participants and the resources on which they draw to do so.

An example of a pronounced interaction between the shape of talk and what it does exists where participants were noticeably self-conscious about what they were saying, or felt the need to explain and contextualise their accounts (which the loosely-structured approach to interviewing had left largely up to them). Almost all the participants volunteered to contextualise themselves via a 'coming to massage' story, some of the context-specific reasons for which I have suggested earlier.[287] But individual motives aside, that these coming to massage stories were a common occurrence also suggests something more general, and points to the Schutzian question of the circumstances in which a speaker gives reasons for what they say or feels the need to explain themselves, three aspects of which can be noted here. Firstly, by providing a back-story to their doing Holistic Massage, the participants usually related their practice to personal

[287] Such as a concern for the privacy of clients, and my expressed interest in their experience.

experience of the efficacy of massage, and thus justified their initial interest in it in terms of an embodied knowing. Secondly, intrinsic in these accounts is a distinction between health-oriented and Spa/Beauty Massage, and so their claims to involvement in a serious practice are established early, and are fundamental to their accounts of their work and to their self-presentation overall. Thirdly, that participants felt the need to contextualise their work in this way also speaks to the fact that the move into Holistic Massage was frequently a deliberate career change. This circumstance, together with the reflexive awareness cultivated in Holistic Massage, means that they have often given significant thought to the process of how they came to do it and why.

Where practitioners became uncomfortable with what was being discussed in the interviews occurred most frequently in relation either to 'sex' or to 'science': the two directions from which their knowledge and practice is most likely to be challenged, devalued and stigmatised. The 'question' of sex has already been addressed in Chapter Five, but what it is worth adding here is that – while I was originally undecided whether sex and sexuality would be a productive area of discussion, or whether it might alienate participants, make them feel defensive, or cause them to think me judgemental or misguided about their work – I am now convinced that the interrelation between Holistic Massage work and sex (work) is an essential point to note. While this is no doubt an uncomfortable association for would-be healthcare workers – and while there was a general sense amongst my interviewees that massage is less sexualised today than in previous times – it is a persistent association nonetheless, and one which speaks of the equally unrelenting, widespread heteronormative sexualisation of touching work and the women who do it. Underlining this makes more tangible the potential challenges these women face at an everyday level: to their safety, their working practices, and to their professional identities and sense of self.

In suggesting that the interviewees were uncomfortable when talking about 'science', on the other hand, what I refer to are the ways in which they incorporated what I have described in preceding chapters as 'pseudo-science' into their accounts of Holistic Massage. In the sense that a 'common language' is necessary for 'genuine collaboration' between biomedicine and CAM (Sharma 2002), their drawing on the narrative resources of physiology, biology and neuroscience as well as more marginalised knowledge forms may be a judicious step. They also of course drew on knowledge of mind-body practices,

energetic and humoral understandings of bodies, and the suggestion that 'humoral' conceptions of the body may be more prevalent than might be expected in the contemporary west is certainly the case here (cf. Lupton 1998). Participants were not universally uncomfortable with drawing on these conflicting ways of knowing: those who teach were, not surprisingly, more likely to pull together these different epistemological strands fluently and unproblematically. But those with less extensive experience approached this with more marked unease. They self-consciously spoke of 'hippy' or 'weird' ways of knowing, were sometimes gently derisive of popular notions of holism and explicitly flagged this in their talk. This may not be surprising, given the epistemological dominance of mainstream science. But it also suggests that these practitioners do not aim to commit fully to one way of knowing about bodies to the exclusion of the other, and thus truly 'complementary', even 'integrative', approach to knowledge.

While the practitioners were at times uncomfortable with the conflicts in the resources available to them through which they might express their knowledge of bodies and being, I too became uncomfortable in writing about their resulting formulations as 'pseudo-science'. I came to feel that the slightly derogatory undertones of the 'pseudo' prefix could be interpreted as a judgement on their presentation of this knowledge, which would surely have vindicated their unease.[288] What I propose as a more effective (and less inadvertently judgemental) concept for understanding these aspects of their stock of knowledge is as a practical 'ethnophysiology', specifically tailored to their work. I use this term less with the implications of 'ethnoscience', which is used in a range of contexts to signify an ethnography of knowledge (Werner 1969). Rather I employ it in parallel with the term 'ethnopharmacology', as applied by Bloor et al (1998) in relation to steroid use, and understandings of their effects which do not rely solely (if at all) on medical definitions but on locally tailored and context-specific outcomes. In the present

[288] Writing on boundary work, Gieryn specifically cites 'pseudo' as a prefix used by those aiming to maintain the hegemony of their knowledge, on a par with terms such as 'deviant' and 'amateur' (1983:792); and mainstream medical researchers writing on CAM dismiss anecdotal accounts using this very term. Atwood, for example, highlights the concern that mainstream medics cannot tell, merely from surveys of CAM use, the extent to which such use is reasonable, as opposed to being 'based in pseudoscientific, magical or uninformed thinking' (2009:788, my emphasis).

context, ethnophysiology combines intuitive or esoteric epistemologies with dominant scientific ways of knowing into a practicable stock of knowledge to hand.[289]

Another point highlighted by attending to the talk of individuals as it relates to larger-scale concerns is that, while there is evidence of a shared Holistic Massage stock of knowledge across practitioners, there is a lack of continuity in the language used in talking about Holistic and other Massage practices (Goldstone 2000). In terms of larger scale discourse, while there is an existing body of massage literature, the variability in language used in contemporary massage practice – including that used by my participants – on the one hand disguises what can in fact be framed as a long-established stock of knowledge on massage and, on the other, undermines knowledge claims based on it. This echoes existing (usually feminist-influenced) accounts of the obliteration of older stocks of embodied healthcare knowledge (see in particular Ehrenreich and English [1973]2010), and points to the advantages of a more schematised language of Holistic Massage.

I acknowledged early in this thesis that investigating touch sociologically might be somewhat difficult if done via talk. But this was not sufficient reason not to investigate in this way the sociological questions in which I was interested. In fact, an argument I pursued was that approaching it via talk highlights something extremely interesting about the supposed inarticulability or ineffability of touch. A potential limitation to talking about touching work has been highlighted by, for example, the differences between my interest in habitual narratives and practitioners' understandings of what they do. This is best interpreted as telling of the broader ways in which touch and touching work are understood: the fact that practitioners rejected some (researcher-imposed) ways of talking about their work in favour of others sediments their claim to doing specialised, un-routinised work.[290] I suggested earlier in the thesis that the 'dematerialising tendency' characteristic of other body work (Twigg 2000b) is not present to the same degree in Holistic Massage. But, if practitioners are deliberately not talking about touching, this may be understood as evidence to the contrary, of them distancing themselves from

[289] There potentially persists in the 'ethno-' prefix an implication of the dominance of objective 'fact' over culturally embedded 'value'. However, anthropologists have long-since identified this in itself as a facet of scientific dominance, in which biomedicine is 'assumed to lie beyond culture' (Gaines and Hahn 1985; also Good 1994).

[290] That my methodology enabled me to recognise and accommodate this rejection and allow practitioners' interpretations come to the fore is another significant advantage to note here.

bodies by refusing to talk about them. What it certainly is evidence of is the messiness of talk, which in turn reflects the messiness of everyday social life. The intricacies of and contradictions in the way practitioners talk about what they do are testament to the complex character of the professional practices in which they engage.

A narrative-informed sociological phenomenology has the potential to tell the sociological investigator much about not only people's meaning-making, but about the narrative resources or stocks of knowledge in which they are enmeshed. Since the stock of knowledge is intersubjectively shared, and is built of component parts from predecessors, contemporaries, and aspect of the general social milieu of the speaker, the talk by which participants express themselves is not only an individual voice, but pre-eminently a social one.

Coda on gender

A point which has not been explicitly addressed thus far, and which is of significance to the overall shape of my research, is the extent to which the data, and so the analysis, presented here might have differed had the group of interviewees not been entirely female.[291] The best way in which I can discuss this is to make a comparison with my earlier research on male massage practitioners (Purcell 2007; 2009), and I suggest five points of particular relevance.

The first is that a thematic difference might have arisen in relation to the boundaries that male practitioners would be likely to draw and the practices they might choose to associate their work with. Comparisons with Spa/Beauty work were no more favourable in my earlier research than they have been here, so there is something of a commonality: it seems likely that Spa/Beauty massage would continue to be the 'scapegoat' that it has been interpreted as in this analysis. Interestingly, the issue of sex work did arise, although my male interviewees considered this to be more of a concern for their female colleagues.[292] Hence, while the way my female participants talk about sex work is

[291] As noted in Chapter Two, this was not deliberate, and some men were contacted but declined to participate.

[292] Although the assumptions of heteronormativity and threatening male sexuality underpinning the notion of inappropriate behaviour were challenged by one male participant who had encountered the expectation of sexual services from a male client, and another who, as noted earlier, recounted inappropriate behaviour on the part of a female client.

marked with reference to changes over time – elisions with sex work were a problem 'then not now' – an all-male sample may have seen this comparison change to 'them not us'. Secondly, it has been suggested elsewhere that men in conventionally female occupations may be more markedly concerned than their female counterparts with improving the occupational status of their work (Williams and Heikes 1993). This was corroborated by my interviews with men who do massage, who expressed a keen interest in having massage recognised on a par with Physiotherapy. A partially or all-male sample would therefore be likely to shift the focus more explicitly onto professionalisation and codification than has been the case with my female participants.

The third point is phenomenological and regards the issues around which male practitioners might become uncomfortable about or feel the need to offer explanation or justification for what they say. These would be likely to differ from those of my female participants. For example, in relation to their reasons for doing what is stereotypically conceived of as 'women's work', the men I interviewed were generally keen to emphasise that this is a misconception and to explain that there is nothing odd about men doing massage.[293] Some went as far as to suggest that men – with the implication of greater physical strength – are actually better equipped for this work, a re-framing of the skills or competencies involved which is common to men in other feminised occupations (see Simpson 2004; Williams 1993). They also offered explanations for their choice of massage practice in terms not only of their masculinity, but of their typicality (and thus addressed any potential questioning of their motivations).[294] This suggests that had, say, half of my interviewees been male, the dominant themes may have shifted away from the nuances of the embodied competencies comprising Holistic Massage, toward participants' explanations for doing Holistic Massage in the first place. In an all-male

[293] Twigg notes: 'men who work in caring occupations suffer from a series of cultural assumptions that since this is women's work, men who do it must be effeminate and therefore gay. […] They also suffer from the homophobia of male clients, or at least from male anxieties about intimate tending by another man' (Twigg 2000b:130). This was echoed by my male interviewees, one of which underlined the cultural setting where 'men don't touch each other, and they DON'T go to another man for relaxation'.

[294] One, for example, commented that he practiced a clothed form of massage because he is 'a typical [city] Scottish male in that em I still have issues regarding working on somebody that I don't know on the skin with just towels protecting'.

sample, analysing this data therefore could have required closer focus on managing a potentially 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1968) than has been the case here.[295]

The fourth, also phenomenological, point relates to data production. The broad impact of gender on the interview interaction has long been acknowledged (DeVault 2002; Oakley 1981; Riessman 1987) and the specific context of women interviewing men has also been addressed (Arendell 1997; Broom et al 2009; McDowell 1998).[296] From a phenomenological perspective, what is significant here is that the basic assumptions underpinning what is intersubjectively shared between the interviewees and I would change with mixed or exclusively male interviewees, since the assumptions of common experience afforded by congruent gender in the interview would be removed. The possibilities for differences in an all-male sample are vast but might include, for instance, the assumption that I would think women are better suited to doing massage, or that it should rightfully be considered 'women's work'. This could contribute to talk of a more cynical, defensive or persuasive character.

Given the recognised differences in the ways men and women talk (see Coates 2004; DeVault 2002), it is likely that a half male / half female sample would have seen greater diversity in the language – that is the typifications – which make up the stock of knowledge. And, from the perspective that men have freer access to linguistic resources, and find it easier than women to be 'speaking subjects' (DeVault 2002),[297] it is possible that an exclusively male sample may have drawn more extensively on established tropes.[298] Moreover, the impact of gender on embodiment, on shaping ways of doing and being (Young 1980),[299] means that they ways in which men and women actually do Holistic Massage may differ. Given that western hegemonic masculinity does not typically foreground bodily awareness and intuition, it would be interesting to

[295] While this perspective has relevance to the data analysed here - in relation to my interviewees' management of the discursive boundary with sex work (see Chapter Five) – it was not dominant in what they chose to talk about.
[296] This literature suggests, amongst other things, that men might be more likely to be directive or 'take charge' as interviewees, and that they may imagine a woman interviewer to expect or be more receptive to 'emotional' talk (Arendell 1997).
[297] Where women, DeVault (2002) argues, are more restricted to relying on 'translations', that is using words which are 'close enough' to convey their (previously unarticulated) everyday experience, but which are effectively conveyed and interpreted between women based on an intersubjective understanding.
[298] Rather than engaging in a process of devising new and (re)claiming existing language, in the way that my female participants did (see next section).
[299] See also Crossley (1996b).

investigate whether or not male practitioners of Holistic Massage find it any more difficult to acquire/develop and talk about embodied skills such as 'presence' and 'awareness', or whether they might tend toward the emphasis of specifically physical strength.[300] This begs a fifth point – whether what I have conceptualised in the thesis as a feminised/feminist form of knowledge could have emerged as thus from men's talk – and to this I would give a qualified yes, with the recognition that the knowledge may be embodied and deployed in a different way.

What I can say with some certainty is that the fact that my sample turned out to be exclusively female is indicative of the female-dominance of Holistic Massage, and of the fact that men who practice CAM tend to gravitate less to the 'softer', stereotypically female, practices and more toward the relatively mechanistic and mainstreamed areas of the field such as (within massage's sub-genres) Sports Massage and (in CAM more broadly) Osteopathy and Acupuncture. The ways in which these healthcare practices are gendered warrants further investigation that would require both male and female participants. What should also be noted is that it is essential to bear in mind gender as not only a set of issues which shape a stock of knowledge, but also as an influencing factor on how that knowledge emerges in the context of the interview.

Towards a narratively-informed sociological phenomenology of touching work: a conclusion

The argument in the preceding chapters provides the component parts of a narratively-informed sociological phenomenology of touching work, which are: Schutzian phenomenological theory, a topical sensitisation to the phenomenon of interest as touching work, and an overall methodological orientation to the significance and analysis of talk. In the course of producing this phenomenology, what this thesis has also done – somewhat more diffusely – is to question the stock of methodological knowledge on which sociology is based, which tends to focus on the tangible and the easily articulated, sidelining and confining significant phenomena such as touch to the 'inarticulable' and therefore unknowable. However, what has become clear across the preceding analysis is that, far from being silent and unknowable, touch is talked about,

[300] The gendered differences in understandings of pain noted by Bendelow (2000) may be transferable to constructions of touch, in the sense that there are powerful existing discourses which cast women and men as managing (and being expected to manage) emotions in distinct ways.

and extensively so. In some cases this talk revolved around its different qualities or uses, while in others it centred on the difficulty or impossibility of talking about it. Crucially, either way, this nonetheless constitutes talk about touch, and talk which says something significant about touch and about UK/western social attitudes to it. As a means of concluding my argument, and in order to pursue analysis of this, I take a short detour into Foucault's (1979) critique of Victorian discourse on sex, which offers a useful analogy here.[301]

Volume One of Foucault's The History of Sexuality (1979) begins with an ironic take on Victorian attitudes to sex, caricatured in the 'image of the imperial prude' and characterised overall by the 'repressive hypothesis' which has come to dominate Euro-American thinking on sex. He parodies the widely received notion that, in confining sex to certain spaces (the asylum, the brothel), there was for the Victorians 'nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know' (Foucault 1979:4). No longer an openly public matter, as it had been in earlier periods (cf. also Elias [1939]2000), sex-talk was as a result supposedly silenced.

In his now classic challenge to the repressive hypothesis, Foucault argues quite the opposite, and aims 'to examine the case of a society which […] speaks verbosely of its own silence [on sex, and] takes great pains to relate in detail the things it does not say' (Foucault 1979:8, my emphasis). By way of this exploration he establishes that, rather than 'silencing' sex, what resulted was instead an explosion of medical, psychiatric, judicial and other ways of talking about sex, brought into being by a 'regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse' (1979:34). Foucault's reading of the eighteenth century boys' boarding school, for example, finds sex to be all-pervasive, in 'the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organisation' (Foucault 1979:28). It is clear from the written codes which dictated the shape of all spaces and all behaviours within the school, and which 'referred, in the most prolix manner, to the sexuality of children' not only that 'the question of sex was a constant preoccupation', but also that '[a]ll who held a measure of authority were placed in a state of perpetual alert' (Foucault 1979:28; my emphasis). Foucault's goal in drawing this out is to investigate not so much why we are repressed, but why we say that this is the case

[301] I use Foucault's perspective precisely as an analogy and do not mean to imply an emphasis on sexual aspects of touch.

and, in so doing: 'to account for the fact that it [sex] is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak' (Foucault 1979:8).[302] There are distinct echoes of the Schutzian questions explored in this thesis of when and why speakers give reasons or explanations for what they say and why they do so at a given time, as well as who is doing the speaking and with what authority or power. Hence, it is from this perspective that I utilise the analogy of Foucault's critique to touch and touching work.

There are clear parallels between what Foucault says about sex and what can be said about touch in light of the analysis presented in this thesis. In terms of the details, it is perhaps not surprising that there are significant parallels between touch and sex, given the ways in which they are often understood to be intertwined. Touch has become privatised, supposedly removed from the public sphere and confined to the private and, moreover, to the sphere of 'erotic relations' (Twigg 2000a). Subsequently there has been a development of recognised and accepted spaces for touching: one of which being the CAM centre or massage treatment room.[303] Furthermore, there are ever-tightening codes of who may touch who and when, which in themselves exemplify another explosion of talk about touch. But on a larger scale, the most interesting parallel is with Foucault's overall thesis that while the received wisdom suggests that touch may be difficult to verbalise or wholly untalkable, it is in fact talked about all the time and in a range of ways. It is fruitful to interpret the competencies of tailoring, awareness, presence and the 'something more' as a new language of touch that is deployed while also suggesting that touch lies outside of what can be spoken. Just as, for the Victorians, new ways of talking about sex emerged, what these practitioners are doing is putting touch(ing) into new language, but language which is most certainly about bodies, emotions and touch. This perspective offers a direct contrast to existing research on massage which interprets practitioners' talk about touch as 'sublimating' the body (Oerton and Phoenix 2001).

Local to my participants, this is to an extent a language of touch-as-commodified and professionalised; here touch is something which is dispensed by trained professionals. This is so in order that they stake a claim to the therapeutic and discursive space they are

[302] As well as 'the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said' (Foucault 1979:8).
[303] Cf. also Foucault ([1963]2003) on the evolution of the clinic, noted elsewhere in this thesis.

establishing for themselves. However, and perhaps more interestingly, this emerging language has a more general reach and goes some way to bridge dichotomies of mind/body, affective/instrumental, in that it addresses the physical and emotional components of touching. It is also worth noting the power relationship that the utilisation of this new language implies. The way the Victorians named, and defined as il/legitimate, aspects of sexuality (Foucault 1979) denoted a clear power relation: some sexualities (heterosexual, monogamous) were sanctioned, while others (such as homosexuality) were labelled 'deviant'. There are echoes here not only of the way in which hegemonic mainstream medicine marginalises CAM practices – as has been explored in relation to boundary work, and as is implicit in the labels 'alternative', 'complementary' and others which are applied to these practices – but also of the power practitioners re-direct or create for themselves by devising an innovative language of touching. By deploying this new language around 'local' practices, they mark these out for themselves as something which constitutes (or at least should constitute) a legitimate stock of professional knowledge.

This knowledge is only just beginning to emerge as such, and is not yet codified in any formal way. But it is beginning to crystallise in a way that has the potential to emerge as a broadly identifiable stock of knowledge. In Foucauldian terms, its crystallisation can be understood as an 'insurrection of subjugated knowledge' (Foucault 1980:81), in the sense that this (embodied, tacit, feminised, sometimes 'common-sense') way of knowing has been marginalised/devalued, 'even directly disqualified' from accepted healthcare and body knowledge, and is now being mobilised to (re)establish a discursive space.[304] This knowledge is comprised of those competencies which have been the most extensively examined in this thesis. That is to say, it consists of tailoring to individuals, working with awareness and intuition, being present, touching physically and emotionally, includes the supposedly ineffable 'something more', and is also 'different every time'. Crucially, it also involves working with the 'unbounded', working pragmatically with different strands of knowledge, working open-endedly towards a holistically conceived body project. It involves paradoxes but, in a Schutzian perspective on the social world, these are all parts of its typification. In this sense, the emergence of

[304] Foucault goes on to describe such knowledge as 'a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it' (Foucault 1980:81-2), a comment which could well be applied to CAM.

a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge in this form has some aspects of a re-emergence and others of the development of a new means of knowing. Significantly, this may be interpreted as a feminised/feminist means of knowing in the sense that it is a 'leaky' and 'unbounded' knowledge and practice.[305]

The way in which this stock of knowledge is beginning to crystallise is also an example of the commercialisation of not only intimate, but even 'common-sense', everyday life, and it has the potential to develop into a significant criticism of hegemonic forms of knowledge. Crucially, what this adds up to is, firstly, that this knowledge has to be understood in terms of the paradoxes and complexities in which it consists. And, secondly, that while these aspects may thus far be all that is known, what can be known about Holistic Massage and touching work from this is actually quite substantial.

Consequently, the claim that touch cannot be talked about, counterpoised with the fact that it is talked about everywhere and all the time, makes it sociologically extremely interesting. What has been explored here is the question of who talks about touch, and the perspectives from which they speak, and my thesis has offered some interesting answers with regard to Holistic Massage practitioners, which the narrative-informed phenomenological approach I have adopted has enabled to be expressed. In sum, what my narratively-informed sociological phenomenology of touching work has comprised is a sociological investigation conducted on and through talk, and which offers a perspective on a Holistic Massage stock of knowledge as accounted for by those who do it. It requires the close analysis of both the form and content of these accounts, so that the interplay between these can be examined, and it provides not only a descriptive but also an analytical account of what Holistic Massage 'is'.

In so doing, this phenomenology makes available for sociological examination a range of entangled issues in Holistic Massage practice, including the boundaries that practitioners demarcate, the physical and metaphysical competencies they have and practice, the impact their gender has on their work, how this work is recognised and rewarded, and the narrative resources upon which they (are able to) draw in discussing

[305] While some assume boundedness as the fundament of being (Johnson 1987), feminist critiques have identified this notion, and boundaries themselves, as "essentially" masculine products that seek to "contain" women's corporeal "flows"' (Williams and Bendelow 1998:120). On the unboundedness/ leakiness of female embodiment see Battersby ([1993]1999); Martin (1987); Shildrick (1997).

and accounting for these matters. And, whilst recognising that a whole picture of a phenomenon always involves ‘something more’, it also makes tangible the component parts of this particular form of touching work as these relate to bodies, emotions, senses and work.

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Appendix One
Transcription Conventions

Interviews were transcribed using a modification of the Jefferson system of conversation analysis (Heritage and Atkinson 1984), also drawing on the conventions suggested by Riessman (1993; 2008). As well as presenting the talk itself, these conventions indicate a range of additional features such as words spoken simultaneously or contiguously, non-lexical utterances, pauses, laughter and so on. The version I have used is 'modified' in the sense that it does not adhere to a conversation analytic conventions so closely as to risk fragmenting the data and losing the contextual detail which surrounds it.

In terms of the quotations presented in this thesis, where both the interviewee and I are speaking (and in the dual interview), the layout reflects the sequence in which talk occurred. Hence, sequential talk appears as:

> Sarah: YEAH so you're using your WEIGHT and stuff yeah um
> Carrie: it's much stronger when you're
> Sarah: yeah but also quite often in feels somehow more peaceful

Whereas talk in which there is an overlap appears as:

> Carrie: do you have any particular thoughts about
> Rachel: hmm quite a deep one that one

Amongst other things, transcribing in this way allows for the analysis of possible miscommunication and misunderstandings in the interview interactions, and of the points at which interlocutors cut each other off.

Non-lexical utterances are represented as they sound – as in 'mmm' and 'ah' – and false starts and repetitions are also represented. Other non-lexical features such as laughter are indicated by square brackets: for example '[laughter]', '[gestures]' or [tone of voice]'. Emphasis is indicated by BLOCK CAPITALS and a very strong emphasis by UNDERLINED CAPITALS. Otherwise only proper nouns are capitalised. Pauses are represented by full stops, one for each two second pause.

Lines have been numbered (and these numbers indicated in quotations) for ease of reference, and to give an indication both of the stage of the interview at which particular excerpts took place and the actual length of those excerpts. The co-constructed, dialogic approach outlined in Chapter Two means that the interaction between the interviewees and I has thus been transcribed as fully as reasonably possible. My own questions and utterances are included in the transcripts and in the excerpts quoted where appropriate. Given my commitment to maintaining an interpretation which is close to the data, excerpts are for the most part given in full, other than where the space required was impractical. In these instances omissions are clearly indicated by '[…]'.

While I acknowledge that no system of notation can ever be a total representation of an interview (Atkinson and Heritage 1984), this system comes as close as possible to fully representing the features I interpret as having most significance for the analysis.

Appendix Two
Interview Guides

In accordance with my methodological orientation – which I conceptualise in Chapter Two as a narrative inquiry informed by phenomenological sociology – the approach taken to interviewing in this research involved a loosely structured format which would allow participants freedom to guide the interview in a way which a more structured approach would not (see Chapter Two for further details). Hence, while the interviews were entered into with an overall plan of what might be asked, the actual questions posed varied slightly in relation to interviewees' responses and to the issues which they spontaneously raised. As I wanted the participants to feel they had a fair level of control over what was being said, I did not attempt to stick to a rigid schedule, but rather to allow for flexibility and negotiation in what was talked about. However, since I did aim to focus the interviews to some extent – that is, to encourage the interviewees to talk primarily about Holistic Massage rather than unrelated topics – some guiding questions and prompts were used. With this in mind, the interview guides presented here should be read as templates or guidelines, rather than a definitive list of questions posed to interviewees.

In the interest of explicating the design process, I have included the pilot interview guide here. There were significant differences between the guides used in the four initial scoping interviews (data from which have not been included in the final thesis) and the subsequent nine, given that the guide for the latter was prepared in response to the former. The questions used in the pilot interviews were designed to focus the interviewees' talk on massage in particular (as opposed to other CAM therapies), to encourage them to describe what happens in a massage, and to elicit their ideas on the relevance of professional organisations for their day-to-day work.

Pilot interview guide

Tell me about the kind of massage that you do

How long have you practiced and where did you train?

Tell me about what you do when a person comes to you for massage

And once the person is actually on the table, what happens then?

- *any particular order, how do you start and finish?*

Do you consider the way you work to be holistic?

What are the main things that influence how you work?

- *for example, your training, the room/place where you are working, and particular ideas which underpin your work?*
- *what differences between CAM centre/home (yours or theirs)*

Are you a member of a professional organisation? (Which?)

- *how do you view their role as being, in relation to your work?*
- *do they have a code of practice / ethics etc?*

How much and in what ways does your own body come into your work?

- *do you have to do certain things to look after your body / yourself? (If so, tell me about this)*

Do you have a particular idea of what it means to be 'professional'? (If so, tell me about this)

Is there anything else in particular that you would like to add / talk about?

- *for example, anything we haven't covered which you think is particularly important to what you do, or that would be interesting/important for me to know*

~

For the most part, the above questions worked well and were carried on into the core nine interviews. But, in the course of conducting these pilot interviews, I did become aware of some modifications which would have to be made. The most significant was the need to narrow my focus to one type of massage. It also became apparent that if I wanted to know about touch, I might have to ask more directly about it. Lastly, given the generalised responses to the question of '*Tell me about what you do when a person comes to you for massage',* I would almost certainly have to follow this with '*And once the person is actually on the table, what happens then?',* as participants tended to focus on the initial 'consultation' aspect of the massage.

Having refined my focus, I produced a second guide in which the questions were tailored to Holistic Massage. This template remained very open and minimal in order to maintain its flexibility although, since it was informed by the pilot interviews, it is in many ways more focused toward the potential concerns of the participants. Given my interest in non-verbal aspects of the interviews, this guide also included a number of aide memoirs so that I might also be able to attend to movements, gestures and other physical features of the interaction between myself and the interviewee.

Final interview guide

How long have you been doing massage and where did you train?

Tell me about the kind of massage that you do

Tell me about what you do when a person comes to you for massage

And once the person is actually on the table, what happens then? (eg. do you work in any particular order, how do you start and finish, and how you decide this?)

Is there anything in particular you look for or feel for whilst working?

For you, what is the most important part of what you do when you do Holistic Massage?

Are there certain things you have to do to/ with your body? (eg. other body practices, exercise, supervision etc)

What are the differences between Holistic Massage and other kinds of massage? (And do you always call what you do 'Holistic Massage'?)

Do you have any thoughts about the regulation of massage?

[eye contact, hand gestures, movement, touching me, demonstrating/performing]

~

These questions were tailored to individual participants and not necessarily posed in this order. Additionally, some questions did not need to be asked, since interviewees raised the issues themselves. Further questions were added where clarification was needed or where a particularly interesting issue was raised by the participants that I wanted them to expand on. But, for the most part, I did not ask questions, but simply encouraged the participants to 'tell me about what they do'. Overall, these templates, alongside the extensive quotations and analytical detail which has been presented in this thesis, together serve to give a clear indication of what was asked of the research participants and of the outcome of these questions.