Dancing the Self: How Girls Who Dance in Commercial Dance Studios Construct
a Self Through the Dancing Body

by

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Abstract

Dance has been identified as one of adolescent girls' favourite activities (Clark, Spence & Holt, 2011; Dowda et al., 2006; Wright, Macdonald, & Groom, 2003) and the dance studio as an important site of girls' physical activity (Harrow et al., 2009; Kuo et al., 2003). However, research on dance has largely focused on the experiences of dancers in university or academy settings and less on younger girls (e.g., Aalten, 2004, 2007; Bettle, Bettle, Neumarker, & Neumarker, 2001; Green, 1999, 2001; Kleiner, 2009). Furthermore, dance (particularly ballet), has been critiqued by health and exercise psychology researchers for contributing to eating disordered behaviours and perfectionism (Nordin-Bates, Walker, & Redding, 2011; de Bruin, Bakker, & Oudegans, 2009), and body image disturbances (Bettle et al., 2001; Green, 1999; Penniment & Egan, 2010). This literature has largely focused on critiquing the idealized exceedingly thin, delicate, and long limbed ballet body as an oppressive body.

This doctoral project examines the experiences of adolescent girls who dance in the commercial dance studio. It seeks to expand the understandings and critiques of ballet that have focused on the representational ballet body. This dissertation was guided by the work of French poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault and his concepts of disciplinary power, discourse, and the self to address my overarching question: How do girls who dance in a commercial dance studio construct the self through the moving body? To answer this question I conducted a case study (Stake, 2005) of one advanced level ballet class at a dance studio in a large Western Canadian city. Empirical material was collected through

participant observations of this ballet class over 22 weeks. In addition, I conducted two rounds of semi-structured interviews with 11 female dancers in this class.

My analysis revealed that the dance studio was both a place of discipline and respite for participants. Disciplinary techniques (Foucault, 1979) were deployed in the dance class to train individual bodies through the precise arrangement of time, space, and movement. However, the ballet class also enabled girls to develop meaningful relationships with each other, the teacher, and their own dancing bodies. Additionally, the dance studio provided a reprieve from other complex social settings. Although subjected to disciplinary practices, participants were not rendered completely docile and actively initiated their own creative use of time and space.

Through observations and interviews I examined how my participants' understood the ballet body. They talked about their bodies as the aesthetic body, the skilled body, the careful body, and the expressive body. These results indicate that the discursively constructed idealized ballet body is negotiated alongside other understandings of the dancing body. Although participants acknowledged the desirability of the thin, aesthetically perfect ballet body, their own understandings of their dancing bodies were informed by multiple discourses.

Finally, analysis revealed that girls problematized a feminine adolescent existence through the practice of dance. They also actively problematized (Foucault, 1988b) aspects of the dancing identity, particularly the need to obtain

an extremely thin body, and created new ethical practices for themselves.

Similarly, I located myself in this study and actively problematized my

researching and dancing identities. Through this process I created an ethics that

guided my research and dance practices.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Marianne Clark. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Constructing the Self Through the Dancing Body", No. Pro00023911, November 14, 2011.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dancing is just discovery, discovery, discovery

- Martha Graham

1.0 Introduction

Articulating with eloquence the nature of my scholarly interests to friends, family, and peers has proved challenging at times. I have grasped for words rich enough and concepts capacious enough to adequately capture my intent. For at the centre of my academic interests and indeed of this study lies the moving body, and my wonder at its potential. More specifically, the dancing body, in all of its ethereal beauty, captivates, bewilders and inspires me. It has ignited a curiosity that has proven too persistent to ignore.

Dance as an art form and physical practice is enjoying a moment of increased visibility in contemporary society. Television shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance a*nd blockbuster movies such as *Black Swan* have propelled dance, and the dancing body, into the spotlight of popular culture. As a result, the dancing body hovers over the intersections of popular culture, entertainment, art, and physical fitness. Its image is splashed across fitness magazines spreads, enthralls audiences of prime television shows, and has even prompted fitness crazes such as *Barre Pilates* classes. The dancing body then, presents a unique study of physical culture.

In this dissertation I examine the dancing body and its relationship to self. Specifically, I ask how adolescent girls who dance in commercial dance studios construct the self through the moving, dancing body. In attempts to explain these

interests with some elegance, I have fumbled with a vocabulary and repertoire of theoretical concepts too scant to sufficiently convey my thoughts, questions, and ponderings. The body is no simple force to write about. At once a material and social entity, the (moving) body is continuously shifting, consistently becoming, and in doing so tends to evade satisfactory description, nonetheless definition.

I grew up studying ballet seriously from the age of four years and have always loved physical movement, although this relationship has not been uncomplicated. Countless evenings and Saturdays throughout my childhood and adolescence were spent at the dance studio, and it felt like home. It was my favourite place to be. I would yearn for it when I wasn't there, and daydream about ballet when I wasn't dancing. Where I found little joy (and often experienced stress) in more conventional competitive sport and physical education settings, I thrived when I danced.

As a child, my experiences of ballet and the ballet studio were fairly unreflective and likely slightly romanticized. It has since become apparent how such spaces can be fraught with problematic messages and practices pertaining to bodily aesthetics and notions of femininity. Therefore, my passion for dance, while still there, now intersects with my scholarly interests and fuels a curiosity about the dance studio and the practices young dancers engage in. As a woman, a sometime dancer, a lover of physical movement, and a feminist scholar, I am troubled by the (problematic) equation drawn between bodies, health, and idealized femininity. Increasingly, dominant notions of idealized or desirable femininity are associated with the appearance of a slim, toned, youthful body,

which is also equated with 'health' (Bordo, 1993; Heyes, 2007; Markula, 1995, 2001). Consequently, I argue that women's and girls' physical activity experiences risk being over determined by health discourses and are seemingly inextricable from dominant understandings of the aesthetics of the idealized feminine body. While dance is not so closely linked with health and illness prevention, the aesthetics of the dancing body are surely complex and arguably problematic. Yet dance is a popular physical practice among girls and women (Emery, Meeuwise, & McAllister, 2006). Therefore, dance and the dance studio are important focal points for feminist, physical culture scholarship.

1.1 Physical Activity is 'Good for You' but Dance is 'Fun'

We know in no uncertain terms that Canadian youth, and particularly girls, are not engaging in regular physical activity (Active Healthy Kids, 2014). Yet this population is aware that physical activity is 'good for them'. Results from my Masters study (Clark, Spence, & Holt, 2011) revealed that girls could articulate quite clearly how physical activity "made them healthy." They explained that physical activity helps people become healthy, in shape, and beautiful, and that it prevents people from becoming "fat." However, when girls shared their experiences of actually *being* active and described the practices they enjoyed and how these activities made them feel, these ideas of health were nowhere to be found.

To further explore this line of thought, I pick up a thread provided to me by the girls in my Masters study, all of whom said they like to dance. When asked why, they merely described dance as fun and said that it made them feel free.

Some of the girls took formal lessons in the studio, some danced in their bedrooms, some danced in their backyards, some danced in the woods. Wherever they danced, and whomever they danced with did not seem to matter, it was the sensation of dancing they enjoyed. I cannot help but think they might be on to something. Thus, I cannot help but think that the ways in which we currently understand the physically active body, the "healthy" body, and the fit feminine body[1] may limit more expansive understandings of the experiences of the moving body. It is for this reason I wish to expand, even ever so slightly, the ways we currently imagine and study the moving body.

1.2 Dancing on the Edges of the Mainstream

Dance education and dance studies literature has critiqued ballet for perpetuating narrowly defined feminine identities and promoting disordered eating and body image disturbances (Aalten, 2005; Daly, 1987a, 1987b; deBruin, Bakker & Oudejans, 2009; Gray & Kunkel, 2001; Green, 2001). Yet my own personal experiences and the experiences of other dancers I know suggested to me that (some) girls enjoy ballet. Indeed, many are passionate about it, as authors Kolb and Kalogeropoulou (2012) have reported. This seeming contradiction gave me pause. If ballet is linked to destructive practices and oppressive identities, how can one enjoy it, nonetheless practice it? Should not I and girls and women everywhere be running from it? As a feminist scholar should I not be leveling a critique against it?

When I contemplated this as a final analysis, my own history of dance enjoyment bumped up stubbornly against it. I was not so naïve to think ballet (and

4

the ballet body) was unproblematic. But I wondered how it could be that I and other girls and women have enjoyed and continued to enjoy a practice that is so vehemently critiqued for perpetuating decidedly oppressive ideals. Sitting in this uncomfortable place, I wondered if it was possible to complicate our understandings of ballet and explore it in a way that exceeded labeling it bad or good, oppressive or liberating.

Therefore, in this study I examined dance as a physical cultural practice through a Foucauldian lens. Foucault's (1979) interest in the workings of power at a local level allowed me to explore the practices that occur in a dance studio on a day-to-day basis and ask how these practices impact the girls who dance in it. This study did not seek to identify if ballet was good or bad, or if the girls' experiences of ballet were positive or negative per se, but rather to understand how the discursive practice of ballet within the unique power relations of the ballet studio shaped girls understandings of their bodies and selves.

I also take this project up through a poststructuralist feminist lens. While contemporary forms and definitions of feminism are multiple and at times difficult to navigate, I draw upon the work of poststructuralist feminist scholars (e.g., Heyes, 2007; Lather, 2007; Probyn, 1993; McWhorter, 2013) to define my understanding of feminist research as that which seeks to interrogate and disrupt overlapping systems of power relations and knowledge that "diminish women's [and girls'] mobility, development of capacities, expression, and general well-being in comparison with men's" (McWhorter, 2013, p. 69). This entails working

for the creation of "new relations of power/knowledge that traverse, rival, or even displace what is objectionable" (p. 69).

Therefore, I see poststructuralist feminism and feminist research as an accumulation of theoretical, methodological and lived practices that are continuously oriented towards examining, questioning, and disrupting relations of power/knowledge that act to limit women's and girls' capacities, resources, and wellbeing. This means I do not seek to uncover one point or system of oppression, nor speak for or to a unified, essential category of 'woman,' but to consistently examine the power relations that shape girls' and women's' experiences.

Markula and Silk (2011) outlined three possible goals of qualitative research; mapping, critique, and change. Markula and Silk (2011) explained that a mapping study "refers to a research project that aims to provide a general overview or 'topography' of a behaviour, phenomenon, practice or 'field' of physical culture" (p. 8). I consider this study to be primarily a mapping study as there is not an abundance of research available that focuses on girls and dance studios. Therefore, it is difficult to engage in a thoughtful and thorough critique and to know what to change without a coherent understanding, or mapping, of the current conditions pertaining to the topic of interest. Therefore, this poststructuralist feminist mapping study examines the power relations and knowledge systems that inform and shape girls' dance experiences in a commercial studio. It also seeks to examine girls' active constructions of the diverse meanings of ballet in their lives.

My literature review explores scholarly literature related to girls'
experiences of physical activity and education and literature from the field of
dance studies (see chapter two). In chapter three, I then articulate my theoretical
framework and describe the Foucauldian concepts that guided this study. Next, I
outline my methodological approach and describe how I collected and analyzed
my data in chapter four. My results will be presented in three analysis chapters
that focus respectively on disciplinary techniques in the dance studio, discourse
and the dancing body, and the construction of the dancing and researching self.
Finally, I conclude this dissertation by summarizing its contributions to the
literature and providing possible directions for future research.

2.0 Review of the Literature

Girls' engagement in physical activity has been of great interest to scholars from a variety of disciplines. This is likely due in part to the existing body of empirical literature that suggests a large proportion of children and youth in the developed world is insufficiently active to attain subsequent health benefits (Andersen et al., 2006; Biddle, Gorely, & Stensel, 2004). Scholars have further demonstrated that girls are less active than boys at all ages (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2011; Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000; Trost et al., 2002), and that participation in physical activity decreases significantly throughout adolescence. In Canada, only 7% of children and youth meet national guidelines for physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous activity; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2011). Specifically, only 9% of boys and 4% of girls meet these recommendations (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2011).

These low levels of engagement have prompted concern because physical activity is associated with a variety of health benefits for girls. Such benefits include improved cardiovascular health (Bermingham, Jones, Steinbeck, & Brock, 1995; Craig, Bandini, Lichtenstein, Schaefer, & Dietz, 1996), lower rates of anxiety and depression (Norris, Carroll, & Cochrane, 1992; Strauss, Rodzilsky, Burack, & Colin, 2001), decreased incidence of overweight and obesity (Berkey, Rocket, Field, Gillman, Frazier, & Camargo, 2000; Moore, Gao, Bradlee, Cupples, Sundarajan-Raman, & Proctor, 2003), and an enhanced sense of self and self-esteem (Daley & Buchanan, 1999; Ransdell, Dratt, Kennedy, & O'Neill,

2001). An extensive review conducted by the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health echoed these findings and concluded that "physical activity has a generally beneficial effect on various dimensions of psychosocial health such as mood, cognitive functioning, anxiety, depression, psychological stress, and well-being for girls and women" (Reid, Dyck, McKay, & Frisby, 2000, p. 44).

Low rates of physical activity among girls have captured the attention of physical activity and health researchers. For example, Sallis and colleagues (2000) and others (see also Ferreira et al., 2006) have conducted major review articles to identify the correlates of girls' physical activity participation. These authors reported that engagement is influenced by intrapersonal, social, and environmental factors (Ferreira et al., 2006; Sallis et al., 2000). More specifically, the presence of opportunities, lack of perceived barriers to activity, high levels of self-efficacy, positive attitudes towards the benefits of physical activity, biological factors (i.e., growth and development), and the presence of a supportive milieu have been found to be positively associated to girls' physical activity (Strauss et al., 2001; Trost et al., 2002). While these quantitative studies provide a helpful starting point, they provide very little information about what these concepts (i.e., presence of opportunities, positive attitudes towards the benefits of physical activity) might look like or mean to young adolescent girls in their daily lives. The intricacy of the social processes and contexts that may influence girls' behaviour is also largely absent from these discussions. Therefore, an important part of the puzzle is missing for me. When I consider the list of factors that are associated or

related to girls' physical activity in some way, I glean very little insight into how girls' physical activity levels might be addressed or how their experiences might be made more positive in meaningful, tangible ways. What I do take away is that the relationship between girls and physical activity is complex and is one that merits further attention. Because I am interested in the ways in which girls experience their moving bodies, I turn now to the qualitative literature in this area.

2.1 Girls' Experiences of Physical Activity and Physical Education

Qualitative researchers have been interested in girls' physical activity participation and physical education experiences. I explore this literature lengthily here, as it is one of few fields that have paid ample attention to young and adolescent girls' physical experiences. Although not all of the studies reviewed are related directly to dance, they provide some insight into girls' physicality. Scholars from various countries have used an interpretive approach to gain a rich understanding of girls' activity experiences and have focused on the physical education setting (e.g., Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Brown, 2000; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gibbons & Gual, 2004; Gilbert, 2001; Hastie, 1998; Hills, 2007; van Daalen, 2005). Results from these studies have suggested that a striking dissonance exists between the opportunities provided to girls within physical education settings and the activities and environments girls' desire (Hastie, 1998; Humbert, 1995; van Daalen). Generally, physical education curricula have been described as sport-based, competitive, and male oriented, and therefore experienced as exclusionary by many girls (Brown 2000; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gibbons & Gual, 2004).

Researchers have also shown that girls are highly sensitive to the external gaze of their peers, teachers, coaches, and boys (Brown, 2000; Dwyer et al., 2006; Humbert 1995; van Daalen, 2005). For example, in two separate studies, Brown (2000) and Waters (1997) interviewed junior high school girls (ages13-15 years) to gain insight into their experiences of physical education. In both studies teachers and other significant leaders (e.g., coaches) emerged as salient influences on the girls' perceptions of physical education, decisions to participate, and the girls' level of enjoyment. Additionally, Waters found that girls placed great value on connecting with the teachers. Girls were more likely to engage in a new activity if their relationship with the teacher was positive and if evaluation was not focused solely on skill acquisition. These findings resonated with Humbert's (1995) case study on Canadian adolescent girls' experiences of physical education. Participants in Humbert's study considered the structure and environment of physical education classes to be limiting and incongruent with their interests and needs. Interestingly, many girls voiced an interest and desire to be physically active but felt available options within physical education did not accommodate their interests. Overall, adolescent girls valued physical activity but had difficulty identifying and accessing environments in which they felt comfortable and able to engage within school physical education.

A more recent interpretive study conducted in the UK focused on adolescent girls' reflections about physical activity and the authors reported that perceptions of appropriate femininity and self-presentation were also important considerations for girls (Whitehead & Biddle, 2008). Participants described how

salient social norms that prescribe how female bodies should look and what activities they should do limited girls' ideas about available activity options and contributed to feelings of self-consciousness. In this study, participants described 'feminine' girls as those that cared more about how they looked than being active, and less feminine girls were "seen as being more active, less self-conscious about their appearance, while being active, muscular and interested in sports traditionally perceived as being masculine, such as rugby or football (soccer)" (Whitehead & Biddle, 2008, p. 246). In an Australian focus group study, Slater and Tiggemann (2010) similarly reported that high-school aged girls often described sport and physical activity as uncool and unfeminine, which contributed to decreased involvement. Although the authors did not explicitly define the term feminine, it was used to describe girls who think "shopping and doing your nails and stuff rather than sport is better" (p. 262).

Girls in this study also suggested that some sports and activities, such as football, were clearly marked as masculine and that girls would be labeled "butch" if they played it (p. 623).

Participants also described sport as an important forum through which boys asserted their masculinity, while girls had to carefully negotiate their femininity against their sport involvement. This was expressed through girls' concerns that playing sports might make them build muscle and become 'buff', which they perceived would make them less attractive and therefore, less feminine. In this study, femininity was not explicitly defined but was closely linked to appearance and associated with not being muscular and not playing

sports, which were understood as masculine characteristics. Participants also noted fewer enjoyable physical activity and sporting opportunities available to them in the school context and beyond.

Reflection upon this literature reveals the salience of girls' perceptions about gender, physical activity, and physical education, and the impact these perceptions have on their physical experiences. I will now turn to a more detailed discussion of the ways in which this topic has been taken up by feminist critical and poststructuralist researchers.

2.2 Physical Education, Femininity, and the Body Beautiful

Scholars have largely explored the gendered power relations in which physical education is embedded (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Azzarito & Solmon, 2006; Evans, Davies, & Wright, 2004; Garrett, 2004; Gorely, Holroyd, & Kirk, 2003; Hills 2007, Rich, 2003; Wright 1995). They have done so by interrogating several discourses that shape girls' perceptions of physical education. Azzarito and Solomon (2009) argued: "Physical education is a site of the production, reproduction, and transformation of dominant discourses produced in society…" (p. 24). Therefore, to study how young people embody the discourses that shape their participation in physical activity, Azzarito and Solmon focused on physical education settings in the UK and drew upon Kirk's (1992) definition of discourse as

> …the ways in which people communicate their understanding of
> their own and others' activities and of events in the world around
> them . . . discourse is larger than language, because it embraces all

forms of communicating rather than simply the verbal and written

word. It refers to all meaning-making activity, whether this be

intentional, conscious, unconscious, explicit, tacit, or reflective. (p.

42)

The authors reported that girls felt pressure to participate in appropriate

feminine physical activities in physical education contexts. Like other authors,

Kirk (1992) did not provide a definition of femininity but the term is framed in

relationship to a particular bodily appearance, which is believed to be built

through specific feminine activities. Feminine activities were described as

jogging, dancing, and gymnastics and were linked to the production of a slender

body, which was understood in opposition to a muscular, masculine body, built

through activities such as football and weightlifting. This finding was consistent

with others who have argued that gendered discourses act to shape girls' ideas

about the gender appropriateness of physical activities, thus narrowing their

choices (Azzarito et al., 2006; Garrett, 2004; Gorely et al., 2003). Researchers

have also suggested that physical education curricula are often characterized by a

privileging of sport and competitive team games, valuing boys' skills and

competencies, and narrow definitions of fit and healthy bodies (Flintoff & Scraton

2001; Garrett, 2004; Wright, 1995). Girls were then left to negotiate their desire to

display competence while satisfying social and cultural demands of femininity.

The concept of femininity runs through much of this literature. I draw

upon feminist philosopher Susan Bordo's (1993) writings and define femininity

as a socially constructed ideal that defines what is perceived as socially acceptable

(and desirable) for women's aesthetic appearance, conduct, and attitudes. Put another way, femininity is an identity constructed around several characteristics thought to be appropriate for females (biologically defined girls and women). In contemporary society, notions of femininity are often inextricably linked to, and read through, physical appearance. Therefore, the way one looks is central to the feminine identity and creating a particular, acceptable body is important. Certain types of physical activity are supposed to produce this body (Markula, 1995). Feminist scholars[2] have described (and critiqued) the currently idealized feminine body as slim, toned, young, and heterosexually desirable, which is thought to reflect traditional feminine qualities such as passivity, kindness, nurturing and compliance (Bordo, 1993; Heyes, 2007; Markula, 1995, 2001). This version of femininity is also reproduced and celebrated in a white, heterosexual, class-based culture.

Researchers have suggested that girls construct their identities in relation to their bodies through physical education and that this process is shaped by the celebration of slenderness and the pursuit of the ideal body (Azzarito, 2009; Burrows, 2008; Garrett, 2004). Garrett (2004) reported that such this emphasis on bodily appearance created feelings of inadequacy among girls and discouraged engagement in physical education.

Although the literature above indicates that girls generally feel oppressed by traditional physical education curricula, a UK study by Azzarito and colleagues (2006) found that girls actively negotiated gendered expectations in school physical education. Furthermore, an Australian study by Garrett (2004)

highlighted the positive potential for physical activity and argued that girls experienced pleasure in moving their bodies as a form of emotional expression and cathartic release. Girls in Garrett's study also reported feelings of empowerment from developing new skills and being able to display them. Indeed, other feminist scholars have argued for the empowering potential of physical activity (e.g., Hargreaves, 1994; McDermott, 2000; Theberge, 1987). However, Garrett noted that the positive meanings participants found in movement were rarely associated with the types of activity they experienced in physical education. Therefore, more research is needed that explores girls' activity outside of physical education in order to better understand these experiences. Although some scholars have focused on women's broadly defined physical activity experiences to examine the positive potential of bodily movement (e.g., Chisholm, 2008; McDermott, 2000; Wright & Dewar, 1997), these studies have focused on adult women.

2.3 Enjoyment

In the quest to understand and promote physical activity engagement among girls, it has been common to identify those activities and aspects of activity that girls enjoy. Concepts such as 'enjoyment' and 'fun' have emerged frequently in girls' favourable accounts and stories of physical activity. This is consistent with Weiss's (2000) suggestion that the three most positive aspects of physical activity described by youth are that it is motivating or enjoyable, it allows them to develop and display physical competence, and is a way to gain social status and create relationships. Therefore, it is of great interest to me that

dance has been repeatedly cited as one of girls' favourite activities and one

consistently described as fun (Clark, Spence, & Holt, 2011; Dowda et al., 2007;

Grieser et al., 2006; Sallis, Zakarian, Hovell & Hofstetter, 1996; Wright,

MacDonald, & Groom, 2003). Studies have also shown that dance is one of the

most common self-reported activities girls actually engage in, along with walking

for transportation, bicycling and household chores (Dowda et al., 2007; Grieser et

al., 1996; Harrell et al., 2003; Kuo et al., 2009). For example, in a US study of

1925 6th grade girls, over 50% reported liking dance and indicated it was one of

the three most common activities they engage in. Twenty-five per cent of this

same population reported taking formal dance classes at a commercial studio

(Kuo, 2009). Dowda and colleagues (2007) investigated the role of commercial

recreation venues (e.g., dance studios) in promoting physical activity for

adolescent girls in the US and found that dance studios were an important

recreation destination for this population and associated with higher levels of

activity.

In light of the these findings, it is fair to suggest that dance is a preferred

activity for many girls and that commercial dance studios may play an important

role in their activity engagement. Such studios are particularly intriguing, as they

are the primary and perhaps the only spaces that provide organized dance

participation and professional dance instruction. The findings above, which

indicate that dance is an enjoyable activity for adolescent girls, resonate with the

results of my Masters thesis (Clark, Spence, & Holt, 2011) as participants in this

study expressed quite passionately that they enjoyed dancing. Consequently, I

now turn to existing scholarly literature about dance from the fields of physical activity and health and dance studies, as well as girls' and women's experiences of dance, with an emphasis on ballet.

2.4 Dance Interventions

Although dance has been given relatively little attention in the health-related physical activity literature, there have been a handful of dance interventions implemented with some success (Beaulac, Olavarria, & Kristjansson, 2010; Burgess, Grogan, & Burwitz, 2006; Flores, 1995; Robinson et al., 2003; Walters & Martin, 2000). Burgess et al. (2006) examined the effects of a six-week aerobic dance intervention on body image and physical self-perception in girls aged 13-14 years. A dance-based intervention was chosen to promote engagement among girls who did not enjoy participating in traditional, competitive sporting activities. The authors reported that results from their questionnaires revealed that participation in six weeks of aerobic dance significantly reduced body image dissatisfaction (assessed through self-reported measures of Attractiveness, Feeling Fat, Salience, and Strength and Fitness) and enhanced physical self-perceptions (Body Attractiveness and Physical Self-Worth), although these improvements were not sustained. The authors acknowledged the limitation of a six-week intervention in sustaining the effects, but concluded that their results were enough to merit further investigation and planning of similar interventions.

This study was one of the only ones to interrogate the impact of a dance intervention on variables such as body image and physical self-concept. Others

18

evaluated the effectiveness of similar interventions in altering physical components of health such as body mass index (BMI), percent body fat, weight, waist circumference, physical activity measured by accelerometry, aerobic capacity, and attitudes towards physical activity (Flores, 1995; Robinson et al., 2003). In a randomized trial involving African-American and Hispanic adolescents aged 10-13 years, Flores (1995) reported that a 12-week dance intervention resulted in a lower body mass index and lower resting heart rates in the group that received the dance intervention compared to the group that participated in more traditional physical activity. In another randomized trial (Robinson et al., 2003), African-American girls ages eight-to-10 years took part in an after-school dance activity three times a week for 12 weeks. In addition to decreased BMI, results at the 12-week follow up showed a decreased waist circumference, increased physical activity after school, and decreased video and screen time.

Evaluation for most of these interventions focused on measurable outcomes related to physical indices of health (e.g., BMI) and did not consider experiential aspects of the intervention such as how it influenced girls' thoughts about health or physical activity, or their relationship with their bodies. The rationale for using dance as an intervention activity was based upon previous findings that girls enjoy dance and find it fun, but this element of dance was not explored. Instead, dance was utilized as a technique to promote health narrowly defined through a biomedical lens. I argue that when framed this way, dance is at risk for being subsumed by neoliberal health discourses. The participants in my

Masters study (Clark, Spence, & Holt, 2011) described physical education and organized sport as activities that kept them thin, "fit" and as being "good for them". When they talked about dance however, they used descriptors such as 'creative' and 'fun' and did not link it to either appearance or health outcomes. Consequently, I find it concerning that scholars conducting dance-related research in the physical activity and health area have focused so explicitly on measurable health outcomes. Instead, I propose that dance may be considered as a rich opportunity to examine young girls' movement experiences in a way that extends understandings of physical activity beyond simply a means to achieve a certain body shape or health status. Indeed, physical activity researchers have shown that dance is an enjoyable form of bodily movement for girls, and that it is an activity many engage in within a formal studio setting. Researchers have also demonstrated that participation in dance may hold physical health benefits for girls. These findings create new and potentially rich directions for research. If many adolescent girls study dance in commercial studios[3], what is this experience like for them? What role does the studio play in shaping their sense of self or their relationship with their bodies? In an effort to address some of these questions, I will now turn to existing literature on dance, focusing primarily on ballet.

2.5 Ballet and Feminist Objections to the Ballet Body

Scholarly literature about ballet spans diverse disciplines, ranging from cultural studies, dance education studies, psychology, and physical education. Given my interest in dance as a form of physical movement for girls in non-elite, non-professional dance settings, I do not delve deeply into the body of literature

that focuses on the artistic and performance aspects of ballet. However, I now provide an overview of feminist literature from dance and cultural studies to provide insight into ongoing scholarly dialogues in the world of professional ballet and contemporary dance. I then turn to literature that focuses more closely on different facets of the dance studio setting.

Feminist dance scholars have historically focused their attention on the representational female ballet body and offered critiques of ballet as an oppressive practice for women (e.g., Aalten, 2007; Adair, 1992; Daly, 1987a, 1987b; Foster, 1996; Garafola, 1985; Novack, 1993). This critique has primarily identified ballet as a practice that "upholds the dominant ideology, for example, by continuing to select dancers on the basis of a classical ideal of beauty, by reinforcing traditional sex roles and by the hierarchical structures of both the training institutions and the ballet companies" (Adair, 1992, pp. 88-9). Daly (1987a) further criticized ballet because it is "rooted in an ideology which denies women their own agency" (p. 17).

At the centre of these critiques is the prima ballerina's body, described as a "spectacle…the bearer and object of male desire" (Daly, 1987b, p. 57). Elaborate descriptions of this corporeal 'spectacle' are woven into much of the feminist dance scholarship from the 1980s and 1990s. Through these writings we learn that the ballet body is "ephemeral" and conveys a "sumptuous ethereality" (Foster, 1196, p. 6), while being treated as a "submissive instrument" by its male partners and audience (Daly, 1987a, p. 14). Garafola (1985) provided this summary of the persistent ideology of the classical ballerina over time:

…the nineteenth century belongs to the ballerina. She haunts its

lithographs and paintings, an ethereal creature touched with the charm of

another age. Yet even when she turned into the fast, leggy ballerina of

modern times, her ideology survived…the art of ballet…has yet to rid its

aesthetic of yesterday's cult of the eternal feminine. Like her nineteenth-

century forbear, today's ballerina, an icon of teen youth, athleticism, and

anorexic vulnerability, incarnates a feminine ideal defined

overwhelmingly by men. (p. 35)

This description captures several themes that ran through the scholarship

of this time and still persist, including the fascination with and objection to the

objectification of the body, the link between ballet and eating disorders, and the

reference to the oppressive ideology of masculine and feminine difference read

primarily through the body. Indeed, ballet was thought to celebrate and reproduce

the desirability of female delicacy, beauty, and fragility (Garafola, 1985),

understood in opposition to masculine strength, athletic prowess, and virility

(Adair, 1992; Daly, 1987b). These writings and other more popular works (e.g.,

Kirkland, 1986; Vincent, 1979) emphasized the intense and troubled relationship

between the prima ballerina, her body, and the gaze of the audience and

choreographer. In these works, anorexia is often brought to the fore and the

(anorexic) ballet body is written about with a hint of both macabre and awe. For

example, this chilling account taken from *Dancing On My Grave,* the

autobiography of former New York City Ballet prima ballerina Gelsey Kirkland,

illuminates the extreme aesthetic demanded of professional ballet bodies. In her

book, Kirkland (1986) details her relationship with renowned Russian choreographer George Balanchine, noted for his preference for exceedingly dancers and grueling training practices. Kirkland writes:

> He [Balanchine] halted class and approached me for a kind of physical inspection. With his knuckles, he thumped my sternum and down my rib cage, clucking his tongue and remarking, "Must see the bones."
>
> I was less than a hundred pounds even then. (p. 56)

Kirkland's book, and others (Gordon, 1983; Vincent, 1979) describe in no uncertain terms the extreme objectification to which prima ballerina bodies are subjected and the extreme scrutiny particularly of the bodies size and degree of thinness. They also chronicle a very dark side of ballet.

2.6 The Ballet Body Image Connection

Scholarly attention has remained focused on the link between ballet, body image, and eating disorders. Researchers have focused on the psychology of dancers using quantitative methodology and have reported a link between dance environments, perfectionism, and eating disorders among ballet dancers (de Bruin, Bakker, & Oudejans, 2009; Nordin-Bates, Walker, & Redding, 2011; Penniment & Egan, 2012). Penniment and Egan (2012) suggested that ballet dancers who identified as perfectionists were more likely to value thinness, perceive thinness expectations in the dance class, and perceive a high-occurrence of thinness-related learning experiences in the class, resulting in a higher risk for eating disorders. Similarly, Nordin-Bates, Walker, and Redding (2011) found that contemporary and ballet dancers were more likely to report low self-esteem and

eating disorders if they also demonstrated negative variables of perfectionism. The high rates of body image related issues and disordered eating that emerged in this literature are in line with themes troubled by the feminist dance scholars reviewed earlier.

Body-image disturbance and disordered eating among ballet dancers of varying levels have also been studied by sport psychologists and dance scholars (Adame, Frank, Serdula, Cole, & Abbas, 1990; Alexias & Dimitropoulou, 2011; Benn & Walters, 2001; Pierce & Delang, 1998; Radell, Adame, & Cole, 2002; Ravaldi et al, 2003; Ravaldi et al., 2006) who have consistently reported high levels of body image disturbances among ballet dancers training in conservatory or elite ballet school settings. For example, in a phenomenological study of 20 professional female dancers (Alexias & Dimitripoulou, 2011), the authors found that 16 of the 20 women interviewed experienced body dissatisfaction. Benn and Walters (2001) also conducted a qualitative study to find that female ballet students described an extremely thin body shape as that which was rewarded in ballet. Participants expressed a keen desire to obtain this body shape and engaged in eating disordered behaviour to manage their weight. In contrast, a recent study by Langdon and Petracca (2010) examined the body image ratings of 77 adult women who considered themselves modern dancers. Participants reported positive body image perceptions and high body appreciation scores. The authors conceded that these findings must be interpreted with caution as they counter previous work, but continued to theorize that modern dance may embrace a more athletic body type than ballet, thus lessening the pressure.

The complexity of the relationship between the dance environment and body-related expectations and experiences is revealed through this research, particularly in the context of ballet. Although these studies were correlative and must be interpreted carefully, overall they suggested a link between compromised body image and the serious study of ballet. However, little insight was provided into the nature of this relationship. Furthermore, body image was a vaguely defined quantifiable psychological concept thought to reside inherently within an individual, and as something the individual could control. Radell, Adame and Cole (2004) defined it loosely as the perception one has of his or her body or body concept. However, it remained unclear how this perception was shaped. Furthermore, these studies provided little insight into what specifically about ballet practices or the ballet environment was thought to influence body image. The studies reviewed above largely leave the broader social context in which female dancers train, perform, and come to know and understand themselves as dancers unexplored. Yet, it is this very thing I am interested in.

Therefore, I pick up a thread offered by ballet scholarship in the late 1990s that presented more complex analyses of ballet and complicated the narrative of ballet as wholly oppressive and victimizing for female ballerinas (Aalten, 2004, 2007; Banes, 1998; Davis, 1997; Foster, 1997). These scholars sought to extend the analysis of the ideal ballet body by emphasizing the need to focus on the physical experiences of ballet dancers and their material, dancing bodies. In particular, Foster (1997) urged dance scholars to adopt a "more meat and bones approach to the body" (p. 235) and Aalten (2004) suggested that the

"instructional practices and the daily routines that create a dancers' body" require more attention (p. 264).

I agree with Foster (1997) and Aalten (2004) and insist that our attention be further extended to younger girls who are not in professional settings but remain firmly entrenched in the dance world by way of the commercial studio setting. In my review of earlier literature I demonstrated that dance studios are important sites for girls' physical activity and that dance is among girls' favourite activities. However, the dance scholarship reviewed above leaves this population and setting largely unexamined, focusing instead on the specialized world of elite and professional ballet and professional ballet companies. Therefore, the ballet studio itself appears to be an intriguing area of study, as such studios are likely to be influenced by some of the same social forces and values as professional ballet. I now turn to qualitative research literature that is more relevant to the studio setting.

2.7 Dance as a Means of Self Expression

The world of professional dance involves multiple classes per day, interactions with numerous choreographers and teachers, changing in and out of costumes, costume fittings, endless rehearsals, multiple dress rehearsals, and regular performance (Kirkland, 1986). This daily schedule is far removed from the life of girls who dance in commercial dance studios. Yet, a ballet class or studio is likely to look similar in both settings. Green (1999) vividly described a standard dance studio as follows:

When I envision a typical dance class, I see a large studio space filled with

mirrors. The dance teacher usually stands at the front of the studio while

the students are often lined up in neat rows facing the mirror and the

teacher. Students in dance classes spend much time gazing in the mirror.

(p. 81)

Interpretive research has sought to understand the meaning dance holds for girls and women dancing in college and commercial studio settings. Self-expression has been repeatedly reported as one of the most important motivators for female ballet and contemporary dancers in college settings and social dance settings (Alter, 1997; Bracey, 2004; Nieminen, 1998; Stinson, 1990; Stinson, Bluemnfield-Jones, & van Dyke, 2000). For instance, Bracey (2004) found that dance was a way in which female college aged dancers "found their voices" (p. 19). Thomas (1993) reported that both male and female dancers described, "the release of feelings experienced through dancing, the pleasure of moving and of releasing tension" (p. 83) as important and meaningful aspects of their dancing. A study by Stinson and colleagues (1990) examined how female dancers (ages 16-18 years) in commercial dance studios and university dance programs described the meaning of dance in their daily lives. All participants described dance as a means through which they could express their feelings in a manner that was easier than speaking or writing. Alter (1997) reported similar results from her study with dancers in university and college programs. These participants described dance as an enjoyable way to express themselves and said it made them "feel alive and free" (Alter, 1997, p. 29). Participants also reported that dance satisfied their

creative needs and provided emotional release that they did not experience in other areas of their lives.

Wellard and colleagues (2007) interviewed younger dancers (ages 11-13) in a UK ballet conservatory that grooms dancers for professional dance careers. Participants described feeling pressure to conform to the ideal ballet body, but also described ballet as a liberating practice. They defined ballet as a means through which they could feel "free" (p.88) and the act of dancing as pleasurable because the movements were "dreamy," "gentle," and "flowing" (p. 89). Dancers in non-elite settings have also described their experiences of studying and performing ballet in positive ways and expressed that ballet was "the ultimate high" (Stinson et al., 2000, p. 17) and claimed that dance transported them "above the normal plane of living" (p. 17). Goodwin and colleagues (2004) explored the dance experiences of children with Spina Bifida who required a wheelchair for mobility and found similar themes of transformation. Children in this study described dance as taking them "beyond the wheelchair." In both of these cases, there was something about the practice of dance that facilitated positive experiences and ways of being that were unlike those encountered in other aspects of the participants' lives. Stinson and colleagues (2000) suggested that such expressions reflected a sense of transformation and escape from daily life. They argued that dance provided these participants "with a chance to enter a transcendent state" (p. 17) and forget everything else. Although the authors did not go into detail about what was being transcended or what aspect of the everyday world girls desired release from, these findings provided a sense that

dancers can experience dance quite intensely and pointed to an emotive, affective aspect of the experience.

Findings by Bond and Stinson (2007) further emphasized this theme. In order to understand the meaning of dance for children and youth, the authors analyzed material such as interviews, drawings and journals originally collected for other research-related purposes by scholars around the world. In total, material from approximately 600 children and youth between the ages of three and eighteen from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States was collected. Dance experience ranged from one class to many years of study and reflected public and private schools, commercial studio settings, university classrooms and recreation centres. Similar to the findings reported above, children reported a sense of freedom through movement and made connections between the pleasurable kinaesthetic sensations of dance with feelings of joy and exhilaration. They enjoyed the feeling of physical mastery and, like the participants in Stinson's earlier study, described the experience of focusing intensely on movement (Bond & Stinson, 2007; Stinson et al., 2000).

Findings from the above studies suggest that for some girls, dance facilitated a bodily experience of expression not possible in other contexts of their lives. Participants often spoke with a great degree of passion about their dance experiences and described being able to express emotions and thoughts through dance that they could not express in words or writing. There were undertones that hinted at fantasies of self-transformation and escape from the everyday world. From a cultural studies perspective, McRobbie (1997) argued that dance is

potentially important for girls *because* it is a feminine activity that allows for what she calls an active femininity. In this analysis of two dated but at one time socially significant dance-related popular culture pieces (*Fame* and *Flashdance)* McRobbie outlined how dance fosters fantasies of achievement and engenders a desire to initiate movement (physical and otherwise) and provides the conditions in which to do so.

What remains unanswered by this literature is what about dance is it that makes the self easier to access and express. What do fantasies of achievement look like now? To gain insight into these questions it would be helpful to examine more closely the practices that might foster this sense of expression. Alter (1993) reported that improvisational dancing was described by some dancers as being most conducive to self-expression, but gave no further information. Furthermore, these studies focused primarily on older adolescent and adult female dancers in college and university settings. Older dancers may have different experiences than their younger counterparts, and it can be assumed that commercial dance studios have different goals, purposes and philosophies than university settings. Therefore we lack a rich understanding of how self-expression might be experienced by younger girls who dance in commercial dance studios.

2.8 Power Relations in Dance Class

In addition to being a space that facilitated self-expression, the dance studio has also been described as an important pedagogical setting. Buckroyd (2000) identified the dance class as the vehicle and mode for the vast majority of learning that takes place for young dancers. Rafferty and Wynon (2006) wrote: "The

repeated experience of daily learning in the dance class is the most important element in the training of a dancer because it acts as a preparation for performance and the means by which the capacity to perform is sustained" (p. 7). Dance scholars have, therefore, investigated such aspects as preferred instructor characteristics and teaching styles as well as interrogated the role of the instructor in influencing dancers' experiences and understanding of movement, self, and technique (Barr, 2009; Enghauser, 2003; Kimbrough, 2008; Rafferty & Wynon, 2006; van Rossum, 2004). For example, in Kimbrough's (2008) study of 119 social dancers, knowledge, leadership skills, enthusiasm, and attentiveness to students were all deemed "very important" by more than 50% of the participants. The way in which instructors demonstrated their knowledge was more important than formal evidence of it, and the way they related to their students was almost equally important.

Similarly, undergraduate ballet and contemporary dance students in university settings reported that positive feedback and high levels of training and instruction were the most effective teaching attributes in technique classes as well as a democratic classroom environment (Rafferty & Wynon, 2006). Rafferty and Wynon (2006) found that training and instruction referred to the teachers' ability to effectively instruct students on how to acquire necessary skills and relevant techniques as well as improve the performance level of the students. Dancers expected and desired high levels of training and instruction and appreciated classroom dynamics that incorporated student perspectives in decision-making. Dancers also wanted to be consistently recognized for their efforts (positive

feedback) and required detailed instructions on how to improve their technical performance. This is similar to earlier findings that reported the importance girls placed on the relationship to physical education teachers and coaches.

Ballet students have also described the teacher as a powerful figure who must be obeyed and pleased at all times, even if one must compromise one's own physical or creative need to do so (Bracey, 2004; Green, 1999, 2001). Dancer and researcher Bracey (2004) described this dynamic and explained that a dance studio is often, "replete with contradictions, the most significant of which was the struggle between the need to achieve one's own goals and the need to please outside parties, including teachers, choreographers and audiences" (p. 12). Alter (1993) similarly found that the significance of teacher's praise meant it was important to ballet dancers that teachers not show favoritism and that they take time to foster each dancer's individual goals. Instructors were also key players in creating a sense of community in the classroom, which the dancers in her study valued.

The literature reviewed above suggests that the relationship between the dancers and the teacher is of central importance. Dance studies researchers have emphasized the importance of power dynamics in the studio, particularly in the ballet studio. Some dance scholars have utilized the work of Michel Foucault to investigate the power relations that characterize the ballet studio (Benn & Walters, 2001; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Fortin, Viera, & Tremblay, 2009; Green, 1999, 200; Ritenburg, 2010). They have used Foucault's concepts of discourse, technologies of dominance, and docile bodies to analyze the ways in

which ballet and modern technique is taught and to understand how such strategies shape dancers' experiences. Each of these researchers use Foucaut's concepts in particular ways. I will return to the meanings of these concepts in chapter three, my discussion of theory, and clarify how I will use them.

Fortin and colleagues (2009) examined how pre-professional contemporary dancers negotiated various dance discourses in relation to body and health issues. The authors (p. 48) define discourse according to Foucault (1963) as:

> …systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, beliefs, courses of action and practices that enable, just as they constrain, what can be said or done at particular times and places. Discourses construct current truth and what power relations they carry with them. (p. 50)

They continue to describe a dominant dance discourse, which values "an ideal body where aesthetic criteria of beauty, slimness, virtuosity, devotion and asceticism prevail" (p. 50). However, in his own work, Foucault did not consider a body (shape) as a discourse per se, although it necessarily influenced by the knowledges and practices (of dance). Therefore, the authors' provided a clear definition of discourse, but their results did not quite reflect this definition, as they did not discuss the current truths and power relations in dance, or the knowledges that are used to talk about the body in the current dance world.

The same authors (Fortin et al., 2009) also argued that in the world of dance, the teacher or the choreographer is the primary holder of power and knowledge. However, in their analysis, Fortin and colleagues did not question where the

teachers' knowledges draws from or what discourses shape their understandings and definitions of dance. Nor did the authors question or examine how dancers use their power. As a result, their results lacked a Foucauldian sensibility. Similarly, Benn and Walters (2001) conducted a qualitative study to examine power relations in the ballet studio. Their project drew upon Foucault's conceptualization of power although they located his study in both the interpretive and critical paradigms. The authors concluded that dance teachers and choreographers hold authority over dancers and utilize their power to shape and sustain dominant understandings of the ideal ballet body and gender relations. Dancer compliance with these dominant ideals was rewarded through the selection processes that assign professional dance status, which was decided upon by the teachers, directors, and choreographers. Again, a more nuanced understanding of the power relations in the studio was lacking. Finally, Dryburgh and Fortin (2010) argued that dancers are oppressed through the power relations that characterize the ballet studio and ballet culture as the dancers are under the constant surveillance of those who have more authority than they do, such as teachers and choreographers.

In order to gain approval of these authority figures (teachers, choreographers, company and studio directors), scholars have argued that dancers have little influence over their dance training and dance experiences (Green, 2001; Pickard, 2012) and as a result participate in training practices that conflict with their own beliefs (Dyer, 2010), and even compromise their physical and emotional wellbeing. This literature paints a rather bleak picture of the power dynamics

within ballet studios and prompts questions around the value of such environments for dancers who inhabit them. However, the ways in which dancers participate in these power relations remains relatively unexamined. Therefore, I am interested in exploring how dancers are active participants in the meaning making of their world, particularly their dance experiences.

Several dance scholars have turned to the concept and practice of somatics as a strategy to alleviate the seemingly oppressive power relations that characterize ballet. For example, Fortin and colleagues (2009) described the marginal discourse of somatics as one that promotes body awareness, which in turn allows individuals to make choices for their own wellbeing. They quoted Guimond (1999) who asserted that somatic education proposes "a new relationship to oneself and to others: sensing one's actions, knowing one's feelings, no longer considering oneself as an object, but as a creator of one's own life" (Guimond, 1999, pg. 6 as cited in Fortin et al., 2009, p. 49). To understand how dancers negotiated and made sense of somatic practices, Fortin and her co-authors conducted an action research study with 24 female students in a university dance program. For 10 weeks they participated in theoretical and practical (dance-based) classes that emphasized a somatic approach to dance. At the end, all dancers supported the idea of challenging and changing the way the ideal body is constructed in dance class. However, many suggested that this idea sounded positive in theory but would be very difficult to put into practice. Dancers believed it would be difficult to allow their bodies to be shaped by somatic practices because they were so strongly conditioned by more traditional ideas that

ascribed to the normalized ideal. They were afraid of the reaction they would receive from other dancers and teachers if their bodies changed size or shape.

Very few participants believed they engaged in practices that demonstrated resistance to the dominant ideals, although some did. Practices they considered resistant included paying attention to their injuries instead of ignoring them, negotiating more flexible rehearsal time with choreographers, and going to see an osteopath. Interestingly, these examples did not accommodate a different bodily aesthetic. These findings support others that have reported the saliency of the ideal, objectified body in ballet and contemporary dance studios (Green, 1999, 2001; Ritenburg, 2010; Thomas, 2003).

Green (1999, 2001) has also explored the use of somatic practices in the ballet studio as a means to challenge dominant discourses of dance that objectify the body and privilege a thin body above all else. Green did not define what these dominant discourses might be but referred repeatedly to the idealized ballet body shape and size. She also argued that teaching techniques commonly found in dance studios promote a disconnect between inner and outer bodily life and between mind and body. Dancers described feeling disconnected from inner sensory feedback in their efforts to please the teacher. One participant said, "…we treat dance teachers as the gods because that is the way we are brought up. We don't question what they say…"(Green, 2001, p. 64).

Green (1999, 2001, 2002) also used Foucault's concept of docile bodies to analyze the power dynamics that permeate the student teacher relationship in the ballet studio. She defines docile bodies as being under "meticulous control and

surveillance" (2002, p. 111) and argued that dance education settings facilitate docility because they present a specific power relationship between student and teacher. The teacher is often viewed as an all-knowing expert and presents specific movements to dancers that require rote learning. Students vie for praise from the teacher and for attention through physical correction. Green reported that students often perceived teachers as powerful experts who should be listened to and obeyed even at the expense of attending to their own kinesthetic feedback and physical limits. The result, according to Green (2001), is the production of docile bodies that have been "self-regulated and habituated" (p. 159) through regimes of power that are exercised through explicit laws and codes.

Dancers in Green's (2001) study were exposed to somatic practices in the dance studio once a week for two terms. At the end of the term, the five female dancers (ages 20-24 years) who participated reported that taking part in somatic practices helped create a sense of personal engagement in the learning process and a richer connection to the body. Some expressed a growing refusal to disconnect from their physical needs in order to satisfy technical demands. Unlike Fortin and colleagues (2009), Green did not provide specific examples of the ways in which students demonstrated this refusal or which practices fostered the richer connection they felt.

Therefore, the relationship between teachers and dancers is characterized by a unique power arrangement and plays a pivotal role in shaping dancers' experiences. Fortin and colleagues (2009) and Green (2001) argued that a dominant discourse that promotes body objectification is ascribed to in the dance

studio, which, in turn results in young dancers feeling disconnected from their body and going to physical extremes in order to please the teacher. However, the teachers also play a role in fostering a sense of community in the classroom, and, as Green (2001) and Fortin (1999) illustrated, have the capacity to be reflexive about their teaching style. It is important to note that the bulk of this research was conducted in university program settings. Yet very few girls who dance in commercial dance studios continue to pursue a professional dance career through university programs. Therefore, we have little idea about how younger girls who dance in commercial studios experience dance instruction or how they describe their relationship to their teacher. This would be a valuable area for further investigation.

In my review of the Foucauldian literature so far, it has become evident that some Foucauldian concepts (e.g., discourse, docile bodies) are used in multiple and inconsistent ways. To provide further clarity on the Foucauldian approach(es) to dance I will return to the meanings of these concepts in my discussion of theory (see chapter four) to articulate how I will use them.

2.9 The Dance Studio as a Place of Surveillance and Discipline

It was described earlier that mirrors are one of the dance studio's most distinguishing features. Not surprisingly, scholars interested in dance have also studied the effects of mirrors in the dance studio (Dearborn, Harring, Young, & O'Rourke, 2006; Radell, Adame, & Cole, 2002; Radell, Adame, & Cole, 2003). These authors suggested that the use of mirrors in the dance classroom was related to poor body satisfaction and that mirrors may actually hinder technical learning

because they act as a distraction. For example, Dearborn and colleagues (2006) examined the influence of mirrors and phrase complexity (e.g., the level of difficulty of a dance combination) on body satisfaction and attention capacity. The authors reported that the mirrors were less distracting when dancers were learning more complicated phrases than when the phrases were simple. However, body image satisfaction was consistently low and participants reported constantly monitoring their bodies closely in the mirror.

Nevertheless, mirrors are considered an integral teaching tool in the dance studio that helps dancers refine their technique and movement (Kleiner, 2009). The presence of mirrors, combined with teacher feedback creates a setting in which one is constantly being observed. Dance scholars have examined this aspect of the dance studio and argue that it promotes bodily discipline (Green, 1999, 2001; Fortin, Vieira, & Tremblay, 2009; Kleiner, 2009). Discipline is often described by dancers as a central aspect of a dancing identity and vital to improving dance technique and performance ability (Alter, 1997; Green, 1999, Stinson, Blumenfeld-Jones, & van Dyke, 1990; Wellard, Pickard, & Bailey, 2007).

Green (1999, 2001) has used Foucault's idea of surveillance to describe how dancers' bodies are disciplined in dance class. She argued that surveillance from external sources (teachers, mirrors) is gradually internalized, thus leading to a disciplined body. As mentioned previously, dancers in her (1999) study revealed that pleasing the teacher through their physical performance was of the utmost importance. Green interpreted participants' accounts through a Foucauldian lens

and argued that such stories exemplified Foucault's notion of disciplining the body through surveillance. She explained: "With the teacher's eye constantly on students, the teacher does not have to impose outside force to motivate students to perform according to specific standards, the students learn to discipline themselves through self-regulation…"(Green, 2001, p. 164). Participants further demonstrated this concept as they reported that teachers' corrections such as "Don't let your butt stick out" and "Make sure your back is flat" (p. 165) gradually became assimilated into their own self-talk.

Kleiner (2009) also drew upon Foucauldian concepts such as surveillance and the Panopticon to describe how ballet creates docile bodies. She describes the Panopticon as:

> Bentham's Panopticon was designed as a surveillance system that instills a deep sense of scrutiny and, thus, self-discipline (Foucault, 1979). One or more observers are located in a central tower, but remain invisible, while the observed are individually isolated, constantly exposed to the observation tower, and backlit. (p. 240)

She argued that the design of the ballet studio, like a Panopticon, creates a sense that one is individually exposed and thus highly visible and constantly observed.

Kleiner (2009) interviewed 23 adult ballet dancers (18 women and five men) who danced at a high level of proficiency (50% were dancing professionally at the time of the interview) to gain insight into the experience of the aesthetic training of ballet. Their reflections revealed surveillance and discipline to be prominent aspects of their experiences. Participants explained that even though

they were discouraged from talking in class, they were still able to see their own and each other's reflections in the mirror throughout class. This enabled them to compare themselves and monitor their movements and appearance and facilitated constant adjustment and self-correction. Kleiner suggested that this constant monitoring promoted intense self-discipline and that the sense of being observed allowed dancers to be ranked and to rank themselves according to physical ideals. She explained:

> When physical ideals are recognized and given positive meaning within a defined aesthetic such as ballet, the self-conscious evaluation of one's own form as "better" and another as "worse" is almost experienced as natural. Because these evaluative meanings are shared, dancers learn to rank themselves. In a ballet studio, those who are "better" may even take their rightful place up in front, as an exemplar, without prompting from an instructor. (p. 248)

As discussed previously, many dance scholars have described the idealized ballet body as being characterized by extreme slimness, long, lean legs and arms, and delicate facial features (Aalten, 2004, 2007; Green, 1999; Thomas, 2003; Ritenburg, 2010). Ritenburg outlined how this type of body became normalized in the professional world of ballet and how it continues to be idealized in dance studios and popular culture through widespread discourses and practices. Participants in Green's (1999) study also referred to the intersection of the dance world and mainstream society. They discussed the pressures they encounter both inside and outside of the dance studio, which incessantly remind them that a tall,

thin body is desirable and imperative to dance related and social success. This intersection of dance and societal attitudes towards the body was not explored in detail. However, it prompts questions around the ways in which dancers create relationships with their bodies and how they and develop understandings and ideas pertaining to body size and shape, femininity, and dance.

In summary, the dance studio appears to be a space that facilitates a high level of observation and surveillance. The presence of mirrors contributed to self-evaluation and body objectification. As a result, the aesthetics of the body became a primary focal point. Some dancers even expressed feeling that their teachers cared more about what the body looked like when performing than what it communicated, although it was the communicative element of dance that girls said they enjoyed (Kleiner, 2009; Wellard et al., 2007). Even those dancers exposed to somatic practices expressed the difficulty they had in reconciling the philosophies of somatics with their long-endured understandings of what a dancing body looks like, how it should perform, and the practices required to shape it.

However, learning and perfecting technique and skill through bodily discipline have been described as enjoyable aspects of dance by many female ballet dancers (Aalten, 2004; Green, 1999; Kleiner, 2009; Kolb & Kalogeropolou, 2012; Wellard et al., 2007). Participants noted the satisfaction they gained from mastering technique and intricate choreography and described great joy and exhilaration in the process of perfecting their movement and performance. Furthermore, dance scholars have also reported that dancers describe dance as a

forum for self-expression, a way to demonstrate creativity, and a place to foster feelings of joy and the sense of being fully alive (Alter, 1997). How then, do we begin to understand these contradictions? As Dryburgh and Fortin (2010) concluded, the dance studio facilitates a sense of observation and surveillance that contributes to disciplinary practices in dancers. However, in some studies dancers at least partly embraced the disciplinary aspect of dance in diverse ways. Some dancers thought it contributed positively to their sense of self as it encouraged them to work hard and perform well, which they took great pride and satisfaction from (Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010). Others said discipline in dance class helped provide structure to their learning, helped build resilience, and that they enjoyed the challenge of learning new skill in dance class (Bond & Stinson, 2007; Kolb & Kalogeropoulou, 2012). When contemplating this literature and reflecting on my own experiences of ballet, a persistent question has emerged that is well articulated by Kolb and Kalogeropoulou (2012):

> …the ideas expressed in ballet, elements of its practice and the attempt to create an ideal body are degrading to women who are objectified, forced to fit into stereotypical patriarchal roles…But if we accept these allegations at face value, we reach a paradox: namely why do a vast number of women (the authors included) still voluntarily engage with the art form not only as viewers but also, notably, participants? (p. 108)

To address this apparent tension, I hope to extend the common critique that positions ballet as an oppressive practice and expand understandings that categorize dancers' experiences as negative or positive, oppressive, or liberating. I

try to achieve this by focusing on the specific bodily practices and experiences of the dancers to interrogate the ways in which dancers make meaning of them. This may expand our understandings of ballet and the ballet body beyond that of aesthetics and representation. Furthermore, research that examines the experiences of younger dancers in commercial studios is needed as the studies above primarily focused on older dance students in college or private ballet school settings.

2.10 Conclusion

In this review of the literature I have illustrated the complex nature of dance and the multiple roles the dance studio plays in the lives of those who inhabit it. The studio is where learning occurs and where dancers persevere to refine their technique through repetition and hard work. The studio is where exhilarating moments of movement transpire and where dancers encounter the opportunity to express what cannot be expressed in words or writing or beyond the walls of the studio. The studio is where dancers observe themselves and become the object of surveillance, which in turn promotes vigilant self-monitoring and discipline. Therefore, it can be concluded that the studio plays an important role in how a dancer comes to understand and make sense of one's self.

Previous research tells us that dancers often describe themselves as disciplined and hard working (Aalten, 2007; Alter, 1997; Wellard et al., 2007). We also learn that the body and its representation are central in the world of dance. This makes intuitive sense. It is through the body that dance technique is learned and performed; it is through the body that dancers described being able to express something that evades language. To learn how to dance, dancers must

spend a great deal of time *in* their bodies, and watching and attending to their bodies. I, therefore, question how girls come to understand themselves through the bodily practice of dance. How does the commercial dance studio shape this understanding? Fortin and colleagues (2009) borrowed from Foucault and explained that dancers make sense of themselves through available discourses or dominant systems of understanding. Therefore, I am interested in identifying and understanding those understandings that flow through the dance studio.

2.11 Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how young adolescent girls who dance in commercial dance studios make sense of themselves through the dancing body. Specifically my overarching research question was: **How do girls who dance in commercial dance studios construct a self through the dancing body?** To answer this question I asked more specifically:

1. What are the discourses (knowledges) about ballet bodies that circulate through the commercial dance studio?

2. What are the specific bodily practices dancers engage in and how are they informed by power relations?

3. How do young dancers' bodily experiences in the studio shape their understandings of the self?

In order to answer these questions, I turned to the poststructuralist theoretical works of Michel Foucault. In the following chapter, I will explain what is meant by the term poststructuralism, outline the tenets of Foucault's theory, and describe how I used this framework to guide my study.

3.0 Poststructuralism as Theoretical Approach

This examination of how girls who dance in commercial dance studios construct the self through the dancing body was guided by a poststructuralist framework; specifically the theoretical writings of Michel Foucault. The term poststructuralism is often used interchangeably with the term postmodernism (Rail, 2002). However, I purposefully use the term poststructuralism and believe distinction between the two terms is important. Generally, postmodernism refers to a variety of eras, aesthetics, and artistic practices (i.e., literature and architecture) while poststructuralism refers more specifically to a set of theories and epistemological positions that emerged post-WWII in the thinking of French philosophers (Andrews, 2000; Markula & Silk, 2011). These prominent thinkers (Jacques Derrida and Foucault for example) shared a rejection of the Enlightenment principles of objective knowledge, grand narratives, and positivist approaches to knowledge (Andrews, 2000; Rail 2002). They similarly rejected the search for (and existence of) a singular, objective, observable truth. This position reflected a line of thinking beyond (or 'post'), existing ontological perspectives, including positivism, post-positivism, and humanism. In other words poststructuralist thought rejected the idea that an essential truth exists and can be discovered, and instead focused on language as that which constructs meaning and truth (Andrews, 2000; Rail 2002). Truth for poststructuralists is understood to be an effect of language and knowledge (Flax, 1992).

Poststructuralism emerged as a critique to the theoretical approach known as structuralism "and its universal theorizing of how meanings are created through

language structures" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 6). Structuralism was developed by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and posited that meanings become fixed once established. Poststructuralism developed in opposition to Saussure's universalistic view of meaning as fixed and arbitrary, and instead emphasized the fluidity of meaning entrenched within power relations. Poststructuralism asserted that it is power relations that shape our understanding of social world. Poststructuralism also rejected the universal metanarratives produced by positivism, the dualistic model of power taken up by critical theorists, and the humanist self celebrated by humanism and positivism (Markula & Silk, 2011).

The goals of poststructuralist research then, are necessarily distinct from those of research seeking objectivist claims. Instead of seeking to discover 'truth' through objectivity, Andrews (2000) described the overarching goal of poststructuralist research as the interrogation and deconstruction of dominant discourses, institutions and knowledges. In doing so, researchers are then able to reveal and address the marginalization of knowledges that emerge from positivist traditions. This aspect of poststructuralist research is perhaps what resonated with me the most, as I am motivated to advance multiple and more fluid ways of understanding bodies, health, and movement. To do so, I will use Foucault's poststructuralist understandings of the concepts of self, body, and knowledge.

As discussed in my literature review, dance scholars have previously used Foucauldian concepts such as discourse, docility, and discipline to study dancers' experiences. However, these scholars employed diverse and multiple interpretations of these concepts in a series of relatively short articles, which has

resulted in somewhat contradictory and fragmented insights. Therefore, this study

seeks to provide a deeper analysis of ballet dancers' experiences in such settings

through a more explicitly articulated Foucauldian lens. To help ensure coherence

and clarity, I now provide detailed explanations of Foucault's concepts of power,

knowledge, and the self, and how I intend to utilize them in this study. More

specifically, I explain how bodies are subjected to disciplinary practices and made

into docile bodies within specific power relations, and how the self is constructed

within the power-knowledge nexus. To achieve this I begin by explaining how

Foucault understood the material body.

3.1 Foucault, the Body, and Power

As Shilling (2003) explained: "The body for Foucault is not simply a

focus of discourse, but constitutes *the* link between daily practices on the one

hand and the large scale organization of power on the other" (p. 66). Therefore,

Foucault's theory provides a lens through which I can analyze bodily practices

and experiences (as they are central to dance), the meaning they have within a

specific socio-historical context, and the way they contribute to the construction

of the self. This framework presents itself as one that explicitly considers the

material body without reducing its materiality to a fixed biological essence. I now

articulate Foucault's understanding of the body through a discussion of his

concepts of power and discipline.

Foucault (1978) understood modern power as fluid and relational, not as

an essence possessed by any one individual or institution to be imposed from the

top down. Therefore, power is diffuse and flows through all relationships

(Foucault, 1978). It operates in a capillary fashion throughout society and is best understood through its local effects and in everyday practices. Foucault identified several forms of power. I concentrate on the anatomo-politics of the human body, which involves disciplinary technologies focused on the individual body[4]. Anatomo-political power maximizes the body's capacities and utility and renders it docile (Foucault, 1978). This is the form of power relations previous dance scholars have focused on and that my study is primarily concerned with. Foucault clearly identified the body as an important site of power relations and important locus of social control (Foucault, 1979). For him, the body was "that materiality, almost a medium, on which power operates and through which it functions" (Grosz, 1994, p. 146).

In other words, using Foucault's understanding of power, we can consider that the body is targeted by disciplinary power so that it can be trained, disciplined, and made useful through a specific set of techniques. With the disappearance of sovereign power at the turn of the 17th Century, a new method of managing the population was needed. Foucault described how this form of power, was "centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities…the parallel increases of its usefulness and its docility, [and] its integration into systems of efficient and economic control" (1979, p. 139). Disciplinary power was, therefore, a "political anatomy of details" (p. 139). It introduced a new micro approach to power that works through subtle, seemingly innocent arrangements designed to produce "subjected and practiced bodies" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 138).

The body as a target of power relations, or what Foucault called anatomo-politics, was particularly important for my research because I wanted to explore how power targets the dancing body. I was particularly interested in the importance Foucault placed on everyday practices, because the dancing body and what it does day-to-day within a dance studio was the subject of my analysis. Therefore, this study drew upon Foucault's understanding of anatomo-political power to locate the dancing body within the power relations and as a possible target for the technologies of discipline. These technologies produce efficient, useful bodies through the precise organization of time, space, and movement. Therefore, they provide a relevant analytical framework for my study as particular types of bodies are demanded by and produced through particular dance practices.

Dance researchers have previously been interested in how the body is implicated in dance practice and have drawn upon Foucault's concepts in their work. However, as mentioned previously, their use of terms such as 'docile bodies,' 'discipline,' and 'discourse' was, at times, somewhat generic and inconsistent. I hope to clarify some of these meanings by explaining at length what is meant by disciplinary techniques below. Foucault (1979) identified the techniques of discipline as: the art of distributions, the control of activity and, the organization of geneses. A brief description of each is now provided.

3.2 The Art of Distributions

Foucault (1979) described how discipline progresses from the distribution of individuals in space. An enclosed space that "is the protected place of disciplinary monotony is needed" for disciplinary practices to occur (Foucault,

1979, p. 141). Familiar examples of such spaces include schools, hospitals, and army barracks (Markula & Pringle, 2006). A more relevant example for my study is the dance studio, which is designed to allow for the focused study of dance practices and enables the specific organization of bodies in space (in a line at the *barre* for example). Disciplinary space also requires "partitioning" (Foucault, 1979, p. 143) which limits the formation of hard to control groups, while enabling the location and identification of individuals. Dance classes are thus organized by grade level, and during each class the dancers form rows often decided upon by the teacher. Therefore, dancers are ranked through the placement and organization of their bodies in the studio as indicated in previous research (e.g., Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999). The art of distributions is, therefore, a useful and efficient means by which to manage and train dancers' bodies. By examining how dancers' bodies are enabled and constrained by space and how they are encouraged to utilize and move through space, we begin to understand how power relations and technologies of discipline operate on the moving body through the minutia of daily life.

3.3 The Control of Activity

In addition to the organization of space, the organization of time is essential to controlling the actual activities being performed in that space (Foucault, 1979). Foucault refers to this technique as the 'control of activity' and it is achieved by four means: timetabling; temporal regulation of the act; correlation between body and gesture; body-object articulations. By organizing the body within specific spaces and implementing a specific schedule, the body

becomes efficient, obedient, and useful. Timetables, with their roots in monastic communities, establish rhythms and divide time, thereby increasing discipline (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Timetabling promotes the efficient and effective use of space, leading to time used for productive means. An example of the use of the timetable as tool to control activity can be considered in the context of a dance studio. For example, a weekly timetable dictates when each level of dance class is taught, and outlines the duration of the class. The timetable also organizes the timing and structure of a ballet class. Each segment of the class (i.e., *barre, centre work*) is planned to last for a specific duration of time to ensure that all of the exercises are performed before the class is over and 'to assure the quality of the time used" (Foucault, 1979, p. 50). This organization of time also ensures the greatest benefits (technical improvement) in the time allowed.

The temporal regulation of the act promotes correlation between body and gestures and imposes precise instruction upon the body, thus disciplining it into useful efficiency. Dance classes, in addition to being specifically organized, also involve detailed instructions for the proper execution of each exercise. Each movement must be completed properly, with the full range of motion and with meticulous technique. Each exercise and movement is cued in a precise manner and dancers dance in unison. Foucault explained that this approach allows the correct (and efficient) use of the body. He stated: "…nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required…" (1979, p. 152). By organizing dancers' bodies through space and time in particular ways, the dancing body becomes disciplined and efficient.

Body-object articulation also contributes to the control of activity. Foucault (1979) wrote: "Discipline defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates" (p. 153). In the ballet studio, the *barre* plays a central role in many of the performed exercises. These exercises require that the body is positioned specifically in relationship to the *barre* and that bodily movements are organized to accommodate and manipulate the *barre* in a precise fashion. The *barre* then becomes "an apparatus of production" (Foucault, 1979, p. 153).

3.4 Organization of Geneses

Effective use of time and the efficient use of space are vital elements of disciplinary techniques. However, Foucault noted that the disciplines, "which analyze space, break up and rearrange activities, must also be understood as machinery for adding up and capitalizing time" (1979, p. 157). This was achieved through four different means: by dividing duration of time up into successive or equal segments; by organizing these segments into an analytic plan according to increasing complexity; by deciding how long each temporal segment will last and having an examination and; by drawing up a series of a series.

Through these tactics, a logic of progression is followed and a series of exercises arrived at that educate the body; orient it to a specific, definable goal. If we examine ballet class through a Foucauldian lens we may theorize that this aspect is prominent in ballet as the intensity and complexity of the exercises increases not only as each individual class progresses but also as dancers move up through the levels. Therefore, each class and each grade level are organized into

an 'analytic plan.' As each dance class progresses from the *barre* to the centre, and as dancers advance through the grades, the sequences and combinations of movements become longer, more complex, and more technically demanding. By following this plan, dancers are trained to execute increasingly intricate, precise, and demanding movements that require great levels of skill. This is achieved through the performance of a series of series of exercises that becomes successively more complex and difficult.

A defining feature of dance studios in Canada is the annual dance examination. In an exam situation, dance students perform exercises in front of an externally sanctioned examiner and demonstrate their ability to learn and execute complicated sequences. Foucault (1979) described the exam as a disciplinary technique as it submits the individual to a normalizing judgment. The individual dancer is rendered visible to the examiner or expert who qualifies and classifies the dancers' performance. The examination also ranks dancers as it determine if a dancer is allowed to progress to the next level, based on the examiner's judgment of their performance. Authors of previous studies (Green, 1999; Kleiner, 2009) also discussed the normalizing gaze of teachers and choreographers and suggested that this gaze arbitrarily categorized dancers as successful or unsuccessful. These authors further suggested that this gaze shaped dancers experiences in positive or negative ways.

It is easy to imagine how these techniques come together and produce effective results in a dance studio. In order for dancers to be able to perform at the level required of them, they must engage in hours of practice within a studio.

Their training consists of the repetition of multiple exercises, executed precisely and meticulously. Dancers must also be able to self-correct their own technique. As Kleiner (2009) explained, dancers must, and do, learn to internalize the 'correct' way of performing an exercise, be able to identify whether they are or are not performing it properly, and take the necessary steps (i.e., more practice) to do so. This process of self-management is accomplished through (self) surveillance, which I will now discuss through Foucault's concept of the Panopticon.

3.5 Surveillance and the Panopticon

While disciplinary techniques, which act upon the body, are used to create docility, the technique of surveillance is also important to the disciplining of individual bodies. Foucault (1979) drew upon Jeremy Bentham's prison structure, the Panopticon, as a metaphor for the ideal disciplinary apparatus. This design placed a single guard in the center of the tower, which meant he was able to see each inmate in his cell, but the prisoner was unable to see the guard. Consequently, the inmates never knew when they were being observed, only that they *could* be observed. This resulted in a tendency to self-monitor one's behaviour. As Foucault explained, the result of the Panopticon is this very act of self-surveillance; its success is based on a system of internalized surveillance. Previous dance researchers (e.g., Green, 1999; Kleiner, 2009) have utilized the concept of the Panopticon to examine the effects of surveillance in the dance studio. Kleiner (2009) defined the Panopticon as a "system that instills a deep sense of scrutiny and thus, self-discipline" (p. 240). She further argued that the

mirrors in the studio create constant visibility, "which has the potential to result in highly nuanced refinement of movement" (Kleiner, 2009, p. 244).

Foucault (1979) noted that the panoptic arrangement enables the process of docility utility. As Foucault noted, "discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" and also that "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). Therefore, a docile body is disciplined but also useful. For example, a ballet dancer's body is subjected to discipline through repetitive and progressive exercise, but it is rendered useful in that it becomes technically proficient and able to perform and master the intricacy of ballet. Through this process the body is produced as recognizable and knowable in a specific way: as a ballet dancer. Green (1999, 2002) argued that in general, ballet practices create docile bodies, which she defined as bodies that "are trained to behave in normative ways" (2002, p. 112) and are the result of "hierarchical surveillance, normalizing judgment, and continuous supervision" (Foucault, 1979, p. 192, cited in Green, 2002, p. 111). However, Foucault (1979) also stressed that docile bodies are unthinking bodies. Green's (1999, 2002) analyses demonstrated how aspects of ballet practice lead to normalization and self-surveillance, but do not explicitly articulate how such practices produce docile, unthinking, bodies.

Ritenburg (2010) acknowledged that dance studios are exquisite examples of Foucault's techniques of discipline (the organization of bodies in time, space, and movement) although she did not provide extensive detail. Others (Green, 1999; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010) have pointed out how the design of dance studios enables consistent surveillance (by oneself, teachers, and other dancers) through

the use of mirrors, which often line every wall. However, an extensive analysis that applies the techniques of discipline to the everyday practices within ballet class has not previously been done. Furthermore, little scholarly attention has focused on the material practices and what the dancing body actually does in the studio. Thus, this project sought to build upon previous research and explore the link between bodily practices and the construction of the self. I was curious about the capacity of the moving body, and how that capacity might be both realized and constrained through the performance of physical practices understood as disciplinary through a Foucauldian lens.

It was important to remind myself that although Foucault's theoretical framework provided guidance to this study, it was not intended to be prescriptive (Foucault, 1974). His work on disciplinary power cited institutionalized spaces such as military barracks and prisons as explicit examples of where and how this power operates. However, the dance studio was not so extremely institutionalized and state-governed. This contextual aspect of the study was important to consider throughout analysis, as was my goal to provide a nuanced discussion of dance and disciplinary power. I sought to conduct a systematic analysis of the ballet studio using Foucault's (1979) framework in order to expand upon previous studies and to provide a more detailed and nuanced understanding of how power relations operate in this setting, particularly how dancers are active parts of the power relations.

In order to conduct a sensitive analysis, it was important to engage deeply with Foucault's understanding of power. While it was easy to imagine how the

dancing body might be the target of power through the technologies of discipline described above, I had to continuously remind myself that Foucault (1979, 1998) characterized power as relational, fluid, productive, and unstable. He suggested that power flows through all interactions between individuals in multiple ways with multiple effects: "The power relation is the set of possible relations between forces, which passes through the dominated forces no less than through the dominating, as both these forces constitute unique elements" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 24). Therefore, it can be theorized that dancing bodies are not rendered totally docile. Using a Foucauldian perspective, some dance research has argued that teachers, choreographers, dance masters, and company directors dominate dancers. However, I acknowledged Foucault's perspective that dancers are always participating in power relations and therefore, have the capacity to use their own power for change.

Furthermore, Foucault's understanding of power implies that no practice is inherently bad or good, oppressive or liberating (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Rather, it is how certain practices are used that merits investigation. I was interested in how my participants negotiated their physical experiences of dance within power relations. Foucault (1979) acknowledged that power relations are asymmetrical and non-egalitarian. He conceded that: "In a great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom" (Foucault, 1997a, p. 292). In a dance studio, for example, dancers, dance teachers, and the owners of the dance studios have differing capacities to use their power. Furthermore, dance studios

are themselves embedded within an intricate web of power relations that characterizes the broader physical culture of contemporary society. Therefore, I was not trying to determine if and how ballet practices are oppressive, or if the dance studio is an oppressive space. Rather, my Foucaudian perspective encouraged a nuanced examination of power relations in the studio and how they both operated through and were affected by the dancing body.

3.6 Knowledge

So far I have explored how Foucault understood the body as being subjected to and produced through disciplinary power. I now further articulate how Foucault defined knowledge as it relates to power and the self. I also hope that this discussion provides further clarity to the way previous dance research has used Foucault's concept of 'discourse,' which in his schema assumed multiple meanings. Foucault (1972) observed that knowledge is closely linked with power and that together power and knowledge contribute to and sustain dominant understandings about what is accepted as truth or reality in society. For example, certain knowledges that circulate in the dance studio shape young dancers' ideas and attitudes about what constitutes a desirable dancing body. These knowledges hold value as 'truth' and girls understand themselves in relation to these truths.

Foucault (1972) explained that the nexus of power and knowledge produces and maintains certain ways of knowing and thinking. For example, there are certain ways of knowing about dance that are sustained through the current power relations in society. We generally understand dance to be an art form, to be performed by highly trained bodies that conform to idealized notions of

femininity, and to have an expressive or an aesthetic component. These 'knowledge bases' shape the way we know and understand dance to be dance, and not sport for example. For this study I was interested in identifying the knowledge bases through which dancing girls understand their dancing bodies and construct the self. Although I use the term 'knowledge base,' Foucault uses the term discourse. I will now explain in more detail what is meant by 'discourse,' how discourses operate, and how they inform the process of constructing the self.

3.6.1 Discourse.

Foucault (1979, 1980) explained that power and knowledge are joined together in discourse. Therefore, discourses play a central role in the strategic use of power and are used to support dominance in force relations. Foucault (1979, 1980) maintained that discourses produce and express certain ways of thinking and knowing. Lessa (2006) summarized Foucault's definition of discourse as: "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (p. 285). Therefore, girls' understanding of dance and their dance experiences are shaped by, made possible, and limited by current power relations and dominant discourses related to dance.

However, no discourse is consistently dominant or oppressive. Discourses are unstable and always shifting within power relations, which are also always shifting. Foucault (1979) wrote that discourse is "a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable" (p. 100), and "…such a segment transmits and produces power, it reinforces it, but also

60

undermines and exposes it" (p. 101). In his work on Foucault, Deleuze (1988) interprets the relationship between power and knowledge. He writes: "Knowledge is not a science and cannot be separated from the various thresholds in which it is caught up, including even the experience of perception, the values of the imagination, the prevailing ideas or commonly held beliefs" (Deleuze, 1998, p. 44).

For this dissertation I needed to identify the ways we know about ballet in contemporary Western society. Although limited scholarly research has analyzed the field of dance from this perspective, it was possible to tentatively identify two main knowledge bases, or discourses, that construct our understandings of dance through these studies. I use the term discourse to refer to systems of knowledge that shape our understandings of social phenomena (Foucault, 1979). The Foucauldian dance researchers did not necessarily use the term discourse in this sense, but based on my reading the most common discourses identified in this literature were the aesthetics of dancing body (Green 1999, 2001, 2003; Oliver, 2005; Ritenburg, 2010), and dance as a form of artistic expression (Bond & Stinson, 2000, 2007; Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones, & Van Dyke, 1990; Stinson, 1997). These studies demonstrated that the aesthetics of the dancing body were prominent in discussions and understandings of dance. The dancing body was articulated and defined according to its appearance. For example, the idealized dancing body was understood to be extremely slender, which overlaps with the idealized feminine body discussed earlier. However, in addition to being slender, the dancing body embodied a weightless and graceful quality that conveyed a

sense of ethereality and effortlessness in its movements (Green, 1999, 2001; Ritenburg 2010). In this way it exceeds the desirable or idealized feminine body. Additionally, the dancing body is often compartmentalized and stringent criteria are applied to each body part: legs must be long, the neck long and graceful, small breasts, well arched feet (Aalten, 2007; Green, 1999, 2001; Ritenburg, 2010). This discourse of the precise aesthetics of the dancing body has constructed a dominant and pervasive understanding about what kinds of bodies (and thus dancers) are valued.

Based on my review of literature, the other discourse that emerged is that of dance as a form of artistic expression, through which the self can be expressed. Many authors have noted that dancers of all ages and levels of proficiency describe dance as a creative means through which they are able to express a true, inner self that is somehow 'free' when dancing (Bond & Stinson, 2000; Bracey, 2004; Goodwin, Krohn, & Kuhnle, 2004). This artistic expression relates to ideas of performance, which act to distinguish dance from other movement forms such as sport.

These discourses, therefore, create a certain way of thinking and knowing about dance: dance requires (and produces) a body that must adhere to particular aesthetics, and is a form of artistic self-expression. However, I was curious about what other discourses might circulate in the dance studio that remain less examined. I also wanted to know more about how dancers made sense of the *moving* body and how that in turned contributed to the construction of a self.

3.7 Foucault and the Self

Much of Foucault's (1988a, 1988b) later work sought to examine the process through which individuals understand themselves as subjects within power relations. He emphasized that the formation of the self always occurs within the power/knowledge nexus and that the self does not exist nor is it constructed outside of power relations. Therefore, he necessarily rejected the modernist philosophy of the self, which realizes the 'self' as a locatable, knowable essence that can be found within each individual (Andrews, 2000). Indeed, it is this notion of the self that is widely accepted in today's society. One needs only to consider the cultural moniker of 'finding one's self' to grasp its currency. This phrase reveals the preoccupation contemporary society has with 'knowing one's self' and suggests it is the individual's responsibility to pursue this endeavor through specific (and often self-managing, disciplinary) practices (Foucault, 1988b). The quantitative health psychology literature and much of the dance literature reviewed earlier also pointed to this notion of an essential inner self discovered and expressed through dance. Several interpretive studies suggested that girls were able to find an inner self that was somehow obscured, through dance (Bond, 1994; Bond & Stinson, 2007).

However, in this poststructuralist study I align myself with Foucault (1983), who explicitly rejected the idea that we can locate a 'truth' in the self. He believed that such a system produced limiting identities, into which individuals are locked. Instead, he (1988a) argued that the self is constituted within the nexus of power and knowledge and made possible and limited by the discursive

understandings available in one's socio-historical and political context. While individuals are always produced through the power relations, Foucault (2003) maintained that the self is not fully determined by power relations. He (2003) insisted:

> Individuals do not simply circulate in those networks [of power]; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always also its relays. In other words, power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them. (p. 29)

In other words, Foucault understood the self as a fluid form both constituted within and constitutive of power relations. Foucault (1988b) believed individuals are able to actively construct a self through careful examination of the specific power relations in which they exist. Through such critical engagement one can actively expand the limitations of one's discursively constructed identity and become less dependent on dominating power relations. Foucault (1988b) referred to these processes as the technologies of the self. I will now describe this concept and how it will assist my analysis.

3.7.1 Technologies of the self.

Foucault (1988b) referred to the active construction of the self within power relations as the 'technologies of the self.' These techniques:

> permit individuals by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct,

and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain

state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (p. 18)

Put another way, the technologies of the self refer to the ways in which

individuals actively understand and construct themselves according to the

discourses and discursive practices available to them within their social milieu

(Foucault, 1988b). However, these technologies do not transform disciplinary

discourses or locate the individual outside of power relations. Rather, they involve

active reflection and problematization about the limitations of existing

disciplinary discourses that shape one's identity. Through such critical

engagement one can actively expand the limitation of one's discursively

constructed identity and become less dependent on power relations (Foucault,

1997b). Foucault (1988a; 1988b; 1997b) identified three important aspects related

to the technologies of the self and the transformation of one's identity. The first is

the need for active problematization of the discourses that shape one's identity.

The second is the creation of new or different ethics for one's existence. The third

is the process of aesthetic self-stylization.

Active problematization is the first and most important aspect of

technologies of the self and refers to the way in which an individual thinks

critically about the limitations of his/her discursively constructed identity: "Only

after such problematization can an individual engage in practices of freedom"

(Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 153). After one has problematized, one can decide

how one will change one's self through the creation of ethics. Ethics refer to "how

the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own

actions" (Foucault, 1983, p. 238). To create a new ethics is to examine how one is able to constitute one's self in relationship to the codes and discourses that shape one's attitudes and conduct. After critical reflection on these codes, one can challenge their 'prescriptiveness' and respond to them in different ways. In this process one can rethink and creatively redefine one's ethics, which ultimately guide one's practices.

Finally, the ethical practice manifests in the process of aesthetic self-stylization. Aesthetic self-stylization refers to the visible ways in which one engages in these redefined ethics and how one actively creates one's life without following a pre-defined code (Foucault, 1997b; Markula & Pringle, 2006). To do this one needs to engage in certain aesthetic practices that have been thoughtfully and purposefully developed.

These self-constitutive processes provide a useful framework for understanding how girls who dance in a commercial dance studio might actively fashion a dancing self. As discussed in my literature, prominent social (and scholarly) understandings about ballet and the ballet body suggest that ballet perpetuates limiting ideas about femininity and the dancing body. Yet, little is known about how adolescent female dancers in the studio context negotiate these discourses. Therefore, examining if and how adolescent girl dancers problematize these discourses and create new ethical practices for themselves will expand on existing literature.

3.8 Conclusion

Based on this theoretical perspective, I was interested in the dance discourses (including dance practice) that shape the construction of bodies and selves and how certain ideas might become dominant. Instead of asking 'what is the essential dancing self?' and consequently defining or critiquing this categorical self, I was interested in how girls actively *construct* a dancing self within the discursive context of the dance studio. I used the Foucauldian concepts of disciplinary power, discourse, and the self to help me do this.

Although previous literature is, indeed, captivated by the appearance of the dancing body, I argue we must try to broach and accommodate more of the complexity and vitality of the moving body in our analyses. To do this, it was necessary to gain a rich understanding of the everyday activities and bodily practices that occur in a dance studio and become familiar with the discourses that flowed through them. Therefore, I immersed myself in the dance studio setting and talked to young dancers to gain insight into the ways they construct the self through the dancing body. The next chapter will describe and explain my methodological approach as well as clearly articulate how I collected and analyzed my data.

4.0 Methodology

To understand how adolescent girls who dance in commercial dance studios understand the self through the dancing body, I situated myself within a poststructuralist theoretical framework. Specifically, I drew from Foucault's theoretical axes to interrogate the relationship between the self, body, and knowledge. The goal of this study was not to discover any one truth about girls' dance experiences or to reveal a 'true' dancing self. Rather, this project sought to examine and reveal those social processes through which truth and the self are constructed (Andrews, 2000). My poststructuralist framework shaped the way I approached every aspect of this project, including data collection, analysis, and how I situated and understood my role as a researcher. In this chapter I clearly articulate my methodological framework and describe my data collection and analysis methods.

4.1 Case Study Research

The purpose of my study was to understand how girls construct the self through the dancing body within commercial dance studios. To achieve this I needed to obtain detailed information about the day-to-day life in this setting and what it was like for my participants. Therefore, a case study approach (Stake, 1995, 2005) provided the scaffolding for this study. Case study research is not limited or oriented to any particular discipline or paradigm and is thus compatible with the poststructuralist framework overarching this project (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Instead, case study research allows detailed and focused observation and enables rich data to be gathered from a single case or entity that is

clearly defined (Stake, 1995). My research goal was compatible with a case study approach as I sought to gain a rich and detailed understanding of girls' dance experiences and practices as they occur in the specific context of the commercial dance studio.

According to Stake (2005), case study is more accurately described as a decision about what is being studied than a methodological decision. A qualitative case study "concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other contexts" (Stake, 2005, p. 444). As Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) explained, case study, "at its most general, provides an approach that focuses one's attention during learning, construction…or problem solving" (p. 81). Possible cases relevant to my topic could consist of a single dance student or a dance teacher, as well as a dance class, a dance studio, or a dance performance: anything that can be conceptualized as a specific, functioning body or 'bounded system' (Stake, 2005). Therefore, the bounded system of study in this project was one advanced ballet class in one commercial dance studio in a large Western Canadian city (Hesse-Biber &Leavy, 2011; Stake, 2005). In this context, a ballet class refers to a series of weekly classes with the same participants who perform approximately at the same level of proficiency. Through my own experience in commercial studios and through conversations with friends and colleagues who teach in such studios, I was aware that dance classes usually accommodate anywhere from 8-14 dancers. Therefore, focusing on one ballet class in one dance studio provided an appropriate number

of potential participants and enabled prolonged engagement in the studio and with the dancers. This fostered the collection of rich, detailed data over time.

4.1.1 Types of case studies.

Stake (2005) described several different types of case studies, each with their unique corresponding goals. The first is an 'intrinsic' case study which is conducted when there is something in particular about a specific case that is of interest or needs more advanced understanding. Using dance as an example, I would have undertaken an intrinsic case study if I was interested in something about a *particular* dancer, dance syllabus, or dance teacher. As Stake (2005) explained, intrinsic case study "is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but instead because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest" (p. 445). If for example, I were interested in the experience of dancing the lead role in the classical ballet Swan Lake, I would focus only on those dancer(s) who have danced that role. My interest would be intrinsic to that particular case. However, my interests did not lie in the particular. Therefore, I selected what Stake (2005) describes as an instrumental case study, which seeks to provide insight into a particular issue in order to foster sophisticated theorizing around that concern.

In instrumental case study work, the particular case(s) themselves are of secondary interest to the other greater, external (to the case) interest. For example, I was not interested in a particular dancer or in a particular dance instruction method, but more generally in the overall experiences of girls who dance in a

commercial studio. Therefore, an instrumental case study was appropriate for this project. While Stake allows that the line between the intrinsic and instrumental case study is not definitive, the goals of my study fell more closely in line with that of instrumental case study research. This instrumental case research involved in-depth examination of the case and the nuances of everyday, ordinary activities within it in order to better understand the topic of interest.

4.2 Research Site

The site of this research was one commercial dance studio in a large Western Canadian city. It is one of the larger dance studios in the city and teaches a range of dance genres including ballet, jazz, hip-hop and Irish dance. I selected this studio based on the following criteria: dance classes are taught by professionally trained dance teachers, ballet was among the dance genres taught, the studio did not explicitly position itself as a pre-professional studio (meaning it was not intended to groom dancers for professional careers, rather, it acted as a recreational outlet); it was easy for me to access by bike, on foot, or one simple trip on public transit. I also had gained familiarity with this studio through acquaintances with children who dance at this studio and who confirmed its status as non-professional. Based on conversations with these parents and with dance teachers familiar with the community, I was satisfied that the studio considered a 'mainstream' recreational dance studio. By this I mean it offers a wide variety of dance genres, and does not intend to groom dancers for professional careers.

Therefore, the culture of this studio reflected that of a fairly typical dance studio. Such a studio was appropriate for the general nature of my question, which

was: How do girls who dance in commercial dance studios construct a self through the dancing body? I suggest that a studio that does groom dancers for professional career would present a different phenomenon than what I was interested in.

4.3 Boundedness

In case study research, focus is facilitated by the concept of boundedness, which refers to how the case of study is defined (Stake, 1995). For example, a case is bounded by time and place and can be a program, an event, an activity, or individuals (Cresswell, 1998; Stake, 1995). The concept of boundedness provides parameters for what is being studied; it refers to the finiteness of data collection possibilities, the specificity and uniqueness of what is being studied (Stake, 1995).

This case study was bounded by several factors: the studio, the genre of dance (ballet), the gender of participants (girls), and the specific level of dance class (advanced). I selected ballet for two primary reasons. First, much of the literature focuses on ballet as it is considered a foundational dance style. Second, experience and familiarity with dance studios informs me that many young dancers will start their dance career with ballet, and then study additional genres as they get older. Therefore, it was a reasonable assumption that the dancers I would be working with would have the most experience with ballet, in most cases. This case study is also bounded by gender as it girls' experiences (particularly their bodily, physical experiences) I am interested in. Finally, the level of dance also bound this case. I selected to study an advanced ballet class, as it is usually this level (very technically proficient but not professional or striving to be

professional) that will include the age group I am interested in and that is largely absent from the literature.

4.4 Recruitment and Sampling Strategy

All dancers in the class were invited to participate. At the time of recruitment, 12 female dancers and one male dancer were in attendance. Although I was interested in the entire class as a case, I did employ purposefully sampling to help ensure the provision of information rich cases. The term purposeful sampling is an umbrella term under which several sampling strategies fall, including intensity sampling, maximum variation sampling, typical case sampling, theory based sampling, criterion sampling, and convenience and snowball sampling (Patton, 2002). Given the goals of my study, participants were selected according to criterion sampling. This term refers to the study of all participants that meet specific, predetermined criterion of importance. My original sampling criteria included: age (15-18 years), gender (female), at least two years of dance experience, history of ballet participation, and enrollment in two or more dance classes per week. This criteria was arrived at as my own personal experience and knowledge of the dance community tells me that many young dancers start out taking ballet, and then morph into other forms of dance such as jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, and tap. Focusing on ballet also enabled me to make connections with previous literature, the majority of which focuses on or makes mention of ballet. By working with dancers who have danced for two years or longer, and who dance twice a week or more, I increased the likelihood of capturing the insights of girls who considered dance an important aspect of their life.

This age group (15-18 years) was of interest because there is little known about studio dancers of this age. Previous research on dance has focused primarily on older adolescents, university level dancers, and those training in dance academies. In addition, this age group was more likely to make decisions about their participation than younger children whose activity engagement is often controlled by parents (Vietch, Bagley, Ball, & Salmon, 2006). When I originally determined age criteria I made an assumption based on my experiences that the dancers in this level would be 15-18 years old. However, several of the dancers were younger (13 and 14 years). I did not see justified reason for excluding these dancers; therefore, my sample reflects an age range of 13-18 years. Additionally, I identified girls as my population of interest but there was one male dancer in the class. I did not want to create any exclusionary dynamics and consequently invited him to participate in the study, which I explain further below.

4.5 Participants

My final sample consisted of 11 female dancers between the ages of 13-18 years who were enrolled in the advanced-level ballet class at the studio selected for my case study. As mentioned above, at the time of recruitment, 12 female dancers and one male dancer were in attendance in class. All dancers (including the male) returned informed consent forms but one female dancer stopped coming to class eight weeks after my study commenced. Four additional female students attended the class sporadically in subsequent weeks to make up a regularly scheduled class or for extra training. They were invited to participate and given an information letter and informed consent form. However, none of these four

dancers returned informed consent forms and attended class infrequently. Therefore, in total, 16 female dancers were invited to participate. Twelve provided consent but only 11 attended class for the duration of the study, resulting in a final sample of 11 female dancers.

In order to avoid creating any exclusionary dynamics, I invited the male dancer to participate. He provided informed consent as he was over the age of 18. However, given that my research question was focused on girls' experiences, his interview data (discussed below) was not incorporated into analysis, nor did I focus on his practices during participant observations. Additionally, during observations I was careful not to record any information about specific practices and dialogue initiated by or involving those individuals who did not return informed consent forms. This was not overly problematic as their attendance was infrequent.

The mean age of my sample population was 15 years and the mode age was also 15 years. On average, participants had six previous years of dance experience. All participants studied only at this dance studio. All dancers, with the exception of one, studied three or more different genres of dance and all participants attended two or more ballet classes per week. The average number of hours each dancer spent at the studio each week was 7.5. The table below details this information. All of the dancers lived within the city limits, in various areas of the city. Most were dependent on parental transportation to and from the studio.

Participant Information

Name	Age	Number of Years Dancing	Dance Genres Studied In Addition to Ballet	*Hours of Class per Week
Anne	15	8	Hip-Hop, Jazz, Lyrical, Modern	12
Cassie	15	8	Hip-Hop, Jazz, Tap	7.5
Chloe	13	7	Hip-Hop, Jazz, Lyrical	9
Ella	14	6	Hip-Hop	4.5
Jess	15	4	Jazz, Modern	6
Laura	14	6	Lyrical, Jazz	6
Lily	15	7	Hip-Hop, Jazz, Modern, Tap	12
Nicole	16	4	Lyrical, Modern	6
Rachel	14	8	Jazz, Modern	7.5
Sophia	18	8	Lyrical, Hip-Hop, Modern	9
Violet	15	4	Jazz, Lyrical	6
**Michael	18	2	None	3

* Classes usually run for 1.5 hours. Ballet and Jazz are offered two-to-three times per week.
**I've included the male dancer's information for descriptive purposes only.

4.5.1 The teacher: An important non-participant

While I did not interview the teacher, she was an important part of the

studio and of my observations (described below), and therefore merits description.

Mrs. M___ was the founder and co-director of the studio and had been teaching

ballet for over 45 years. The studio was founded in 1968 in the basement of her

home. Ballet is the only genre of dance she currently teaches, although she taught

jazz and lyrical dance in the first 20 years of her teaching career. As a dancer she

holds an advanced level standing designated by the Royal Academy of Dance

(RAD)[5] and an intermediate standard designated by the Imperial Society of

Teachers of Dancing (ISTD), the largest international dance examination board

that provides training for dancers, teachers, and examiners. An advanced level in

RAD is the second highest level one can obtain, and the intermediate level in

ISTD is also the second highest level one can obtain. Mrs. M___ obtained her Licentiate teachers certificate with ISTD. This certificate is very highly regarded internationally and reflects advanced teacher training. In addition to teaching ballet, she choreographed approximately 6 dances for each year-end recital.

Over the course of this study, she described to me the multiple injuries endured from her years of ballet training. When I met her, she was preparing for her second knee surgery. She had also undergone one hip replacement. As a consequence, she explained to me, she emphasized the importance of proper technique and approached each class with the philosophy that dancers should be encouraged to work to the best of their bodily ability, but not force "unnatural" positions and movements.

4.6 Data Collection Methods: Participant Observation

Participant observations comprised a large part of my data collection and are considered to be an appropriate data collection strategy for many qualitative approaches, including ethnographic research and case study research (DiDomenico & Phillips, 2010; Hatch, 2002; Markula & Silk, 2011; Stake, 1995, 2005). While my overarching methodological framework is case study, my methods draw from ethnographical approaches as well. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) wrote that ethnography:

involves the ethnographer participating , overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions….to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. (p. 1)

Fetterman (1998) similarly defined ethnography as "the art and science of describing a group or culture" (p. 1). Although this definition is somewhat consistent with my objectives, I did not conduct a full ethnography, as I was not able to devote what I considered adequate time in the field to confidently declare this an ethnographic project (Markula & Silk, 2011). However, I did utilize similar data collection methods, including observations and interviews (described below) and was interested the daily occurrences and practices of a particular group.

Participant observations are often used alongside interviews and textual analysis in case study research and ethnographic studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hesse-Biber &Leavy, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011; Patton, 2002; Stake 2005). According to Stake (2005), these observations allow case study researchers to see and reveal what is considered ordinary in certain settings and events. The setting of interest to the researcher (in my case, the dance studio) is often referred to as 'the field' and observations are a component of what is referred to as 'fieldwork' (DiDomenico & Phillips, 2010; Gambold, 2010; Stake, 1995; Markula & Silk, 2011). Fieldwork, therefore, refers to the collection of information in the environment or setting of interest (Patton, 2001). My interests was in accessing common and taken-for-granted occurrences in the dance studio to better understand the context in which participants developed particular understandings of the self and the moving, dancing body. Therefore, the studio was the site of my fieldwork.

Observations are commonly used as a data collection method within

numerous qualitative approaches. This has resulted in the emergence of myriad terms that attempt to distinguish between observation types (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2008). Within case study literature, Yin (2008) used the term 'direct observation' simply to describe observations that occur on-site. A more robust explanation was provided by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) who distinguished between observer-as-participant and participant-as-observer. In the former, the researcher is situated within the research setting but does not actively participate in the same activities as the participants and interaction with participants is minimal. In the latter, the researcher is a much more active member within the research setting and participates fully in activities with participants. Patton (2002) provided a similar overview but emphasizes that in any study, a researchers' participation is unlikely to fall neatly into one or another of these categories. Instead, participation occurs on a continuum and can shift fluidly between these capacities.

It is this fluidity I embraced in my study. Given the poststructuralist epistemology overarching this study, I at no time assumed to be a wholly objective or passive observer. I believe that my mere physical presence in the room and the shared knowledge and understanding that I was a researcher necessarily shaped the dynamics, albeit in intangible and perhaps inarticulable ways. As Denzin (1997) stated, we must recognize that "our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others" (p. 27). Thus, my presence undoubtedly shaped and influenced the setting observed and was shaped and influenced by it.

Within a poststructuralist study, observations are always invested in values

and are themselves constructed within networks of power relations (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). At the outset I decided I would not participate in the dance class with my participants as the age gap between us was considerable and it would not be common for someone of my age to take part in this dance class. Instead, I engaged in casual conversation with the participants and the teacher before and after class, assisted with cuing music on the sound system, and participated in the day-to-day relationships and interactions within the studio.

4.6.1 The art of observation.

I observed one advanced ballet class for one term as defined by the studio (roughly 22 weeks) from January to June, 2012. Class was scheduled from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. every Wednesday evening. I arrived at the studio 15 minutes prior to the commencement of class each in order to engage in casual conversation with the dancers, observe studio life in the studio, and to become a more familiar presence for my participants.

The goal of observation was to understand and develop familiarity with the dance studio which was the setting in which my participants experienced the phenomena of interest (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2002). Patton described observation as an effective method through which researchers gain a detailed understanding of the context and as well as a sense of how the participants themselves might understand the setting. Indeed, my prolonged observations allowed me to take in aspects of the setting that were 'naturalized' or taken for granted by participants, but which would be overlooked or missed during an interview. For example, observations allowed me to observe the material practices that occurred within the

studio as well as the physical features of the building. Additionally, arriving before class commenced allowed me to observe the daily rhythm of studio life. For example, the 10 minutes prior to class was utilized for stretching and warm-up by my participants and also facilitated important social connections and relationships. In these 10 minutes they were not yet focused intently on dancing and I caught a glimpse of girlishness and a less serious aspect of them as they chatted light heartedly with each other. I would not have captured this aspect of the girls' friendships solely through an interview.

Collecting data through observation also allowed me to practice reflexivity as I was constantly "making sense of how the participants make sense within that setting" (Hatch, 2002, p. 63). Each week new details revealed themselves to me and over time the studio became more comfortable and familiar, which helped me see it through the eyes of my participants rather than those of an outsider. Prolonged engagement was, therefore, a necessary and important part of data collection. Even after three months I noticed new details about the studio layout, organization, the way the classes were scheduled in a specific timetable, and the relationships created within it. Over time I paid less attention to what the studio looked like and more to what actually *occurred* in the studio including the practices of my participants and other people in the studio (e.g., teachers, receptionist, parents). This allowed me to develop a richer understanding of the various relationships my participants formed within this setting.

4.6.2 Types of observation.

Qualitative researchers have suggested it is difficult to know what to attend to when observing the field (Angronsino, 2005; Boostrom, 1994; Patton, 2002). Boostrom (1994) proposed that learning *how* to observe and learning *what* to observe are accomplished simultaneously. Angrosino (2005) suggests that observations are likely to unfold in terms of increasing levels of specificity. Indeed descriptive observation was achieved most prominently in the early stages (first six weeks of observation) as I attempted to both notice and record as many details as possible about the setting (including physical aspects and design of the studio space), the people in the space, as well as the interactions and activities that occurred there (Angronsino, 2005; Boostrom, 1994). Therefore, my initial observations largely described the appearance of the studio space and the flow of activity (i.e., what happens in which space, at what time). This process resulted in large amount of material. Some of this was used directly in analysis but much of it simply provided context (Angronsino, 2005).

Over time, my observations became more focused as the studio started to feel more familiar. My attention shifted more explicitly to the daily occurrences, interactions and "defined activity" in the field (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 165). Given that I was interested in the actual bodily practices in which the dancers engaged, I concentrated on these activities and associated dialogue. My observations were largely guided by Foucault's (1979) concepts of the technologies of discipline (as noted earlier). Therefore, my focus was attuned to how the dancing body is managed through the use of time, space, and movement in a dance studio. I also focused on how dancers and the teacher talked about the

ballet practices and ballet bodies during the class. Observations were not able to capture how participants made sense of ballet practices or how they felt about them, but this method helped orient me towards areas of interest that I addressed in the interview guide.

4.7 Recording the Data: Field Notes

All of my participant observations were recorded as field notes (Gambold 2010; Markula & Silk, 2011; Stake, 2005). Over the course of 22 weeks I took more than 150 pages of field notes recorded in a paper notebook and on the memo pad feature on my iPhone. The purpose of taking field notes was to become familiar with the context and field of study, to inform the interview guide, and to provide empirical material for an analysis of Foucault's disciplinary techniques in the studio setting (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). Therefore, my field notes detailed what the dance studio looked like, who was in the studio, what occurred in the studio, when it occured and my own reactions and reflections on all of these aspects

Patton (2002) suggested field notes should be as detailed as possible to provide adequate empirical material for analysis (Patton, 2002). Therefore, both linguistic and material practices were noted and recorded (Clifford, 1986). After the initial descriptive phase (approximately six weeks), during which I primarily recorded information about what the studio looked like and what happened in the studio at what time, my notes became increasingly organized around Foucault's technologies of dominance and described how the dancers' bodies were organized in time, space and through movement and the relationships that were created in

the space.

A large portion of my field notes was also reflective and analytic in nature. The act of observing and recording prompted my own reactions and reflections upon that which I had observed. These reactions and reflections were informed by my theoretical approach, my own recollections of and knowledge of dancing in a dance studio, and my more personal memories and emotional responses. Therefore, my field notes were roughly organized in this way: description, reflection, and the creation of questions to guide future observations, interviews, and reflection. I also kept a separate file that was more like a personal diary as the observation experience often prompted fairly intense personal memories and emotional reactions (Markula & Silk, 2011). While these field notes were also included in aspects of my analysis, writing them in a separate document assisted with organization.

4.8 Negotiating Participant Observation and the Recording of Field Notes

Initially, I brought a large black notebook into the studio and recorded my field notes in it. However, after approximately three weeks of observation the black book felt intrusive. I started to take notes more discreetly on my iPhone. I noted that many girls in the studio carried smart phones and checked them frequently on breaks in class. It was seemingly a commonplace device in the studio and felt less out of place than a notebook. I wrote key words or phrases about what I observed down in my notebook or iPhone that would prompt more detailed thoughts later (Markula & Silk, 2011). Immediately following class I found a quiet space outside of the studio and quickly jotted down further details

that I was worried about forgetting or diminishing in their clarity. As soon as I returned home (within 30 minutes of class ending) I spent for approximately an hour fleshing out my field notes and filling in details.

Additionally, approximately halfway through the observational phase I shifted to a more active participant observer role and started to participate in the *barre* portion of the class. In my role as an observer at the front of the room I felt awkward sitting still and observing the dancers. Given that I was largely interested in the bodily practices dancers engaged in and possessed the physical capacity and knowledge to perform these practices, it struck me that dancing with the girls might be a rich opportunity to animate my observations, reflections and analysis. The teacher originally invited me to participate at our first meeting but I declined and cited my age as a reason. I was also personally worried that dancing with the participants would complicate my relationship to the project and make things 'messy.' However, after six weeks of feeling stilted in my own practices as a researcher in the studio, I broached the subject with the teacher and she encouraged me to participate in as much as the class as I wanted. I discussed participation with the members of my supervisory committee and we collectively agreed it would be an appropriate practice. From then on I participated in the *barre* portion of the class (almost half). This shift in practice helped me feel considerably more comfortable in the class as well as more connected to the research process. It also facilitated easier relationships with participants.

4.9 Analysis of Observations

A poststructuralist researcher is likely to approach observational analysis by focusing on verbal and non-verbal interactions in the research setting, how the participants position themselves, and the social and cultural consequences of the observations (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Additionally, data analysis should be coherent with the epistemological traditions that govern the project as a whole (Markula & Silk, 2011). Therefore, analysis of my field notes was guided by Foucault's theoretical framework, primarily his technologies of dominance, as explained previously. I read through my field notes and organized them using a colour coded highlighting scheme according to the following categories: the use of time, space, movement; interactions and relationships; and my personal responses and reflections. I then focused on those field notes that described and provided insight into how ballet dancers' bodies were managed in the studio through the specific organization of time, space, and movement. The theoretical concepts such as self, body, and knowledge were also drawn from to make sense of my observations. Verbatim text was often taken from my field notes to help convey the appearance and atmosphere of the studio, and to support my analysis of the how the technologies of discipline operated in the studio.

4.10 Data Collection Methods: Interviews

Interviews were utilized to collect data for this study in addition to observations. Interviews are considered a common data collection method used in case study research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011; Stake, 2005). They were appropriate for this particular case study as they supplemented my observational

data and provided a means through which I could more readily access participants' experiences and the ways in which they made meaning of the topics of interest (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Interviews commenced after 14 weeks of observation and were completed over a 10-week period. Participant observations continued after interviews began. I conducted one round of interviews with 11 female dancers and one male dancer. Second interviews were conducted with six of the female participants based on scheduling availability.

I intended to conduct interviews in the dance studio in order to increase ease of scheduling and because it is a familiar environment for the dancers. However, I allowed the dancers to select any location they wished and they chose other locations. Seven chose one coffee shop close to the studio, one chose her Mother's workplace, one chose a cafeteria on the University of Alberta campus, and two chose a coffee shop close to their respective family homes. All but one participant was dependent on parental modes of transportation to and from the interview, but parents did not attend the interview. First interviews ranged in duration from 34-to-72 minutes. Second interviews ranged from 22 –to-29 minutes. I will now outline why I chose to use semi-structured interviews, describe my interview guides, and review other considerations in relationship to conducting and analyzing interview data.

4.10.1 Interview formats.

The popularity of interviews as a data collection tool has facilitated the introduction of multiple terms to describe particular interview techniques.

Common terms include semi-structured, open-ended, unstructured, standardized and informal interviews (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 83). Markula and Silk narrow the types of interviews down to three primary categories; structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. These categories borrow heavily from Patton (2002) who also describes a variety of interview types, each with corresponding goals and characteristics.

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews

Given the goals of my study I used semi-structured interviews. These types of interviews are perhaps the most commonly used among qualitative researchers (Markula & Silk, 2011). Semi-structured interviews can be conducted with individuals or with groups, in person or over the telephone, and often take place in a designated interview space (Patton, 2002; Markula & Silk, 2011). This designated space is often an everyday setting familiar to participants. In this case, the dance studio provided an example of a space that was both familiar to the participants and easily accessible and was thus, presented as a possible interview location.

Semi-structured interviews seek to avoid yes/no answers and aspire to elicit conversation, story-telling and reciprocal dialogue between researcher and participants (Ellis, 1998). Therefore, as the researcher I took an active role in the conversation (including sharing my own experiences) and sought to manage the direction of the interview to ensure that our conversations addressed the topics relevant to my research. Semi-structured interviews differ from unstructured interviews, which are more aptly described as spontaneous, informal

conversations (Markula & Silk, 2011). Such interviews or conversations may take

place at any time during the data collection stage and in any setting. There is no

set list of questions asked in these interviews as there is no way of knowing when

they may occur. Although I primarily utilized semi-structured interviews,

informal conversations between the participants and myself often resembled

unstructured interviews. If these conversations were relevant to my research

questions I recorded the main themes and ideas of these conversation in my field

journal. These conversations often acted to supplement or clarify data obtained

through participant observation and the more formal interviews.

4.10.2 The interview guide.

The different types of interviews described above require a distinct set of

interview questions and varying approaches to the interview situation.

Researchers wanting to gain insight into participants' experiences will need to ask

questions that encourage story-telling and sharing of memories and insights (Ellis,

1998). Given my interest in the ways my participants made meaning of the ballet

studio and their ballet bodies, I required a set of questions that prompted dialogue

around topics of interest but that allowed flexibility to respond to other potentially

important topics if they emerged. This set of questions is called an interview

guide (Markula & Silk, 2011; Patton, 2002). Its purpose is to provide general

direction for the researchers during the interview but also to accommodate

conversations that may go in other directions. This aspect was important for my

research because the interview guide could inherently limit the flow of

conversation as it was subjectively constructed by myself (the researcher) and reflected my assumptions about what was important (Patton, 2002).

I organized my initial interview guide (See Appendix A) around the concepts and topics of interest (i.e., the ballet body, ballet practices, the self) and drew from my observational data to identify concepts and practices that needed further clarification. The interview guide opened with a general introduction that reiterated the general purpose of the project and the purpose of the interviews. In this introduction I also shared autobiographical information in order to assist with rapport and explained why I was interested in the topic. By sharing personal information and being transparent about the purpose of the study I sought to create an atmosphere that reflected my poststructuralist positioning and identified both researcher and participant as contributors to the construction of knowledge.

The interview guide then included what Seidman (1991) calls 'grand tour' questions. These were broad, open-ended questions designed to start dialogue in a comfortable manner. For example, I asked: "*Can you tell me about what it was like when you started taking dance?*" From there, I asked open-ended questions and invited the participant to share their stories with me. Open-ended questions encourage answers that take the shape of stories and sentences, as opposed to one-word answers. Such questions were difficult to write and care was taken when crafting the interview guide (Markula & Silk, 2011; Patton, 2002). Prompts were used to gain more specific understandings about participants' thoughts on the body and self in relation to dance. It was important to engage in active listening by taking notes and asking for concrete details and stories. In previous research I

have often read a transcript only to find myself wishing I had details to support or elaborate on a topic or concept that came up in conversation. To help avoid this I made a concerted effort to follow up or revisit these points within the interview

Finally, my interview guide was just that, a guide. I explained to the participants that I had a number of questions I hoped they would find interesting, but that some questions might be better than others. I emphasized that it would be fine if we did not address all of them (Ellis, 2006). My interview guide was centered around the concepts of body, self, and expression and sought to access how dancers thought about their dancing bodies, the self, and the movements in which they engaged.

It was important to use everyday language as well as be familiar with the types of terms and language used in a dance setting. To help achieve this I piloted the interview guide (Patton, 2002) with one 14-year-old girl who studied dance at a different dance studio in the city. She was the niece of a friend who teaches dance in the same city as the dance studio of interest. Although the pilot interview went well, I reassessed my interview guide after I conducted the first three interviews. The data collected through these interviews was flat and I sensed that I was not asking the right questions. I concluded that my interview guide was not strong enough in its current form. Therefore, I met with one supervisory committee member who has extensive experience interviewing children and youth. We brainstormed about ways to improve my interview guide and she provided suggestions for questions that were more likely to access stories related to the topics of interest. Consequently, I revised my interview guide (see

Appendix B) and utilized this version in all subsequent interviews. This process improved the interview guide tremendously. I asked the first three participants if they would be willing to be interviewed again with the revised set of questions. All of them agreed. I also created an interview guide for my follow-up interviews (see Appendix C). This interview guide was constructed as an opportunity to explore themes that emerged through initial analysis of the first interviews.

4.11 Important Considerations When Conducting Interviews

It has been said that we live in 'an interview society' (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Silverman, 1993). That is, interviewing has become a staple in the researcher's toolbox to be utilized when one needs to gather data about people (Fontana & Frey, 2005). There has been an assumption that through interviews, the researcher can access a 'true' account of experience, which then translates into real knowledge (Davies & Davies, 2001). However, Fontana and Frey (2005) note that the interview is being recognized by qualitative researchers to be more complex than a neutral data-gathering device. Instead, the ongoing interactions between interviewer and interviewee lead to "negotiated, contextual results" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 698). I considered this critique carefully as it reflected my poststructuralist framework, which acknowledges the constructed, fluid nature of knowledge.

In addition to the philosophical concerns of interviewing, researchers face many practical issues. Ellis (2006) has described the challenges faced by qualitative researchers when interviewing participants, particularly children and youth. She wrote: "One of the challenges in interviewing is to create conditions

that enable a participant to recall significant experiences…and reflect on their meaning" (p.113). If this opportunity for reflection is not provided, Ellis suggested that participants will likely share readily available thoughts that simply reflect common discourses about the topic. I experienced this phenomenon during my Masters thesis project. I asked young adolescent girls their thoughts about physical activity and health and received many unremarkable answers that reflected generic understandings of these topics but provided very little insight into what such concepts might mean in the lives of my participants.

Ellis (2006) recommended several strategies to counter this. One was to engage in multiple interviews with a participant over time in order to move beyond standard, lackluster answers. She also suggested using pre-interview activities, which invite participants to draw pictures that relate to their experiences of the topic of interest. These activities may enable participants to express feelings and ideas about the topic that might not come out in an interview (Ellis, 2006). Pre-interview activities can also provide the participant with some control over what to share and how much to share.

The pre-interview activity.

To help enhance conversational flow and to alleviate the formality of the sit-down interview (which differed from my usual interactions with participants that involved moving, dancing, sitting on the floor, wearing dance clothes) I designed an optional pre-interview activity (Ellis, 2006). These activities can be used to open up "getting to know-you conversations with a child, enable the child to teach the researcher about the context of interest, provide the child with the

opportunity to recall and select memories to share and so forth" (Ellis, p. 118). Ellis explained that in a formal interview setting a child may feel pressured to provide 'right' answers, but a pre-interview activity is one way in which the participant can decide what is shared, how much shared and when it is shared. Although my participants were not children, this approach could be elaborated for older adolescents.

For my pre-interview activities I provided two options for my participants: 1) *Create a timeline that describes your weekly activities, including dance. Use symbols and colours to highlight the importance of each activity.* 2) *Draw two pictures – one that represents your life before you started dancing, and one that represents your life after you started dancing.* I intended for this optional activity to provide a starting point for the interview and help me establish shared understandings of language and terms with the participant (Ellis, 2006). Although the artifacts themselves would not be analyzed, the conversation resulting from would be.

I presented this option to participants when we arranged our interview time and place. Only five participants brought a completed activity to the interview. In these cases, we spent approximately 10 minutes discussing the work. The girls appeared to enjoy talking about their project and it helped bring conversation immediately to relevant, and at times, unpredictable topics.

4.12 Researcher as Instrument

When working with children and youth, researchers need to take particular care to identify and create comfortable environments and activities through which

children can express themselves (Ellis, 2006). My participants were 13-18 year old girls and therefore, I needed to be sensitive to how complicated the lives of these girls are likely to be. I also need to be mindful of the unique power dynamics that characterize researcher-participant relationship as well as the adult-youth relationship (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988). I believe my Masters research project (Clark, Spence, & Holt, 2011) exposed me to similar circumstances and challenges as I worked with girls 11-12 years of age. From that experience and through readings on this topic I concluded that I needed to be sensitive, adaptable and responsive to the needs of my participants throughout my study. I will discuss more about this aspect, which I call reflexivity, later in this chapter.

4.13 Interview Analysis

Poststructuralist research necessities a clearly articulated theoretical frame to guide interpretation data garnered from interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2007). Therefore, my analysis was consistent with and guided by my theoretical concepts and assumptions. I followed the strategy presented by Markula and Silk (2011) to help guide poststructuralist interview analysis.

Data analysis is an ongoing process that occurs through the entirety of a qualitative research project (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It can be done in multiple ways but should reflect the paradigmatic traditions that guide the research (Markula & Silk, 2011). Markula and Silk (2011) have suggested that it is important for poststructuralist researchers to explain clearly how data is analyzed through their theoretical lens. These authors also noted that analysis can be assisted by a themed interview guide, which can help researchers identify themes

in their data. These themes can then be closely examined for intersections and discrepancies and linked the power relations that define the project, as reflected by the selected theoretical framework and previous literature.

The first phase of data analysis included data management activities such as transcript review and preparation, and the organization of supplementary notes taken at each interview (Ruben & Ruben, 2005). Each interview was transcribed verbatim, with the exception of the interview done with the male participant. His data was not included explicitly in analysis as it was not directly related to my overarching question, however it may prove fruitful for future research and for reflecting upon future research questions. He was informed of this.

I paid for six of the first interviews to be transcribed professionally and transcribed the rest myself. Each transcript was then read thoroughly over the course of a week. During this process I identified concepts and emerging themes, which reflected the questions posed in the interview guide. I then arranged the themes according to Foucault's theoretical axis under the concepts of power and the body, discourse, and the body/ self. Additionally, because I was very interested in practices, they comprised a large part of focus of my analysis. I also attended carefully to how the girls talked about their dancing bodies. During analysis I engaged iteratively with the transcripts and also listened to the interviews in their entirety and re-listened to specific sections of them. Consequently, my analysis was very much an engagement and interaction with the data.

In keeping with my theoretical and paradigmatic approach, I sought to interrogate and reveal the discourses that shape girls' experiences and understandings. To achieve this I created a map of the various discourses that emerged relating to ballet bodies. I then examined them closely to ask: How do these discourses intersect? Do they contradict each other? Do they echo those identified in previous literature? This iterative mapping process, guided by Foucault's concepts of power and the body, knowledge/discourse, and the self helped me to develop a theoretically and empirically informed understanding of how girls who dance in a commercial dance studio construct a self through the dancing body, within the power/knowledge nexus.

4.14 Ensuring Quality in Poststructuralist Research

Research within a poststructuralist paradigm necessitates not only epistemologically appropriate data collection and analysis tools, but also suitable ways to evaluate research. Indeed, the issue of rigor in qualitative, social science research in general has been widely speculated upon and written about in certain scholarly circles (e.g., Emden & Sandelowski, 1998; Lincoln, 1995; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olsin, & Spears, 2002; Sandelowski, 1986; Sparkes, 1992). Within this discussion it is widely agreed upon that qualitative research must be held up to different, more appropriate evaluation criteria than quantitative research. What these criteria look like however, is less clearly demarcated. I argue that this may be particularly true for poststructuralist research. When one considers that the usual measures of validity and reliability (markers of quality in quantitative research) are in fact manifestations of the power/knowledge nexus

that produce dominant understandings of science and knowledge (and which

Foucault's methods seek to destabilize), their role in my study is questionable.

Instead, when using Foucault, one "shifts the theoretical goal of any analysis from

ensuring methodological conditions for the discovery of 'truth,' to one of

understanding the conditions in which particular accounts are produced" (Scior,

2003, p. 781). This is not to suggest that poststructuralist methods do not require

rigor or that they cannot be evaluated. One way to strengthen research is through

theoretical consistency. This refers to coherence between one's theoretical

premise and the selection and use of methods (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). In my

case I took care to ensure that my data collection and analysis methods reflected

my overarching theoretical framework and tried to maintain this coherence. I

believe this is demonstrated through some of the struggles I describe in chapter

six. As Meadmore and colleagues (2000) suggested, there is no prescribed manner

for using Foucault's methods, but it is possible to maintain coherence between the

assumptions made by Foucauldian scholars and the methods they employ.

Markula and Silk (2011) also suggest that good quality research within the

poststructuralist paradigm must demonstrate sound, appropriately applied

theoretical logic that reflects and is coherent with the position of the original

theorist. For my study, this means that a competent and substantial understanding

of Foucault's writings must be demonstrated throughout. I sought to demonstrate

this through the coherence reflected in my choice of method, data analysis, and

the decisions made throughout the research.

Another useful concept for assessing the quality of poststructuralist

research is that of crystallization (Richardson, 2000). This concept departs from

that of triangulation, a commonly used validation technique in qualitative research

(Patton, 2002). Triangulation implies the combination of methods and/or data

sources in order to ensure or enhance the 'truth' of the results. Richardson (2000),

however, rejected the image of the "fixed, two-dimensional" triangle as validity

for poststructuralist research (p. 933). Instead she conjured the image of the

crystal, which combines "symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of

shapes…multidimensionalites, and angles of approach" (Richardson, 2000, p.

934). She further explained:

> Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea
>
> of 'validity' (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts
>
> validate themselves), and crystallization provides us with a deepened,
>
> complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we
>
> know more and doubt what we know…we know there is always more to
>
> know. (p. 934)

Crystallization then, does not require us to validate our research by producing a

definable, defendable truth. Instead, it asks that we engage in multiple forms of

analysis and representation in order to consider our topic and our data from

multiple perspectives. Crystallization encourages us to always consider the

multiplicity of meaning and knowledge. The mere intricacy of a crystal suggests

that there is no singular way to 'validate' our research, but multiple ways to build

rich and coherent texts, which "problematize their own construction" (Ellingson,

p. 4). This technique reminds us, that what we see in knowledge, like a crystal,

"…depends on how we view it, how we hold it up to the light or not" (Janesick, 2000, p. 392).

Therefore, the concept of crystallizaton was applied to my study through my careful consideration of the multiple ways girls' experiences of movement and bodies are discursively understood. It was my goal to reveal and reexamine these knowledges in order to make explicit how they have come to be, and to hold them up so that we may see in even more multiple ways. By giving space to multiple knowledges, we validate not one dominant perspective but enrich the landscape with other ways of knowing and introduce the possibility for new and different kinds of questions. My use of multiple methods, including dancing with my participants, fostered my ability to consider my data in relationship to the theoretical concepts of interest from many different angles and perspectives.

Sparkes (1992) argued that one of the greatest strengths of post-structuralism is that it can help researchers to question a "particular way of seeing the world" which has become "not only unquestioned but unquestionable" in one's research community (p. 12). This concept resonated with me, as I strongly believed that there is a need to expand the way we understand the moving body and the relationship between, health, the body, and physical activity. I believe the moving body possesses so much more potential than current understandings of it allow. In addition, I believe that the current ways in which health and physical activity are defined and conceptualized perpetuates our limited understanding of the capacity of the moving body. For example, understanding physical activity primarily as a means through which to attain an aesthetically pleasing, illness free

body risks overlooking the value and potential of movement for its own sake.

Therefore, I attempted through this dissertation to glean insight that opens up,

even if ever so slightly, these knowledge spaces.

4.15 Ethics

Concern for the ethical conduct of research should be a guiding principle

followed throughout the research process (2002). The Research Ethics Board 1,

University of Alberta, granted ethical approval for this study on November 14,

2011. The assigned study number is Pro00023911. Research involving human

subjects must be conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines put forward by

the *Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research*

Involving Humans (TCPS2). These guidelines are in place to ensure that

participants are treated with dignity and respect (Markula & Silk, 2011). Ethical

conduct was particularly important in relation to my study, as I conducted

research with human subjects, including children under the age of 18. Children

are considered vulnerable persons according to the *TCPS2* as they may not have

the means to fully grasp the purpose and implications of the research. However,

this does not mean that they do not have the capacity for self-reflexivity or that

their opinions and insights are not important (Flewitt, 2005). On the contrary, I

was very interested in working with younger populations in order to understand

their perspectives.

Marukula and Silk (2011) suggested that a concern for ethical research

conduct should reflect the sensibilities of the particular research paradigm within

which one is located. Conducing ethical research from a poststructuralist

perspective required that my research practices reflected my understanding that poststructural researchers, "as knowledge producers, have to locate themselves as integral aspects of these [power] relations as they create, structure, conduct and write up qualitative research work within the constraints of a particular social/academic context" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 109). Therefore, throughout this project I sought to be self-reflexive about how I, as a researcher, was involved in generating my data, creating and representing research knowledge, and ensuring coherence between my theoretical framework and choice and employment of research methods. I will now describe the considerations and steps taken to meet the ethical requirements of the *TCPS2* and of a poststructuralist approach to research.

Free and informed consent.

This principle refers to the idea that all participants should receive adequate information about the study they are invited to participate in, in order to fully grasp what the purpose of the research is and what their involvement entails (Markula & Silk, 2011). Once participants have received this information they should be able to voluntarily decide whether or not to participate. To adhere to this principle in my study, prior to commencement of observations I met with the director of the dance studio to discuss the goals of the study and to learn more about the dance studio in general. She supported the goals of the project and invited me to observe and participate in the advanced ballet class she taught each week. I was then introduced to the dancers and some of the parents who happened to be in the studio on my first night of observations. I explained the purpose of my

study and invited questions and discussion. After this initial in-person contact was made, I distributed formal parent/participant information letters and consent forms for interviews with each student in the class (appendices D and E).

As stated by the *TCPS2*, parental consent was required for all participants under the age of 18 years who were interviewed. Only one participant was old enough to provide her own informed consent. Only those students under the age of 18 years whose parents returned signed consent forms were interviewed. Verbal assent was also obtained from the dancer participants prior to the interview (see appendix F). In the interview setting I explained to the girls what is involved with the study and made it clear to them that they can decide not to participate, to answer only those questions they wish to, and/or to withdraw at any time with no consequences. The girls then provided their assent by way of participating in the interview.

When conducting participant observations, I took care not to record any specific details about either the physical practices or dialogue pertaining to any one dancer that was not part of the 'core' group that had provided parental consent. Given that my interest was not in specific dancers as cases, this was not too difficult to navigate. Instead, my attention was focused on general patterns and occurrences in the studio. However, this was something I had to be mindful of given the flexible nature of the class and the potential for there to be additional dance students in the studio.

Privacy and confidentiality.

This research principle refers to ensuring that participants are not identified in the research project. While it was difficult to ensure complete confidentiality as the empirical material elicited through interviews were written about in some shape in my dissertation and potentially in a manuscript, anonymity was assured (McNamee, Olivier, & Wainwright, 2007). This was achieved by removing participant names and other identifying information from research materials. Pseudonyms were assigned to each of the participants in order to provide privacy and promote anonymity (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Data storage.

Maintaining anonymity of the information collected through field notes and interviews further ensured privacy. I was the only one who listened to all of the audio taped interviews. A professional transcriber listened to and transcribed six of the interviews, however a confidentiality agreement was signed before data files were shared with her. Interviews were shared via Dropbox and immediately removed from the site once retrieved by the transcriber. The transcriber then erased her copy of the audio files once transcription was complete. Transcribed data then remained stored in my personal password protected computer and locked filing cabinet in my offices initially in the General Services Building, and later the Law Centre, University of Alberta. Only I had access to a key to these cabinets. All of these steps taken to ensure privacy were be clearly outlined in the information letter.

Risks and benefits.

No deception was involved in this study. I hope that the benefits of this research will include an expanded understanding of the capacity of the moving body that can inform and widen our current approaches to the promotion of physical activity among adolescent girls. I also hope that findings contribute to a more nuanced and extended feminist discussion and critique of ballet as a physical practice. There were no risks attached to this study that were outside what one might experience in day to day living. The interviews may have prompted some small risks in the form of feelings of discomfort associated with the disclosure of personal thoughts, reflections and information. To reduce this risk I emphasized to the participants that they did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable in any way and if I ever sensed discomfort I moved on to a different, more neutral question. Parents were informed that they could request a copy of the interview guide at any time, however none made this request.

While I cannot ensure that participating in this research was beneficial or meaningful for participants, I do believe that the knowledge gained from my study will help expand current understandings of both the dangers, and the productive aspects of ballet. In turn, I hope this will draw attention to the importance of ballet in the lives of adolescent girls and foster more creative research approaches that recognize this importance and seek to understand it in nuance ways instead of categorically positioning ballet as good or bad. It is my anticipated hope that this study will underline the importance of examining girls' physical movement

experiences within the context of their complex lives for dance, feminist, and physical culture scholars. Additionally, I hope that the knowledge from this study will contribute to further research that seeks to examine and develop more ethical teaching practices in the commercial studio context. Finally, participating in my research provided my participants with the space and time to talk about an important aspect of their lives and to critically reflect upon and think about their dance experiences in relationship to their adolescent girls selves, a process which may have been stimulating and enjoyable.

4.16 Reflexivity

A poststructuralist position requires researchers to be transparent about the ways in which analysis is influenced by subject positions and experiences (Flax, 1992; Rail, 2002). Therefore, it was imperative that I acknowledge my subjectivity throughout the research process. As mentioned previously, I have a personal history of dance involvement and have contemplated the body and self in relation to dance and movement extensively in both my personal and academic lives. Through this study I hoped to explore more capacious understandings of the moving ballet body that encourage us to think beyond the representational body.

My own memories and personal history of dance re-emerged throughout data collection and analysis, sometimes manifesting in a physical desire to dance, sometimes in a sense of loss for the dancer I once was, and often in a physical understanding of the practices participants engaged in that exceeded a verbal or linguistic understanding. At times, these moments and memories were so powerful as to be distracting. Therefore, as a poststructuralist researcher I sought

to make transparent the relationship between my subject position and the topic under study (Scior, 2003). This process contributed to what I refer to as the practice of reflexivity. Reflexivity is an oft-used term and refers to a practice that qualitative researchers "can and should use to legitimize, validate, and question research practices and representations" (Pillow, 2003, p. 175). However, as Kenway and Mcleod (2004) lamented, reflexivity is becoming an increasingly hollow term. It is often not made explicitly clear how authors actually practice reflexivity and it is easy to slide into the arena of self-indulgence: the mere retelling or sharing of one's experience may provide catharsis but fail to advance theoretical thinking and insights. Therefore, I clarify below what is meant by reflexivity in the context of this study.

Richardson (2000) described reflectivity as the consideration of how a researcher comes to embark on the research topic, data collection and writing. It considers how the author's subjectivity has "been both produced and is a product of this text" (p. 254). Indeed my own subjectivity and the experiences that have produced me as a feminist poststructuralist scholar, a woman, and a dancer have shaped data collection and analysis. As I moved between data collection, reflection, and analysis my own dance history and relationship to the dancing body undoubtedly guided my attentions in certain ways to particular dialogues and practices that both challenged and enhanced my understanding.

I have acknowledged this history and my own experiences in my analysis. I did so not to claim them as authentic or as concrete 'evidence' but rather to subject them to re-interpretation and re-examination. Similarly, the experiences

shared by participants will also be subject to interpretation and examination. After all, "experience," within a poststructuralist paradigm "is at once and always already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation" (Scott, 1992, p. 37). Poststructuralist feminist scholars Davies and Davies (2007) explained that experience, as it is understood outside of positivist paradigms, is not "something we can straightforwardly *have* and then make a transparent account of" (p. 142). Experiences are not to be assumed to be concrete expressions "of an individuals' being or consciousness" (Scott, 1992, p. 27) and researchers must take care not to fix and limit these meanings. Rather, when dealing with experience in the poststructuralist realm, "what is seeable and hearable…shifts with the interactional space the research inhabits, with the time and the purpose in telling, and with the discursive possibilities available… at the time of each telling" (Davies, 2003, p. 144). That is, the experience itself re-becomes in every telling. Therefore, my experiences and the experiences revealed in participant interviews represented a localized and historically specific understanding. I will now elaborate on the understandings arrived at through this study.

5.0 Discipline and Docility in the Ballet Studio

I descend a flight of stairs, leaving the natural light behind and picking up the distinct scent of popcorn from the movie store above. A sleek brushed silver sign hangs on a dingy, nondescript door, boasting the name of the studio in proud block lettering. I open the door and am immediately greeted by an impossible tangle of girls and women's shoes. I heed the unarticulated invitation, take off my shoes and place them neatly side-by-side on the unused racks. Mismatched couches and armchairs dot the room, haphazardly arranged and tucked in various nooks, looking soft and worn and comfortable. Adults, who I assume to be parents, occupy many of the chairs, their heads bent over smart phones and tablets.

A small administration office is on the left, with sliding glass windows that have been opened up, allowing the receptionist to observe and interact with anyone that enters the studio. The receptionist, a middle aged woman, notices my entrance and asks if she can help me. I introduce myself and she quickly points me towards the ballet studio, "Studio A," and provides directions to the restrooms and change rooms that I do not catch. The sound of giggling and girlish chatter reaches me from the depths of seeming labyrinthine hallways. I presume the change rooms are in that direction. Unsure of where to place myself, I step into the studio.

In the anecdote above I describe my first visit to the studio and the impressions it made on me. Immediately I sensed this was a space in which others

around me (dancers, parents, teachers, staff) felt very much at ease. This comfort was indicated through the body positioning of the parents reading on the couches and arm chairs (some sat curled up as though in their own living room), the easy way a group of younger dancers chatted and giggled amongst themselves as they sat in a small circle on the floor in the lounge/waiting area, and the relaxed demeanor of the receptionist as she leaned over her desk and gently teased the young dancers about their chattering. I also recognized that there were certain 'rules' that governed the ebb and flow of daily activity within the studio. For example, the 'tangle' of shoes I describe in the anecdote above indicated that wearing one's outside shoes in the studio was not encouraged. The presence of the parents sitting comfortably in the chairs also indicated an understanding that parents were welcome to observe the classes and inhabit the studio while waiting. Finally, the expectant, slightly quizzical glance directed at me by the receptionist when she noticed my presence suggested that newcomers to the studio were expected to report their presence.

This chapter seeks to describe in detail the commercial dance studio setting and to reveal and analyze the nuances of the relationships, power relations, and discursive practices that occur within this space. In order to perceive and describe the studio space as sensitively as possible, I have organized this chapter as a journey into the ballet studio. I map the chronology of a ballet class as read through Foucault's technologies of discipline and my own biographical lens. All names are pseudonyms for my participants. I continue my description and analysis of the studio space below.

5.1 The Art of Distributions: A Space Like No Other

Inside the studio, child and adolescent bodies thrummed around me with certainty and purpose. Young dancers called familiar greetings to each other and in an instant it was evident; the studio space was clearly and palpably theirs. While I struggled to find an appropriate place for my body, they confidently claimed theirs, navigating the space with ease.

Foucault (1979) observed: "In the first instance, discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (p. 141). That is, specific strategies for positioning individuals allow for disciplinary power to work effectively. As I discussed in my theory chapter, Foucault called this technique "the art of distributions." Such spatial arrangements require enclosure, partitioning, the functional use of space, and the ranking of bodies within this space. The tactic of enclosure was immediately evident in the ballet setting as the entire studio itself was separated from the outside world and from other businesses within the building. Once inside the studio, space was further organized in such a way that each room accommodated a specific activity: waiting, changing, dancing, and teaching. This tactic of enclosure "eliminated confusion" (Foucault, 1979, p. 145) about what activity was to occur in each space, and dictated which bodies were allowed in which spaces. For example, change rooms were designated according to age and grade so that female dancers aged 13 years and older used a different change room than younger dancers. Similarly, each of the five 'sub-studios' was designated its own genre, so that all jazz classes were taught in one studio, all ballet classes in another, and all tap classes in another.

When dancers entered the building they left public, school, and familial spaces behind. Once they entered Studio A (the ballet studio), dancers were further removed from the social milieu of the change room and waiting areas. These layers of enclosure enabled a "protected place of disciplinary monotony" (Foucault, 1979, p. 141) and prohibited the dancers from being exposed to outside distractions such as spectators, parents, and other dancers. Barker-Ruchti and Tinning's (2010) study of young competitive gymnasts described the enclosure of the gymnasium as a disciplinary tactic; it eliminated distractions and allowed coaches to locate and observe their gymnasts at all times. Ritenburg (2010) also explained that tactic of enclosure was characteristic of ballet studios and facilitated the operation of disciplinary power. The controlled space ensured dancers focused on the task at hand and made it easy for the teacher to constantly supervise them.

While the enclosure of the ballet studio minimized distractions and readied bodies for training, it also provided the dancers with a unique space that facilitated intimacy with other dancers and the teacher. Removed from the often-evaluative presence of parents, friends, and school, dancers described feeling as though they could relax and "be themselves" (Anne) in the studio. Some participants experienced stepping into the enclosure of the larger studio as a form of respite: "I like to leave all that other stuff behind…when I come to the studio it's like my special time" (Violet). Therefore, the studio acted as a home away from home for the dancers; a space they chose to inhabit and in which they felt at ease. This ease was palpable from the moment they stepped in the studio, and

evident in the way they related to each other, the teacher, and the space itself. The studio provided dancers with adequate physical and psychic space to *be* in a way that was coherent with their ideas and desires of self. Hamera (2005) wrote that:

> Ballet companies and ballet studios are also home places; they may be every bit as haunted as the domestic spaces in the repertory, or they may be refuges where dancers go to escape from personal or familial demons. Relations between ballet and home are multifaceted; studios may have all the formality of the parlor or all the lived-in familiarity of the den. (p.101)

Indeed, the studio space was laden with multiple meanings for the dancers. Their ease in the space was perceptible. Although enclosure meant that dancers were sequestered from the outside world and ensured a functional space in which disciplinary power could operate, it also acted as a sort of haven to the dancers. When they occupied this space it meant they were not occupying other, potentially disciplinary spaces available to them in their familial and social lives. Hamera believed that "ballet becomes a way of securing a space of relative leisure and community against prying of relatives and teachers for whom adolescents' free time must be weighed against 'what's important'…what is both 'productive'… and gender- and class-appropriate" (p. 107). This notion appeared to be particularly true for my participants who described the dance studio as a space that at times provided shelter or reprieve from school, family and even public spaces such as the mall.

Barker-Ruchti and Tinning (2010) explained the importance of distinguishing between the public and private in relation to the gymnastics arena

113

and how enclosure achieved this. The private nature of the gymnasts' space enabled specific training activities and was manifest even in the clothes the girls wore. The revealing body suits and tights so familiar and taken for granted within the gymnasium would be inappropriate or strange in public spaces. Dancers in my study wore similar attire. Most often, the dancers wore pale pink tights, a navy blue or black leotard, and pink leather or satin ballet slippers. Some wore tight-fitting shorts over their leotards, and most began class wearing warm-up clothing such woolen leg warmers, wrap sweaters and long sleeve or short-sleeve tops. These garments constituted a sort of uniform specific to the studio setting and rendered much of the body visible. However, despite revealing so much of their bodies, one of the dancers said: "I almost feel more comfortable in my dance clothes in the studio than I do in what I wear to school or whatever… in here I don't have to worry about boys, or anyone judging" (Cassie). Another said: "It might seem like we're not wearing a lot of clothing, but in here it's no big deal, there's a reason for it…no one's looking to see if I look 'sexy' or not, but it's just so that teachers can see if we're doing things right" (Chloe).

When asked about their dance clothing the participants explained that they selected it primarily for functionality and that they felt extremely comfortable wearing little clothing in the studio space. "It's…just what you wear when you dance…" said Laura. In the enclosure of the studio, dance attire held a particular meaning and was constructed as appropriate and purposeful in order to facilitate ease of movement and greater visibility for corrections. As Sophia explained, "You could never wear this kind of thing in, like normal public…it would be

crazy, there would be no reason for it except to get boys attention or the wrong kind of attention, but here it's just what we wear, and it's I don't know, it's just normal."

The dancers' attire was a visible indication of membership to the dance studio and the larger dance world. Being a dancer required that one was comfortable, or at least willing to engage in specific physical practices, and wear specific clothing. Dance clothing allowed participants to perform shared, historical understandings about what a dancer is, does, and looks like, and distinguished them from the teachers, parents, and receptionist in the studio. The form-fitting tights and body suits also enabled maximum visibility of bodily performance and thus, facilitated the workings of disciplinary power.

5.2 Class Begins

Ballet Studio A is a long rectangular room; the front and back walls lined with mirrors that extend almost floor to ceiling. The floor is pale hardwood, with a large worn area in the centre of the room, presumably from the concentration of movement that occurs and has occurred there over time. A wooden barre *extends around the room along three of the four walls. It is approximately six inches in circumference, installed on the wall between waist and shoulder height. At the front of the room is a chair, and a piano sits in the front right corner, both facing the centre of the room. In the other corner resides a small cabinet, housing an impressive sound system complete with receiver, tape deck, and CD player.*

A long horizontal window extends nearly the length of one wall, where parents and other dancers can observe if they wish. A line of chairs and a narrow

carpeted area hugs one side of the room and dance bags are piled on some of the

chairs, spilling over with woolen leg warmer, pointe *shoes, and extra layers of*

sweat pants and hoodies. Class is about to start and the dancers begin to file into

the space, dropping their bags and warm up clothes and gathering in the centre of

the room to stretch and chat. A few minutes later the teacher enters and sits in the

chair at the front of the room. The pianist takes his place on the piano bench to

her right. He is close enough to hear the teacher's cues that prompt the beginning

of an exercise, and to receive feedback or direction about the tempo of the music.

There is a slight change in the energy of the room and the girls fall mostly silent

while they stretch. Once she is settled, the teacher speaks, "Ok girls, to the barre

please." The dancers move from the cluster they had formed on the floor and

place themselves around the room at the barre. *They form a neat row along it,*

facing the front, spaced approximately one meter apart. Left hands are placed

gently on the barre *and heads are delicately poised. "Pliés please." says the*

teacher, and cues the music.

5.3 Claiming Space: The Art of Distributions

Without instruction, the dancers placed themselves specifically and

precisely around the studio and along the *barre.* This spatial arrangement allowed

adequate room for each dancer to perform the exercises, but also constrained the

dancers' ability to move in any way that deviated from the prescribed task. In this

way the space became what Foucault (1979) called a disciplinary space, which

"organizes an analytic space" (p. 143). Such a space is achieved by partitioning,

which means, "each individual has his own place; and each place its individual"

(p. 143). Dance scholars (Aalten, 2004; Dryburth & Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999; Kleiner, 2009) have described how bodies are organized at the *barre* and in the centre during a typical dance class. Sport scholars have also noted the extensive use of partitioning by athletic coaches (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Denison 2007; Denison, Mills, & Jones, 2013; Shogan, 1999), as it enables "each individual to be judged and therefore supervised" (Denison et al., p. 391). By partitioning the dancers within the studio, the dance teacher could evaluate each individual, "a procedure aimed at knowing, mastering and using" (Foucault, 1979, p. 143). This arrangement established and maintained a binary relationship between teacher and pupil (teacher as expert).

As class progressed, the girls moved from the *barre* and formed two or three staggered lines of four or five dancers each in the centre of the room. At least one minute was taken to arrange the dancers specifically in a matrix of rows and lines to the teacher's satisfaction. In this way, functional spaces were created that maintained order. In this specific constellation, dancers knew where they were to be at all times and could be efficiently trained and supervised. This spatial arrangement also ranked dancers bodies. Foucault (1979) considered rank a disciplinary technique that "individualizes bodies by a location…distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations" (p. 146). When dancers lined themselves along the *barre* for the first segment of the class, the teacher always placed the same dancer at the front. Often this dancer assumed the position at the front without being told. I quickly learned this was because Ella was one of the strongest dancers, with clean, steady technique and polished movement. She also

had the strongest acuity for remembering the syllabus and could thus lead dancers through the exercise, allowing for efficient use of time, ensuring compliance among the group. In this way, the ranking of bodies marked "a hierarchy of knowledge or ability" (Foucault, 1979, p. 147).

Dancers in Green's (1999, 2001) studies described how bodies were ranked and rewarded in the ballet studio according to physical appearance and ability. Green's participants (dancers in a university setting) agreed that the 'best' dancers were rewarded with the most teacher feedback, which resulted in feelings of discouragement in others. Dancers also experienced rank according to body size and made differentiations between "the real ballerinas" (Chloe, Rachel) who exhibited the normative, exceedingly thin ballet body, and "the rest of us" (Chloe). In the ballet studio, they argued, being thin or average in the outside world wasn't good enough. Different aesthetic criteria applied in the studio and arbitrarily decided one's status in this space. Such ranking and hierarchizing according to body size was extremely detrimental to these dancers.

Unlike Green's study, my participants were not ranked obviously by body size or shape and participants did not describe experiencing rank in such stark terms (or at all). Although participants agreed that teacher attention and feedback was a coveted resource, many accepted and supported the idea that those dancers who had a competition or exam approaching required the most feedback and attention. They explained that once the event was over, attention was once again evenly distributed, and they did not feel as though there was an evaluative

judgment inherent in this process. Therefore, rank was experienced as fluid and situational.

Additionally, many dancers exhibited a degree of awareness and acceptance of their own bodily abilities and limitations. For the most part, participants did not engage in direct or negative comparisons with one another. Dancers acknowledged the strengths of their fellow dancers, but also identified their own unique strengths. When I began my observations, I noted very quickly that one dancer had what is considered the ideal ballet body; thin, long limbed, narrow hipped, pronounced arches. This dancer was selected to attend the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Summer School, which also confirmed that her body fit the normative ballet mould. However, it was not always this dancer who was placed at the front of the *barre* or in the centre during class. Instead, those dancers who conveyed a more mature quality to their dancing, and whose knowledge of the syllabus was the strongest, were placed at the front. At recital time, the dancer with the ballet body was often front-and-centre, but in class, this was not always the case. Therefore, dancers were provided with a range of body types to learn from and the message was conveyed that a variety of bodies have the capacity to dance well. I also noticed that when I observed the class, it was often other dancers that I was drawn to. This contrasted previous dance research (Green, 1999; Ritenburg, 2010), which made clear associations between the best ballet bodies and the best ballet dancers. For dancers in my study, being a good dancer was defined by more than simply having a particular body type.

The spatial analysis of the ballet studio resonated with Green's (2002) work in which she argued that the dance studio is designed to produce "docile bodies created to produce efficiency, not only of movement, but also, a normalization and standardization of behavior in dance classes" (p. 100). Indeed, the dancers in my study appeared to continuously observe unarticulated rules of conduct in the studio space, moving and arranging themselves in specific constellations without prompting. However, the studio space was also used creatively by participants at times and actively constructed by them in ways that enabled alternative uses and meanings. Furthermore, the spatial arrangement facilitated social relationships that may not be possible in the absence of enclosure. For example, many of the girls attended different schools, yet described each other as their closest friends and explained that "these people know me the best, as soon as I come here I know that people just get me" (Laura).

Enclosure also provided girls with a space in which to explore their physicality. As they stretched and prepared for class before the teacher arrived, they conversed and joked around with each other in very tactile ways, engaging in partner stretching, playing with each other's hair, and leaning on one another affectionately as they talked. Their demonstration of humour and manner of entertaining one another was extremely bodily: they shared physical contact, crawled, jumped, and skipped around and over one other, as they expressed and embellished their stories through their bodily comportment. Observing them, I was struck by this tactile way of relating to each other. It appeared that much of their relationship to each other was made possible and expressed through a

physical intimacy that might not be considered normal or feasible in other public spaces.

Dancers also initiated alternative uses of the studio space and disrupted the disciplinary arrangements designed for efficient instruction. One evening, as I was settling in to observe, this occurred:

The girls sat stretching and chatting in a cluster in the centre of room as usual before class. This was common practice in few moments between classes when the teacher was often out checking messages or filling her water bottle. Animated whispers turned to quiet giggles and suddenly the dancers scuttled en masse *across the room. As I watched they all disappeared behind the piano, bunching and cramming their bodies in so that they were invisible to anyone walking in the room. They continued to giggle and whisper excitedly and I could hear them fidgeting. They were hiding on the teacher, and were completely and utterly delighted with themselves. I smiled to myself and then noticed I felt uncomfortable; my own docility revealed itself and I worried, "What will the teacher think? What will she do? Should I warn her? Isn't she supposed to be in charge?" A few minutes later the teacher came and I smiled at her trying to reveal nothing. "Where is everyone?" she exclaimed. I remained quiet. "Are they all late? It's already past 8!" She conveyed confusion and increasing irritation. Then she looked at the piano and as a look of realization crossed her face, the dancers jumped out. The girls giggled with delight, as did the teacher, and class resumed as usual a few minutes later, the excitement and energy in the room took a few minutes to dissipate.*

In this act the dancers concealed their bodies from the teacher's view and became the unseen observers. In doing so they demonstrated creative engagement with the space and disrupted the predictable and disciplinary use of time and spatial arrangements. In general, participants appeared to be extremely at ease in the studio, which was evident by their playfulness, their comfortable physicality with each other and the teacher, and the ways in which they utilized the space in diverse ways (i.e., for focused training, for 'bonding' with their friends, for playing pranks). In fact, this sense of ease struck me immediately upon my first visit to the studio and it continued to make an impression. Hamera (2005) has also noted the way dancers' actively fashion the studio space and relieve it from its narrow, disciplinary focus. She explained how dancers' bodies both act and are acted upon in the studio, and how dancing bodies possess the capacity to shape and construct the spaces they inhabit. "Whatever ballet's strategic ambitions for bodies in/and space," she elaborated, "individuals inevitably seize opportunities to narrate studio space, and performatively construct place, differently, in turns of physicality and of phrase that insinuate themselves into and redeploy ballet's rituals of proprietary power" (p. 98). Indeed in the moment described above and in many other minute instances, the exuberance, vitality, and physical choices of the girls had created an energetic force that disrupted the "disciplinary monotony" (Foucault, 1979, p. 143) that a studio often imposes.

5.4 Timing is Everything: The Control of Activity

I don't have much spare time, I mean I'm at the studio four nights a week….so, I usually have to eat in the car on the way there, or in between

classes, and sometimes I have to do my homework in the morning before school…but I always make time for it all. And at least I'm not like, at the mall, or on Facebook or whatever. I'd much rather dance… (Sophia)

Participants described the studio as one of the most important places in their life and the place where they spent the most time next to the school and the home. Many participants were registered for upwards of five classes per week, which translated into more than 10 hours a week of training time. When total studio time was added up, which included time spent preparing for class (i.e., changing, fixing hair, engaging in extra warm up activities) and the small breaks between classes in which dancers often ate, socialized, or did homework, many participants spent at least 12 hours a week in the studio. Dancers described "not having much free time" (Sophia), and "being super busy, mostly with dance" (Rachel).

Foucault (1979) wrote that the efficient use of time contributed to the construction of docile bodies. He noted that "discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" and also that "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). Therefore, a docile body is one that is useful and trained to perform certain tasks. The production of a docile body depends upon the workings of disciplinary power, which is deployed through the strategic use of time so that "…the body is constantly applied to its exercise" (Foucault 1979, p. 151). If space organizes the placement and positioning of bodies, the specific use of time ensures bodies are efficiently 'used and improved' within that space. The timetable is one tactic which enables what Foucault named "the control of activity."

5.4.1 The importance of the timetable.

To efficiently train young dancers, and to accommodate as many dancers as possible (for the studio is also a profitable enterprise), timetables that organized annual, weekly, and daily schedules were circulated throughout the dance studio. Yearlong timetables dictated the annual ebb and flow of activity within the studio and informed parents and dancers when exams, competitions and recitals (and associated rehearsals) were scheduled. If dancers wanted to participate in these events, attendance at extra classes and rehearsals was non-negotiable and mandatory[6]. A more detailed timetable was provided that outlined the weekly, daily, and hourly schedules of each of the five studios. This timetable was organized according to the genre and level of dance taught, so that parents and dancers knew where they were to be and when.

Markula and Pringle (2006) explained that breaking down timetabled activities into even more precise pieces increased "the effectiveness of time used and consequently the control of the bodies involved" (p. 77). Within the weekly timetable, each dance class itself was timetabled and organized specifically for maximum efficiency and training.

Each class is structured in the same order: *barre* work comes first, followed by centre work, exercises across the floor, jumps, and unseen work, which involves the teacher creating small combinations that the dancers have not performed before. This structure ensures all elements of the ballet movement vocabulary (i.e., adagio, allegro, turns, jumps) are covered in each class and that dancers practice learning new combinations quickly. Class always started with a

series of exercises at the *barre*. This section of class was where foundational training occurred and was intended to thoroughly warm up the entire body and prepare it for more elaborate movement sequences. *Barre* work comprised the longest segment of the 90-minute class, lasting 30-40 minutes. The same set exercises were repeated each week, and on each side of the body. Dancers performed the exercise first facing the front of the studio, and again facing the back. Ella explained: "The *barre* is where it all starts, it's where we warm up and its where we make the transition from our days at school or wherever, to dance class." In this way a series of temporal constraints are placed upon the dancer, intended to help them "reach the next level of preparedness" (Denison, 2007). With the exception of the two-to-three months when dancers learn choreography for the year-end recital, class structure never deviates from this order of activity. These forms of temporal control, Foucault (1979) wrote, establish "rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition" (p. 149). Disciplined bodies are trained to memorize the specific tasks to be performed and to know when they are to be performed.

In ballet class, the teacher occupied the role of expert and acted as the arbiter of time (Aalten, 2004; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999). However, time was often negotiated between the students and the teacher was often used flexibly. The teacher often asked the dancers if they needed more time to warm up or if they would prefer one exercise over the other and adjusted according to their responses. Jess explained:

Sometimes we're all just tired and Mrs. M____ can sense that….so she'll ask if we want more time at the *barre* or if we need longer to stretch. And sometimes she knows we just aren't in the mood for jumps…so she'll tease us about being lazy but we'll skip allegro and go to something else. I think she wants our input on how to make the class more fun.

In general, it was the dance teacher who decided how time was to be organized and used in order to maximize the specific training of dancing bodies. Dancers understood and anticipated the overall structure of ballet class. However, the use of time was somewhat negotiable between the dancers and the teacher. Dancers were able to vocalize their desires to use time differently (although often also productively) in ways that were more coherent with how their bodies were feeling and their energy levels. Dancers faced no negative repercussions when these negotiations occurred and the teacher often complied with the students' requests. In these cases, time was still most often used productively if less intensely, but allowed the dancers to actively contribute to their training experiences. This room provided for negotiation contributed to a power relationship between the dancers and teachers that fostered dancer involvement and engagement in the studio.

5.5 Everything in its Right Place: The Temporal Elaboration of the Act

In ballet, no limb is placed accidentally or moves out of time. Bodily forces coalesce to perform exquisite, intricate movement with seemingly little effort. Dancers described how ballet demanded extreme precision and the ability to control and execute multiple bodily movements at the same time: "Even at the

barre, you can never really forget about any part of your body….it all works together all at once….and if one thing isn't working properly, then everything else ends up being, well, sloppy too" (Violet). To achieve this physical mastery, the body is continuously adjusted to temporal imperatives. Ballet technique dictates when and how each body part moves, each exercise demanding a specific temporal sequence. This concept is what Foucault (1979) called the "temporal elaboration of the act." He explained: "The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations are defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude; their order of succession is prescribed..." (p. 152).

To perform even basic *barre* exercises, dancers had to concentrate on coordinating bodily movement, breath, and focus in order to execute the task correctly. Repetitive training over years resulted in many movements feeling 'natural' to the dancers. However, dancers were constantly introduced to increasingly sophisticated movement, which required meticulous attention to temporal sequencing. Exercises were performed to musical accompaniment provided by a pianist who followed a book of set music that corresponded with the class syllabus. Each piece of music had a specific time signature and tempo to which the dancers were meant to perform. In this way, the dancers' bodies were further constrained by the organization of time. Being out of time was constructed as a making significant mistake and act of non-compliance. If a dancer performed out of time, the teacher would single her out and verbally recognize the error.

The process of learning and mastering new steps was both frustrating and rewarding for the dancers. Most accepted that new repertoire would require time to perfect. However, if dancers were incapable of performing the movement after several attempts, they concluded that they simply needed to work harder. Most believed they would ultimately master the task, but working towards it was a complicated experience:

> The most difficult thing for me…hmm, would have to be the pirouette, because everything, everything has to happen perfectly. Your leg has to come up the perfect time and your arms have to be in the perfect position, and if you don't get that first *relevé*, you're never going anywhere…but if all that happens, it feels awesome! It's like all these million little movements come together and feel like one… (Jess)

Jess's quote revealed the way in which "time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power, that render a body docile" (Foucault, 1979, p. 152). In order to execute technically accurate movement, the body must be correctly and specifically constrained by time, space, and its own forces. Time further disciplines the dancing body by ensuring that, "nothing must remain idle or useless; everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required" (Foucault, 1979, p. 152). This idea is what Foucault called the "correlation of body and gesture." Consider the above example of the pirouette and its multiple demands. Turning in a controlled manner on one leg is not possible if the force of the abdominals, thighs, arches, neck and arms are not harnessed precisely and according to an arbitrary temporal sequence. Aalten (2004) has also discussed

how the meticulous precision of the body is necessary to perform ballet. Although she does not frame her study as Foucauldian, she described the precise role each body part in play in executing proper movement.

Finally, when dancers worked at the *barre,* their bodies were disciplined through the tactic "body-object articulation" (Foucault, 1979, p. 152). This notion refers to the way the body establishes relations with the object it must manipulate. In this case, dancers spent a good proportion of time in each dance class at the *barre.* This portion of class meant they were in constant contact with the *barre,* and constantly redefining their bodily relationship to it so that they could perform the necessary exercises. Their bodies and the *barre* demonstrated a "meticulous meshing" (p. 153).

Therefore, disciplinary power both constrained dancing bodies *and* enabled them to perform with breathtaking precision and skill. Shogan (1999) summarized this tension in her analysis of Foucault's technologies of discipline and the making of high-performance athletes. She wrote: "Perhaps paradoxically, the more constrained an athlete is by a discipline, the more 'choice' he or she actually has within the discipline" (p. 36). In the dance studio, the more highly disciplined a dancer, the greater her repertoire of movement, the more spectacular and impressive her performance, and (according to my participants) the more intense her level of euphoria and personal satisfaction.

5.6 The Building Blocks of Ballet: The Organization of Geneses

Ballet class primarily focused on syllabus work from September to February. Attention then turned to choreography for the year-end recital. In the

early months, syllabus was taught, memorized, and fine-tuned through repetition in order to prepare selected dancers for examination. Once the examination was passed, the dancers could progress to a higher grade. This cycle ensured that dancers gradually acquired a vaster and more complex movement repertoire once they demonstrated an explicitly defined level of competence.

This pattern begins early. Dancers often begin training as young as three or four years of age and are taught simple *tendues*, knee bends, and movements such as skipping across the floor. Through repetition, surveillance, and instruction from the 'expert' teacher, more complex movements are gradually introduced in a methodical manner according to the RAD syllabus. This strategy is what Foucault (1979) called "organization of geneses", which refers to implementation of different, but progressively linear stages of learning. He argued that this tactic makes detailed and strategic control possible. It allows discipline to "…add up and capitalize time" (p.157).

Aalten (2004) described how each ballet class consisted of a "series of exercises" that escalate in complexity and difficulty as class progresses (p. 266). Barker-Ruchti and Tinning (2010) also demonstrated how this approach was utilized in the training of young gymnasts: "As training sessions were broken down into individual components and the learning of individual skills was split into various progressive stages, the coaches could observe each training component and progression unit closely" (p. 241). Similarly, the specificity of ballet required that discipline works in succession. For example, a pirouette was not possible until dancers could perform a *tendu* and a *relevé* on one foot. An

analytic plan was needed to oversee the "succession of elements as simple as possible, combining according to increasing complexity" (Foucault, 1979). The RAD ballet syllabus provided this successive plan and disciplined both the dancers and teachers by constraining what movements were taught and when. The syllabus designated a specific collection of movements to each grade and dancers were required to perform them satisfactorily before the teacher and/or examiner in order to progress. Once a year, dancers deemed strong enough by the teacher performed in pairs in front of an external expert from the RAD. In the exam, everything culminated. It ensured that bodies were adequately trained to avoid injury, and also ensured normalization. Through a "normalizing judgment" the teacher and examiner assessed dancers' performances and decided how much variation existed between the current performance and the desired, normative performance. This assessment allowed the teacher to determine a training plan for the dancer(s) to achieve the normative standard.

Repetitive training over years resulted in many movements feeling 'natural' to the dancers. However, dancers were constantly introduced to increasingly sophisticated movement, which required meticulous attention to temporal sequencing. Each year a 'series of series' of exercises would be taught that corresponded with the dancers' level of proficiency and rank. Foucault (1979) described this 'series of series' as a "disciplinary polyphony of exercises" (p. 159).

5.7 A Place to See and Be Seen

The ballet studio rendered dancers' bodies continuously visible. The

presence of mirrors and spatial organization made it possible for dancers' bodies to be seen by themselves, the teacher, and other dancers at any location and temporal moment in the studio. This arrangement facilitated the continuous exercise of disciplinary power, which as Foucault (1979) explained, seeks to manage bodies primarily by means of surveillance. Submitting a body to surveillance increases the likelihood that it will remain obedient.

The floor-to-ceiling mirrors that lined the studio walls were indeed conspicuous. They held an irresistible allure for the dancers, who constantly checked their reflections during class and while they warmed up and chatted before class. The moment the dancers walked into the studio, their eyes found their reflection. Hands flew to the hair to adjust anything out of place, and often to the stomach to smooth the bodysuit and the elastic waistband many dancers wore. Participants turned side-to-side in an unconscious gesture and swiftly assessed themselves from each angle. As they continued to stretch and talk amongst themselves, their gaze flitted to the mirror incessantly.

During class, the mirrors allowed dancers to continuously monitor their own and others' movements and enabled the teacher to observe the dancers' bodies from all angles, at all times. Previous authors (Aalten 2004; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999, 2001; Kleinberg, 2009) have also pointed out how the mirror enabled constant visibility in the dance studio. In this way, dancers were constructed as both observers and as bodies to be observed. Foucault (1979) argued that this panoptic arrangement promoted conformity and persistent self-monitoring. Shogan (1999) demonstrated how this arrangement contributed to the

training of high-performance athletes:

> Realizing that they can be seen by coaches, athletes come to monitor their
> own behaviour and shape it according to the expectations of the
> coach…The awareness that one may be watched leads to an internalization
> of the gaze and a policing of one's own behaviour. (p. 37)

Participants described similar self-monitoring behaviours. Anne explained: "Whenever we face the back at the *barre*, even if I can't see my reflection in the mirror, I know that Mrs. M___ might be watching me, so I never want to relax or cheat just in case she's watching me at that exact moment!" Awareness that they *could* be seen at all times prompted the dancers to engage in constant self-monitoring and ensured that the body was the constant target and object of disciplinary power.

When asked about the mirrors, participants described complex and contradictory relationships. They experienced the mirror an inevitable part of studio life and as both a pedagogical tool and an omnipresent critic. When asked about the mirrors, dancers often replied with resigned smiles and a roll of the eyes. "Oh the mirror," sighed Chloe. "I think we all have a love-hate relationship with it…I'm ok with it but some days are better than others." When pressed, Chloe explained that a good day occurred when she was working on a particular movement and the mirror acted as a teaching tool. Ella also noted the teaching utility of the mirror. She said, "I like using the mirror…because it helps me practice at my own pace, and it tells me what I am doing right, or wrong. It gives me the feedback I need to get better." Ella further explained, "The mirror is

good…because it lets me see what I am doing and what I should be doing. I use it to um, sort of *translate* what I know I should do into my body."

The dancers were constantly seeking to execute movements precisely and correctly. The mirror provided constant feedback about the temporal and spatial specificity of bodily movement, which was used by dancers to adjust their performance to comply with technique requirements. However, the dancers described the importance of not being dependent on the mirror. Violet said emphatically: "You shouldn't always rely on the mirror…you should be able to feel when you're doing something right or wrong." Other participants echoed these sentiments and a discourse that celebrated the ability to make self-corrections emerged. Dancers prided themselves on knowing when a movement 'felt' wrong and being able to make the necessary correction. Such corrections became possible when dancers had adequately internalized the gaze of the teacher. This resonated with Kleiner's (2009) suggestion that constant visibility in the dance studio, which she described as characteristic of the Panopticon, enabled dancers to participate in self-surveillance and correct their own actions. Shogan (1999) made a similar observation in the training of elite athletes: "The effects of panopticonism are visceral. When athletes perform skills incorrectly or without intensity, the movement feels 'wrong' or unnatural" (p. 38).

Therefore, the mirror was experienced as a teaching tool and many dancers valued this aspect of the mirror. This view was consistent with previous dance research that has described the mirror as an instrumental teaching tool (Radelle et al., 2002; Dearborn & Ross, 2006; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Kleiner,

2009). Dryburgh and Fortin's (2010) academy dancers reported that the mirror was a 'habit' and a working tool that allowed them to check what was right or wrong. These dancers experienced mirrored surveillance as positive, at times, because it helped to push them and motivated them to look for even small indications of progress. Dearborn and Ross (2006) concluded that dancers who learned movement with the help of a mirror had better retention of learned syllabus and choreography over a two-week period than those who did not have access to a mirror.

However, the mirror was not experienced as solely instrumental or benign by the dancers. It was also described to be a distraction and a persistent critic. The girls noted that the mirror often prompted them to nitpick at themselves and to point out small miniscule physical details that detracted from their experience of performing and from confidence in their abilities. Rachel said: "The mirror is sort of helpful….but sometimes I wish I could ignore it …just go by feeling…I'm not always going to look perfect and I can't always do every exercise perfect …but sometimes I want to learn in my own way…" For Rachel and other participants, the utility of the mirror was limited. It helped them adjust the specific positioning of the body in order to achieve a desired shape, but offered a one-dimensional approach to the teaching and learning of movement. Rachel's comment suggested that the mirror revealed only what is being done 'correctly' and 'incorrectly.' However, when learning physical movement the *in between* was important and necessary to the dancers. The mirror did not accommodate the in between. The mirror was also critiqued for capturing only one aspect of the girls' experience of

135

dance: the visible. Violet provided this example:

> It [the mirror] can be a bummer because I can feel like I did a beautiful *jeté* and I had that amazing flying feeling and I'm feeling awesome…and then I see myself in the mirror and I'm not nearly as high as I thought… my legs aren't in a perfect split but they felt so good… and then I just crash to the ground.

Therefore, there sometimes existed a dissonance between what the dancers experienced kinesthetically and what they observed in the mirror. It was in these cases that the girls described the mirror in negative terms and as an unrelenting critic. They experienced the mirror as focusing only on the shapes of the body and failing to capture or accommodate the materiality, kinesthetic sensation, or expressiveness that girls said they often described when they danced. The girls negotiated this dissonance by critiquing the mirror in return: "You can't be a great dancer just by looking perfect in the mirror, you have to feel when you are doing something right, and sometimes that's more important than what you look like" (Jenny). Hannah expanded: "I know my body's limits but the mirror doesn't know…so, I mean for me, getting my leg to 90 [degrees] is really good and kind of what I can do without being in pain, so I have to go by the feeling and not by what I see in the mirror."

While dancers described being aware that their bodily performance was under constant scrutiny, they did not discuss being evaluated according to their body size or shape. In fact many expressed feeling satisfied with their body and Sophia suggested: "Because I dance so much I think this is just where my body

wants to be. I know I'm in good shape even if I'm not stick thin." This expression

contradicted previous dance literature that reported how surveillance in the ballet

studio reproduced negative ideas about ideal weight and body shape and was

related to experiences of humiliation (Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999,

2002). Green (1999) noted that the "existence of mirrors, as an ominous and

powerful presence that contributed to physical self-evaluation, behavior

regulation, body objectification, and competition" (p. 88).

In summary, while participants in my study acknowledged the mirror was

at times limiting, they did not experience mirrors and surveillance as starkly and

dramatically in relation to body size as participants in Green's (1999) research.

When asked, dancers in my study said they would not want the mirrors to be

removed from the studio as they acted as a helpful and, at times, motivating

teaching tool. Dancers also negotiated the meaning of the feedback provided by

the mirror. For example, the mirror was not always granted expert status by the

dancers. Other sources of knowledge (i.e., kinesthetic awareness, physical

perception, acknowledgement and acceptance of personal physical limitations)

were incorporated into their learning process and considered in relationship to the

information garnered from the mirror's reflection. Additionally, the dancers often

experienced the mirror in positive ways. They explained that seeing the reflection

of their bodily movements helped them recognize their progress, which in turn

motivated them and resulted in feelings of pleasure and satisfaction.

Therefore, the mirror played an integral and complex role in the dancers'

studio experiences. It facilitated the deployment of disciplinary power by making

visible minute details of temporal bodily performance. Dancers used the mirror to recognize technical flaws and make necessary adjustments to perform the normative movement demanded by the syllabus. At the same time, the dancers engaged critically with their relationship with the mirror and actively negotiated on which terms and at what times the mirror was helpful to them.

5.8 The Dance Teacher: More Than an Expert

The teacher-dancer relationships in the studio played an important role in shaping dancers' practices and experiences. Generally, the students viewed the teacher as the 'expert'. Therefore, students and teachers related to each other within a certain power arrangement. Participants in Green's (1999) study described dance teachers in academy settings as repressive authority figures who held expertise that they themselves did not. Dancers in my study participated in a similar relationship in the commercial dance studio. That is, dancers identified the teacher as a source of specialized knowledge they required access to in order to become technically proficient. This knowledge enabled the teacher to evaluate and rank dancers' performances and progress. Her attention and feedback was considered a valuable and coveted resource by the dancers and she generally decided the structure and content of each class.

Foucault (1979) contended that individuals do not possess power, but rather exercise power in relationship to each other. He further noted that power relations can be asymmetrical and individuals' capacity to exercise power varies across contexts and settings. Thus, the dancers and teachers in my study existed within a specific power relationship that while potentially unbalanced, was not

138

characterized by the fixed roles of 'oppressed' and 'oppressor' (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Instead, power relations between the dancers and teacher constantly shifted. This fluctuation was illustrated by the ways in which dancers' behaviours and actions shaped the teacher's actions, as well as the other way around. For example, through verbal negotiation and bodily expression, dancers influenced the use of time in class, contributed to decisions about which exercises were performed or not performed in class, and initiated their own, creative, playful use of dance studio space. When dancers struggled to translate the teacher's demands into their physical performance, the teacher sought to use different verbal and physical cues. In this way, dancers were not assigned individual responsibility for performing 'correctly' or asked simply to work harder. Instead, learning and refining technique was understood to be a shared process between the dancer and the teacher.

Furthermore, the teacher's practices were also situated within specific power relations. As a certified ballet teacher, the teacher had also been subject to examinations and normalizing evaluation processes. She was continuously constrained by the syllabus which commanded what movement repertoire was to be taught and when. She was also assessed indirectly by the annual examinations performed by her dancers. In each exam, an expert who holds higher rank than the teacher evaluates the students' performances. In so doing, evaluates the teacher's ability to instruct according to RAD standards *and* ensures she complies with the syllabus. Therefore, the teacher and students do not exist within an

oppressor/oppressed relationship. Rather, they are situated within a network of power relations in which they are each able to exercise power to varying degrees.

Additionally, the relationship between teacher and student was characterized by more than the exchange of dance knowledge and evaluation of bodily performance. During my observations, I sensed a palpable intimacy between the dancers and teacher in which both parties took delight. Many participants had trained at the studio for more than 10 years and had studied with the same teacher for the duration of that time. Therefore, the studio and the relationships it fostered were folded intricately into the dancers' own histories. One incident in the studio revealed this to me.

I sit down by the stereo. My task is to cue the music while the class rehearses choreography for the upcoming recital. The girls are on the floor stretching and chatting when Mrs. M___ walked in and exclaims, "Girls, look what I've found, some pictures of some of your first recitals!" The girls gasp in delight and scurry over to Mrs. M___, one grabbing me by the hand on the way. The gesture thrills me, a small sign that my entry into this intimate circle is increasing incrementally each week. Mrs. M___ shows us a photo of two of the dancers in a recital costume when they look to be 3 or 4 years old. A chorus of oooh's and aaah's ensues. One of the dancers in the photo presents it to me, eager for me to see. She is beaming and the dancers around me are giggling as they huddle together and flip through the rest of the photos. Mrs. M___ explains that Sophia and Lily have been dancing together at the studio since they were 4 years old, "They're just like sisters," she says. "And they are all like my kids."

The girls flush with the pleasure; the pleasure of being known, of being

recognized. And perhaps I cannot help but think, of being cared for. The warmth

and affection enveloping them in the studio is perceptible…. In the photo the girls

are small children, beaming, proud and excited in their costumes, posing for the

camera. "I've known these two since they were 3 or 4 years old," Mrs. M___

says, her voice conveying unmistakable pride and fondness.

In this incident, the weight that history carried within the dancers'

relationships to each other, the teacher, and the studio was unmistakable. The

photographs became artifacts of the girls' and the studio's history and the ways in

which they shaped each other. I was struck by the continuity illuminated through

these artifacts and suggest it is this continuity that facilitated the ease with which

girls moved in and through the studio spaces and the closeness that so obvious

between the dancers and the teacher. This finding resonated with results reported

by researchers studying the physical education context (Brown, 2000; Dwyer et

al., 2006; Humbert, 1995) and further suggested that the relationship with teachers

(or coaches) can greatly influence and shape girls' physical experiences.

5.9 Dancing Bodies, Docile Bodies

In this chapter I sought to adequately capture the contradictions and

nuances that define the practices and experiences of dancing bodies in the ballet

studio. A dancer's body must be able to perform specific tasks and movements

and is made proficient and skilled through repetitive, specific training. This

proficiency was achieved in the studio through the deployment of Foucault's

technologies of discipline, which trained dancing bodies through the strategic use

of time, space, and movement. However, I also attempted to reveal the rich, relational aspect of the ballet studio I so clearly observed and affectively perceived while in the studio space.

At the centre of my analysis lies the notion of docility. Foucault (1979) maintained, "discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies" (p. 138). Docility was not positive for Foucault and he argued that docility renders a body unthinking, unengaged, and constrains its creativity (Markula & Pringle, 2006). The dancing bodies of my participants were strategically constrained and enabled through the organization of time and space. This then, Foucault would argue, yields dancing bodies docile. Other dance scholars have made this observation. Green (2002) argued: "Student dance bodies are docile bodies created to produce an efficiency, not only of movement, but also, a normalization and standardization of behavior in dance classes" (p. 3).

Indeed, the dancers in my study shared a clear but unarticulated understanding about what constitutes 'normal' behaviour and practice within the studio space. They generally embraced hours of hard, physical work and subjected their bodies to constant surveillance. However, it was the intense physical and personal engagement required to perfect intricate movement that dancers described enjoying. Realizing the potential (and limits) of one's bodily capacity created feelings of exhilaration that were shared with other dancers and the teacher. As dancers became more highly disciplined, they were further enabled to perform increasingly spectacular movement. It was the desire to move in

expressive and forceful ways that sustained their ability to work through challenging moments.

This analysis revealed the studio space to be constructed in multiple ways and to hold multiple meanings for those that inhabited it. These meanings often presented contradictory understandings: the studio *both and at once* disciplined bodies and provided respite. It constrained the girls' bodies through disciplinary surveillance and the specific organization of time and space, but also facilitated the development of productive, supportive relationships and enabled participants to move in energetic and expressive ways. The studio was unlike other physical and social spaces in the dancers' lives and was often experienced by dancers as joyful, safe, and productive. As Hamera (2005) explained, the studio is "a homeplace where solidarity and competition, surveillance, and self-fashioning come together for adolescent girls" (p. 93). This homeplace at once disciplines and provides pleasure, demands time and protects. Entrance into this space, however, is conditional. The vast amount of time dancers spent at the studio demanded that a willing and able parent figure drive dancers to and from the studio on a near daily basis. Furthermore, studio fees were substantial and determined by the number of hours spent in dance instruction each week. The dancers in my study averaged eight hours per week of dance instruction. Therefore, access to the dance studio was contingent on family time and financial resources (i.e., access to a vehicle, ability to pay studio fees). Certain material realities partially decided what bodies were allowed to inhabit the studio space, and what bodies were afforded the privilege of respite and sense of membership

that the dancers in my study described. It also cannot be overlooked that the majority of dancers were Caucasian. This composition complicates an already complex space. It may be that the ballet studio is, in many ways, constructed as available to some bodies, and not others.

For those that did inhabit it, however, it provided a sense of solidarity. The dancers created a history of shared understandings that manifested in physical practices and intimate friendships. Membership was established more firmly over time and demonstrated by the dancers' attire, the increasing sophistication of their bodily abilities, and familiarity with the other bodies that share the studio space. Although the studio presented contradictory meanings and experiences, it provided a space where the dancers were able to construct a coherence of self, bodily practice, external expectations and desire.

6.0 Discourse and the Dancing Body: Moving Beyond Aesthetics

I have long been under the spell of the prima ballerina and her

extraordinary, dancing body. My encounters with this body, beginning at a young

age, have evoked a sort of insatiable fascination that has shaped my own bodily

practices and research interests. As a young girl attending performances of the

National Ballet of Canada in Toronto, I would scramble from my seat at

intermission and hurry my Mother by the hand in order to catch a glimpse of the

performing ballerinas signing autographs in the foyer. The sheer spectacle of

them, with their dazzling, twinkling, costumes and improbable bodies held me

captive in a kind of formidable awe. The ballerinas seemed to sparkle and

shimmer before me, their doll-like faces exaggerated by layers of theatrical make-

up, their bodies jarringly frail. I was almost startled by this display of emphasized

corporeality. Their presence was powerful and my fascination was visceral.

Mingled with this sense of enthrallment was an intense sense of longing. I wanted

so badly to be a ballerina myself, and to inhabit whatever incandescent world to

which they belonged. I wanted to live and possess their bodies, somehow

frightening, beautiful, and powerful.

6.1 Knowing the Ballet Body

In this chapter I explore the set of discourses (knowledges) through which

the idealized ballet body is constructed and understood. Specifically, I take up

Foucault's (1972) definition of discourse. He recognized discourse as system of

beliefs and understandings that both enable and limit the way we come to know

and talk about objects and social phenomena (Foucault, 1972; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Markula and Pringle (2006) explained that a Foucauldian understanding of discourse "refers to unwritten 'rules' that guide social practices and help to produce and regulate the production of statements that, correspondingly, control what can be understood and perceived but at the same time act to obscure" (p. 31). In other words, discourse creates meaning systems through which we define our social world and ourselves. Other dance scholars have also used the term discourse in their dance research (e.g., Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Green, 1999, 2003; Ritenburg, 2010). They referred to the discourse of 'the ballet body' when speaking about the corporeal aesthetics of perfection through which the ballet body is understood (Green, 1999, 2003; Ritenburg, 2010). However, this interpretation and use of the term 'discourse' does not comply with Foucault's understanding. He would argue that the ballet body itself is not a discourse; instead the ballet body is understood *through* a set of discourses. Therefore, I will expand upon the work of previous dance scholarship to identify the set of discourses that define the ballet body.

Foucault (1978) was also interested in the link between discourse and the production of truth. As I discussed in my theory chapter, Foucault argued that some discourses become dominant and gain a status of 'truth,' while others are marginalized. In this way discourse both enables and limits our understandings. In the case of my study, discourse, or sets of discourses, shape, make possible, and limit the way(s) in which we, including my participants, define and know the ballet body. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the discourses that circulate in

the ballet studio and to examine the 'truths' they produce in order to glean insight into how girls understand their ballet bodies.

It also important to explore the power relations that operate in the dance studio. According to Foucault, power is productive and its effects produce "certain bodies" (Foucault, 1980, p. 25). Power also produces the desires, attitudes, and interactions of those bodies. Thus, my participants' dancing bodies are constituted within power relations, as are their practices, desires, and beliefs. Normalization is a technique of power that shapes the conduct and desires of bodies. It involves the construction of a normal, desirable manner of conduct and the subsequent reward or punishment of individuals for compliance or non-compliance (Foucault, 1990). In the case of ballet, some beliefs about the ballet body and the associated practices are rewarded repeatedly over time. As a result, they become so deeply accepted and normalized that they evade critical examination or questioning.

6.2 Becoming a Ballerina: Perfection is the *Pointe*

Previous dance literature suggested that physical characteristics such as thinness, long limbs, and bodily delicacy characterize dominant understandings of the ballet body (Aalten 2007; Foster, 1996; Green, 1999, 2001; Pickard, 2013; Ritenburg, 2010; Thomas, 2003). Indeed, the iconic image of the prima ballerina is easily conjured and complies with this definition: the impossibly petite frame, the pink satin *pointe* shoes, and the (often blonde) hair pulled back into a neat bun cohere into a widely recognizable feminine archetype. Not only does her body comply with balletic ideals, but it is also the physical manifestation of

conventional femininity (Foster, 1996). This image of the extraordinary ballet body is reproduced in the popular and fitness media, children's books, and in ballet academies and companies, sustaining connections between dominant understandings of ballet and idealized femininity (Green, 2001; Foster, 2003; Ritenburg, 2010).

In this study, the specific aesthetics of the ideal ballet body and its desirable movement qualities were identified and described by my participants through casual conversation, observation, and one-on-one interviews. The idealized ballet body inhabited the studio as a familiar notion articulated through dialogue, and as an energetic presence/absence informing the way dancers interpreted their images in the mirror. Participants shared these observations: "The ballerina body is crazy, you know, super thin, long legs and the perfect point" said Ella. Violet added: "Well, ballerinas have long lean muscles and no extra fat or even big muscles anywhere…they are graceful and (laughs) kind of look like they could float." Rachel described ballet bodies as:

> …bodies that are just perfect in everyway…small and delicate…if you go to the ballet none of the dancers have any hips and they are all really tiny…it's like the *corps* [*de ballet*] is just this bunch of perfect looking dancers who have the perfect crazy muscle definition because all they are is bone and a little tiny bit of muscle.

These quotes revealed that dancers were keenly aware of dominant understandings of the idealized ballet body that privilege extreme thinness. However, the ballet body was not simply understood as thin, but also defined

according to particular aesthetic criteria. Similar to the dancers in Green's (2001) study, my participants itemized parts of the idealized ballet body. Sophia said: "Ballerinas have legs that go on and on…I just don't have super long legs, I wish I did…" Ella echoed: "If I could change anything I would wish for smaller thighs and skinnier arms." Many of the dancers added to this list, describing a host of specific bodily aesthetics associated with the ballet body.

6.3 The Stylized and Graceful Body

My participants, therefore, described the corporeal perfection through which the ballet body is widely understood and seemed to accept this understanding as a certain truth in the world of ballet. The perfect ballet body was not only slim, but subject to an extensive checklist that included specific aesthetic criteria for myriad body parts including hips, legs, feet, arms, as well as a general quality of gracefulness and daintiness. The girls were familiar with and able to articulate these criteria and understood their own bodies as non-compliant with them. Based on this noncompliance, participants consequently understood their bodies as other than a 'real' ballet body. Rachel explained it this way: "When I first look in the mirror, I usually think, oh I'm too big to be a real ballerina ….I just feel…disappointed…like I have this body and not a ballerina body…" Cassie shared these thoughts: "Some days all I see is how many things are wrong with my body, I see all my flaws and compare it to that image in my head of the perfect, skinny ballerina…" In these examples the discourse of the precise aesthetics of the ballet body acted upon, shaped, and limited the girls' understandings of their own bodies. Participants understood their bodies as

noncompliant with the ballet ideal and were somewhat dissatisfied with their

bodies as a result. This process of bodily evaluation and associated dissatisfaction

has been previously reported in dance literature (Aalten, 2007; Green, 1999, 2001;

Pickard, 2012, 2013). Aalten (2007) noted: "The dancer who works with her

body, is constantly aware of the ideal" (p. 113). Green's (1999) findings

suggested that university dancers categorized themselves as not real dancers based

on their bodily aesthetics. Green's dancers believed that the only way to be a good

dancer and to obtain praise and attention from the teacher was to attain this bodily

ideal. My participants also perceived themselves differently than 'real' ballerinas

based on aesthetic bodily criteria. However, as I discuss later in this chapter,

participants did not believe being a skilled dancer required having the

aesthetically perfect body.

6.3.1 Intersecting bodies: Where fitness meets ballet.

Participants' descriptions of the aesthetics of idealized ballet body

resonate with discursive understandings of the fit feminine body as slim and toned

(Dworkin & Wachs, 2009; Duncan, 1994; Jette, 2006; Markula, 1995, 2001).

However, important differences emerged. Not only is the ballerina's body

astoundingly thin, it is hyper flexible, seemingly fragile and delicate, yet capable

of astonishing strength and physical feats. Little mention is made of flexibility or

bodily ability in fitness discourses, making the ballet body perhaps even more

elusive. Additionally, feminist scholars of sport and fitness have noted that

women's fitness practices often target certain 'problem areas' such as the

buttocks, thighs, and belly (Dworkin, 2003; Dworkin & Wachs; Markula 1995).

These body parts must be toned and absent of extra flesh in order to achieve the fit feminine ideal. Participants in my study also identified the legs and hips (less so the stomach) as important areas of focus. However, participants listed even more precise aesthetic criteria for these body parts. For example, legs must long and lean, hips must be very slim (almost absent), and arms must be thin, defined, but not too muscular. Additionally, the aesthetics of the ballet body were linked to a particular movement quality described as desirable by participants. For example, Violet explained: "Dancers arms have to be strong but they have to look delicate… so they can't be big and bulky, but they have some shape as long as it's a graceful shape." And Nicole noted: "Ballerinas look so delicate on stage...they are so graceful." In this way the very specific criteria for the ballet body manifested in a stylized aesthetic and evoke a certain movement quality. Therefore, the aesthetic criteria for the ballet body include qualities such as elegance and gracefulness that exceed qualities of the fit body, which is often analyzed in representation and stillness.

Furthermore, additional body parts were subject to scrutiny not discussed in women's fitness. For example, participants emphasized the importance of having high arches in the foot in order to comply with the ballet body ideal. Jess explained: "…ballerinas have to have high arches….or else their lines won't look good...the feet are so important." Nicole added: "you need to have nice long legs, but also good arches, it just makes the whole line look better and is important for pointe work…people who don't have high arches don't look as good on pointe." Participants also described the importance of exuding an air of delicacy. Lily

noted: "To be a prima ballerina, you almost have to look, like, fragile… it goes along with the gracefulness…you know graceful arms and a long neck."

These aspects of arched feet, gracefulness, and delicacy have been previously discussed in relation to the aesthetics of the ballet body (see Aalten, 2007; Green, 1999), but surpass discursive understandings of the fit feminine body ideal. Fitness literature does not discuss *how* the body moves nor does it make associations between aesthetics of the body and movement of the body. Therefore, the aesthetics of the ballet body are linked closely to the movement it performs and the ballet body is understood as more than a still, represented body. It is a body that moves in an aesthetically specific, stylized, graceful manner. This is interesting to note because in one way, it constructs a body that is more difficult to obtain than the fit body. Yet, the link between aesthetics and movements disrupts the notion of bodily appearance as solely a signifier of desirable femininity.

6.3.2 Good lines.

The connection between bodily aesthetics and movement was illustrated through the concept of bodily lines, which dancers described as important. For example, when describing the ballet body, Rachel said: "When we dance…everything has to come together to create nice lines." When asked to explain what she meant by 'nice lines', Rachel thought for a moment and elaborated:

> Well, like clean lines of the body… ballet is all very…I dunno it's very
>
> precise… it's like position, position, position…very clean, so you have to

be sharp and have good technique, that's just what makes it look good. Like an arabesque with a low leg or a developé where the leg doesn't get fully straight just messes the line, you know? The best lines come with good extension and long legs…perfect feet.

Many participants mentioned the importance of nice lines in dance and explained that repetitive *barre* work was essential for building the technique that leads to nice lines. Violet said: "It's like, you can just tell a dancer's body because they have a certain muscle development, we do the same exercises for so long that we make the right lines…" Dryburgh and Fortin (2010) suggested that the ability of professional dancers to create "beautiful lines" was a defining feature of the ballet body (p. 98). Other dance scholars have similarly pointed to the importance of clean technique and nice lines (Pickard, 2013). Therefore, the bodily practices dancers perform in ballet class both build *and* require a certain type of body, one that performs movement with a graceful, delicate quality and exhibits specific stylized aesthetics. This distinguishes it from the discursively constructed fit feminine body, which complies with certain aesthetic criteria (i.e., slim, toned) but is not required to move in any particular way or to convey any specific movement quality. Little, if any attention is paid to how the fit body moves.

Sometimes participants were required to negotiate diverse bodily practices in relationship to their understanding of the dancing body. Sophia shared:

I do a lot of track at school so I'm athletic too…and hurdles build different muscles, bigger muscles…than ballet…so I'm like small but muscley in a different way than ballet dancers…ballet looks so nice with long lean

legs…you know, nice lines, and mine aren't... they're like ballet/hurdle

hybrid legs [laughter].

In this quote Sophia echoed the emphasis placed on muscles that are long and

lean. She also pointed to a power relation she negotiated between ballet and

hurdles, between ballet muscles and sporting muscles.

Therefore, the ballet body was understood through the discourse of

stylized aesthetics and gracefulness. The ballet body must not only look a certain

way, but also evoke a particular quality in its movement. This discursive

understanding of the stylized aesthetics and gracefulness of the ballet body was

normalized and accepted as a 'truth' by my participants. In her study of young

dancers in training to be professional, Pickard (2013) noted a similar

phenomenon. She noted: "The young dancers were aware of and accepted the

expectations of the ballet body physique, the high standards of the ballet aesthetic

of perfection and idealized ballet body that exist in ballet culture" (p. 16).

Similarly, none of the girls in my study questioned the stylized, thin body's status

as the most desirable body type, and many identified and confessed their own

bodily lack and noncompliance with it. For example, Anne confessed: "I'm not

stick thin, so I won't ever be a real ballerina." In this way, the ideal ballet body

imposed conditions (limitations) on the possible ways in which girls came to

know their bodily selves.

6.4 Putting Perfection in its Place

In my literature review I discussed how dance researchers have

demonstrated the saliency of the discursive understanding of the stylized

aesthetics of the ballet body and articulated how it is oppressive for young female dancers (e.g., Aalten, 2007; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Foster, 2003; Green, 1999, 2001; Gray & Kunkel, 2001; Pickard, 2012, 2013; Ritenburg, 2010). Aalten (2007) argued that dancers view the body as malleable and work harder to achieve the idealized, stylized aesthetic. Gray and Kunkel (2001) suggested that the widespread celebration of the ballet body ideal compels dancers to blindly engage in extreme, grueling training practices with the sole objective of achieving the elusive ballet body. However, participants in my study also discussed ways in which they negotiated the discourse of stylized aesthetics. Cassie explained: "I know that I could look more like a ballerina if I was super skinny, but I'm not trying to be famous, so as long as I'm able to keep up in class I don't really see the need …" Violet added: "I guess, I mean maybe some people in class are a bit heavier, but it doesn't really matter, they're still amazing dancers."

These reflections slightly disrupted the totalizing discourse of the aesthetics of the ballet body. The context in which the girls danced and the fact that they were not striving to be prima ballerinas created a discursive space that allowed for a multiplicity of acceptable dancing bodies. While the thin, aesthetically precise ballet body remained unquestioned and was maintained and normalized as a desirable body, dancers expressed a certain acceptance of their own bodies by acknowledging their personal contextual realities (i.e., they were not training to be professional dancers). They argued that a range of bodies had the capacity to dance well and that learning and performing ballet was not conditional on attaining the perfect body. For example, Cassie noted:

"I dunno, I know I don't look like a 'real' dancer…but then, you know, after a while I just accept that…I mean I don't want to be a professional…but I'm still a good dancer." While Cassie did not overtly critique the narrowly defined ballet body, she acknowledged it was unnecessary for her circumstance, desires, and goals.

Through similar negotiations, participants diminished the importance of the perfect body and disrupted the assumed relationship between body shape and dance ability. Lily shared this reflection:

> My friends tease me, 'cause ballet dancers are known for being anorexic, but I like my body and the way it is, it does amazing things for me. Yes B___ has the perfect body and it sometimes makes me feel bad about myself, but I would never think about going on a diet…It wouldn't really change anything, it wouldn't made me a better dancer.

In this example the discourse of stylized aesthetics did not explicitly impact Lily's eating or training practices as far as she was concerned. The celebration of the idealized ballet body shaped how Lily understood her body (not ideal), but did not manifest in oppressive practices. These findings contrast with earlier literature that suggested that the discourse of aesthetics is totalizing and oppressive for young dancers (Green, 1999; 2001; Pickard, 2012, 2013; Ritenburg, 2010). In my study, participants actively negotiated this discourse in relation to their own context and experiences.

6.5 The Skillful Body

Participants also described their bodies as 'skillful' bodies. Dancers described the ballet body as capable of "doing amazing things" (Ella) and spoke of the impressive range of movement and movement qualities the ballet body demonstrated. Violet explained: "It's so amazing…everything from how high dancers can jump to how much control they have…it's [the ballet body] just so fine-tuned." This celebration of hyper-ability was repeated in many conversations. According to participants, the skillful body was one that demonstrated a high level of awareness, was strong, coordinated, flexible, and exhibited good extension.

As I observed and danced with the girls, I marveled at their skill. Curious as to how participants perceived their bodies and their capabilities, I asked them how they would describe their own dancing bodies. Many of them said they thought of their bodies as very "aware" bodies (Cassie, Rachel, Violet, Ella). When asked how they experienced and defined body awareness, participants often paused and considered their response, as though searching for adequate words. "Um, I guess it's just knowing your body and where it is in space and maybe….um, like being more particular or careful in how you move it…" explained Rachel. Violet elaborated:

> It's sort of like having good coordination all the time, like as dancers we are more aware of the limits of our bodies and more aware of them when they move, where our weight is and stuff… also we can make different body parts do different things at the same time, where most people can't.

Body awareness, therefore, referred to the overall coordination of the body and a heightened ability to know how to move the body in a space. Contemporary dancers in Markula's (2013) study also expressed the importance of body awareness and described it as an important aspect of their dancer identity. However, body awareness is not prominent in discussions of female fitness or physical activity.

Conversations further revealed that dancers considered themselves to be good movers, both in the studio and out. Anne reflected: "I usually don't really like gym class…it's usually super boring but we were playing dodge ball last week and I was so good at it because it was so easy to lunge out of the way." In this way Anne's skilled dancing body was productive outside of a dance context. However, in other instances her dancing body stood out as different. Anne explained: "I was bending over to pick up the badminton birdy and I noticed that I didn't bend my knees at all, I just bent like from the waist and then I realized that no one else was doing that." When asked how she felt about that, she replied, "Well, I don't know, it wasn't really good or bad…I just noticed it was different."

Anne's reflection demonstrated that she was perceptive of the understanding that her body moved differently than those around her. The ability to bend forward at the waist and fold the body in half was normal for Anne as a dancer, but not normal in different contexts. Interestingly she did not label this difference as good or bad, yet recognizing this difference further demonstrated her body awareness. Interestingly, scholars who examined physical education settings also indicated that girls were aware of being looked at and experiencing feelings

of self-consciousness (Azzarito & Solomon, 2009; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001;Slater & Tiggemeann, 2010;Whitehead & Biddle, 2008). However, the concerns described by these authors had to do with the appearance of the body, rather than what the body was doing or how it did it.

Other dancers also described body awareness as a positive aspect of the ballet body. When I asked why it was so important, Lily explained:

> We just know what bodies can do, I mean every body has the potential to do it, but like most people don't know they could do three turns on the tip of their toe, but being a dancer you know that. And like, even when people talk about gravity, as a dancer we have to understand the centre of our bodies, so we like figure out that with our bodies.

I asked Lily why it might be important to understand the centre of the body in other contexts and she pondered: "Well, I guess maybe everyone could have a little bit more body awareness…it might help people be more in touch with their bodies." Lily's discussion of her body in very particular, almost scientific terms (i.e., 'centre of gravity') suggested a fairly sophisticated understanding and awareness of her body. Participants generally perceived that few people were body aware and thought that increased awareness would help people move more efficiently and echoed Sydney's idea that being more 'in touch' with one's body was a positive thing. In this way the ballet body is also constructed differently than the idealized fit feminine body as the fit body is not required to be 'in touch' nor is it taught to become in touch through exercise, it is simply required to comply with specific aesthetics (Markula, 1995).

6.5.1 The ballet body can do amazing things.

The discursive understanding of the ballet body as a skilled body also encompassed the body's ability to exhibit flexibility, extension, and to learn and perform complicated movements. Dancers explained that flexibility and extension contributed to the overall clean lines of ballet technique, and their ability to perform impressive leaps and turns. "You need flexibility to get the classical lines," explained Violet. "The better extension, the better the lines." In this way, the discourse of skillful body was linked to the discursive understandings of ballet aesthetics. Through the development of bodily skill and ability, dancers were able to perform with a high level of proficiency *and* comply with the aesthetic criteria that defined the ballet body. This aspect of the ballet body distinguishes it from the fit body as the fit body is often constructed primarily in terms of the aesthetics of a healthy looking body (Markula, 2001). Fitness discourses do not mention the skill demonstrated by the fit body nor do they discuss or celebrate the skill required to obtain the fit body.

In order to cultivate the skillful ballet body, girls demonstrated and discussed the concepts of hard work and commitment. "It's not about looking like a prima ballerina here," said Jess. "It's about working hard and learning technique and pushing yourself the furthest you can go." Hard work was demonstrated by time spent in the studio, and persistent effort in class. When asked why it was important for dancers to push themselves, Violet answered:

> Well, if you don't then you just stay the same and you never get to the
>
> next level. And then I don't understand why people dance then. I always

want to push myself, even when I'm so dead tired I just want to keep on dancing…if I'm not exhausted I feel like something's wrong, I'm not working hard enough.

Violet's quote illustrated the normalization of hard work and pushing oneself in the dance studio, as well as the importance of reaching the "next level." The discourse of hard work manifested as a code of behaviour that was understood and valued in the studio. This included taking multiple classes a week and being at the studio for multiple hours a night. When asked how a dancer demonstrated commitment, Rachel replied: "It's just like how much time you put in you know, like do you want to be out at the mall and stuff or do you want to dance?" In this study, all participants spent a lot of time at the studio (upwards of 10 hours per week). This was normalized, and the dancers were proud of it. They described a great sense of connection to the studio and to their "dance family" (Sophia). For participants, the demonstration of hard work was more important than bodily aesthetics and was necessary for acceptance into the studio culture. Cassie provided an explicit example: "Mrs. M always knows when we're working hard, she doesn't care about our weight and never says anything about how we look, but she just wants us to work hard."

Pickard (2103) also suggested that hard work and self-discipline were highly valued by young dancers striving to be professional dancers. However in Pickard's study, engaging in hard work was perceived primarily as a means to attain the corporeal perfection demanded by ballet. For my participants, hard work was discussed more evidently in relation to building skill. When I asked

participants how they approached developing their physical skills, many

responded that they practiced over and over again. Many of them also practiced at

home. Lily and I shared this exchange:

> Lily: Um, I think being flexible is pretty much the most important
>
> thing…but also you have to be strong, if you're just flexible you have no
>
> control over your body, you need strength too….
>
> Me: How do you work on your strength and flexibility?
>
> Lily: Well…I've worked like so hard, so so hard on my flexibility. I
>
> basically sit in the straddle splits every night and then I lift one leg off the
>
> ground and hold it there as long as I can, and then I do the other one. And
>
> I just keep doing that
>
> Me: Wow, that sounds really hard! I've tried a similar one where I put my
>
> leg on the *barre* and try to lift if off and hold it and it's so hard.
>
> Lily: (Laughing) Yes, it is….at first I could barely lift it [leg] before it like
>
> crashed down...but it's better now.
>
> Me: Is it?
>
> Lily: Yeah, I really notice a difference, now I can do turns with my leg
>
> high… even Mrs. M noticed and complimented me, it's like I can get my
>
> leg really high but it's still controlled. I also got a big compliment at a
>
> competition once, the judge said my extension was um, really impressive
>
> and that the other girls should try to get theirs to look like mine.
>
> Me: Does it ever hurt, or feel like you're working your body too hard?

Lily: Umm, well, it doesn't, um, it doesn't hurt…but it's I guess it feels

hard, like I'm working hard, but I actually like it…I dunno I guess it's

interesting to see how good I can get.

Lily's anecdote revealed how the engagement in dance-related physical practices

was quite extreme, but also a normal part of her life. The ability to exhibit

impressive flexibility was normalized as desirable, as evidenced by the rewarding

compliment Lily received by the judge. Here her bodily practice contributed to a

power relation between her and the teacher and the other dancers, and flexibility

is maintained as a normative quality of the ballet body. However, Lily clearly

derived great satisfaction from working on her flexibility and from working hard

at dance.

6.5.2 Experiencing bodily success.

Working at new skills was one of the girls' favourite aspects of dance and

they took great pleasure in mastering new and more sophisticated movements.

Many described learning new skills and taking on new challenges as "fulfilling"

(Chloe, Violet, Rachel, Anne). Violet described it like this:

I like working at something, because after you get it, it becomes one more

step you can use in the rest of your dancing and you can work off of it, and

you feel a sense of accomplishment because you remember all the

difficulties you went through to get there.

Anne added: "It's just, just the best …it's kind of, almost fun to work something

out, to figure it out on your own…and then it can be like my biggest

accomplishment in a day." The process of mastering complicated movements

resulted in pleasurable kinaesthetic experiences and feelings of physical success. Although success was not always instantaneous, most dancers described enjoying the physical experience of learning. Ella described:

> …sometimes I have to be very precise and technical, so it takes all my concentration, or sometimes it's like doing an amazing big jump, and trying to get higher or cleaner in the air each time…and when you land it it feels amazing…it's like finding your body's limits.

Mastering new steps enabled dancers to develop a more expansive sophisticated movement repertoire, which was a very satisfying aspect of dance. Millar (2013) also found that skill development was an important aspect of dance training for recreational contemporary dancers and that progressively improving one's skills was part of what made dance enjoyable. Dancers in Millar's study enjoyed the feeling of hard work and derived pleasure and satisfaction from working hard in order to develop skill. In my study participants also enjoyed working hard: "I love feeling challenged and just working so hard…when I go home I just collapse but it feels so good, if I'm not tired something isn't right" (Chloe). Similarly, dancers in Kolb and Kalogeropoulou's study (2012) reported that the presence of physical challenge was one of the main motivations to dance. Therefore, hard work and skill development were closely related and were perceived and experienced positively by dancers.

The discursive understanding of the ballet body as a skilled body extended to participants' own bodies. They acknowledged they had good body awareness and seemed aware of their own skills. As Violet said earlier, they could control

164

several different body parts at once, and their bodies faced multiple, often contradictory demands as they performed. For example, flexibility (a highly valued aspect of the ballet body) was only productive when it was matched with strength. The height and freedom of one leg, as it swung in the hip joint, depended on the stability and groundedness of the other. The dancing body was continuously called upon to recruit muscles and energy in seemingly contradictory ways in order to perform even simple tasks. As dancers performed *pliés,* the foundational *barre* exercise, Mrs. M called: "Grow taller as you go down girls, send your energy up, don't sink, but remain tall." Dancers continuously worked to accommodate complex cues and translate them into polished, effortless looking movement. The repetitive exercises simultaneously *create and require* a certain body. When watching the girls dance, it was apparent that they had developed a very particular repertoire of movement. At the *barre,* their legs moved and swung with ease within the hip joint, their legs arching high and gracefully into the air. The visual effect was pleasing and underlined to me that this particular ease and grace of movement is indeed foundational to ballet technique. The motion appears effortless, and elicits a sense of freedom, yet is made possible only by rigorous training and the capacity to exercise extreme coordination and precision. This bodily exhibition of extreme ability is again a manifestation of the disciplinary practices described by Foucault (1979). Through repetition and the specific arrangement of the body in time and space, the physical practices of ballet both create and require a particular body that moves in skillful and aesthetically precise ways.

Therefore, dance practices provided dancers with multiple ways through which they knew and understood their bodies and contributed to an understanding of a *doing* body, a body with potential and capacity. The unique space and culture of the studio facilitated experiences of success that were based primarily on movement capacity, not on body shape or size. This may perhaps have been different in a professional setting. This finding expands upon findings reported by feminist scholars who have examined other movement settings, such as physical eduction. These scholars (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Burrows, 2008; Garrett, 2004) stressed the ways in which the appearance of the body was important to girls in these settings, and acted to deter participation. However, little mention, if any, was made of the ways in which girls thought of the body beyond that of appearance.

I argue then, that the disciplinary strategies employed in dance class were also linked to the production of physical pleasure and success as they enabled the skill development girls valued. Difficult training moments produced moments of pleasure in the mastering of increasingly complicated movements, which led to a more expansive movement vocabulary. Knowing this, it complicates the understanding of dance practices as 'disciplinary' as my analysis in chapter five indicated. Indeed, it is through what Foucault (1979) calls disciplinary techniques (the specific use of time, space, and movement) that girls become skilled dancers. These techniques facilitated the experiences of "hard work" that many of them purported to enjoy. Participants clearly expected, desired, and enjoyed dance classes that required them to challenge themselves physically. In this way,

disciplinary practices were productive for my dancers. Previous research has

focused on and critiqued the disciplinary aspects of dance but has not focused on

the complexity and nuances of the ways in which dancers experience such

disciplinary practices. One exception is Millar (2013) who found that

contemporary dancers framed hard work, discipline, and skill development in

positive ways. For these dancers, the engagement in hard work and developing

new skills was inextricable from their enjoyment and motivation to dance. My

findings echo Millar's as my participants took great pleasure in developing new

skill and worked hard to do so. Furthermore, unlike previous dance research,

which suggested that hard work is taken up solely to achieve a certain *looking*

body (Green, 1999; Gray & Kunkel, 2004) participants in my study talked about

hard work as a means to build a highly skilled *moving* body. While my

participants clearly described the ideal *looking* ballet body, they talked about their

dance experiences more clearly in relation to the *skilled* ballet body.

6.6 The Careful Body

When asked how they would describe the ballet body, participants

repeatedly introduced the idea of the ballet body as a "careful" body (Rachel,

Anne, Chloe, Lily Sophia, Ella). I was surprised by this and asked them to

elaborate. They explained that they approached learning challenging new

movements very carefully in order to avoid injury. Ella maintained: "It takes a lot

of concentration…and even though you just want to go for it, you have to be

careful…injuries can happen like that." Dancers also said they were generally

mindful and careful about the way they took care of their body, both inside and

outside of the studio. This sometimes impacted other physical practices and activities they engaged in. Sophia participated in track and field and school and shared this reflection: "Whenever I'm doing track I always hear Mrs. M's voice in my head telling me to be careful," she laughed "and I'm always thinking about my ballet body…sometimes I don't put myself out there 100% on the track because I'm afraid of injury." Most participants had experienced a dance-related injury of some kind ranging from rolled and sprained ankles, to a badly torn hamstring, to minor nagging injuries such as tight hips. Three had also experienced significant injuries outside of dance that impacted their dance training. They described the long road to recovery as an arduous one. "It took me almost a year to get back to where I was," said Rachel. "And when I wasn't dancing I felt almost depressed...I don't know if I could handle another major injury."

Injuries among ballet dancers are not uncommon. In classical ballet companies, annual injury rates range from 55%-95% on average (Bronner et al., 2003; Nilsson et al., 2001; Thomas & Tarr, 2009). A growing body of scholarship has examined ballet dancers' experience with pain and injury (Aalten, 2007; Pickard, 2007; Turner &Wainwright, 2003; Wainright & Turner, 2004; Wulff, 1998). Much of this scholarship suggests that physical pain is normalized in the ballet context and that it is often ignored as the dancer perseveres in the pursuit of the ballet body. In my study, the teacher's body, which had achieved a high level of ballet certification, bore the signs of multiple injuries and her experiences exemplified the notion that pain is often ignored. She had undergone knee and hip

replacements and as a result demonstrated limited mobility in the classroom. This meant she was unable to demonstrate the movements and often called upon one of the most technically proficient dancers in the class to act as her demonstration body. In conversation she confessed to me that when she was dancing as a young woman, she would "just keep going…if it wasn't stopping me from dancing, I wouldn't stop…why would I? It would just mean I would get behind, and that was my biggest fear." Her quote echoes the previous literature cited above, and demonstrates how the silencing of the body and of pain (Aalten, 2005) occurs in the ballet world.

6.6.1 Injury aware.

However, as a result of her injuries, Mrs. M___ talked frequently about injury prevention in class and urged her dancers to "listen to their bodies" to "make sure you're warm" and to "be careful" when attempting new or strenuous movements. She stressed the importance of good technique and frequently referred to her body as an example of what the girls wanted to avoid: "Girls, you must pay attention to your technique, and you must be careful when you are dancing…don't go and be careless to show off…you don't want to end up with my knees." Therefore, the concept of the careful body was circulated in the studio and dancers understood their bodies as careful bodies both within and outside of the studio.

Dancers described their history of injuries to me in a very matter of fact like manner and without much emotion. Some even suggested that injuries "were part of being a dancer…they just happen sometimes" (Rachel), which supports the

169

findings of Aalten (2007) and Pickard (2007) who reported that injuries were accepted as part of a dancers' life. However, participants were fearful of incurring more injuries. Interestingly, they did not discuss the pain associated with injury. Rather, injuries were significant challenges for the dancers as they hindered their progress and made their bodies feel fragile. Therefore, they were careful with their bodies. In one class, one of the dancers experienced a pain in her foot when she rose on demi-pointe. The teacher noticed her stop the exercise partway through. Once the rest of the class had completed the exercise Mrs. M___ paused the progress of the class and called the dancer over. She spent three-to-four minutes inspecting the dancer's foot, asking her questions, and ultimately encouraged her to rest for the rest of class. The dancer complied without protest.

The teacher's history of injury prompted dialogue about injury prevention in almost every class. Dancers were encouraged to accommodate any movements that might put them at risk for injury, and the importance of good technique was stressed. Every other week the teacher would encourage the girls to use Therabands and Yamuna balls that were stored in a cabinet in the studio and take time to tend to any trouble areas that might be sore, tight, or painful. The history of injuries and the possibility of injury was an important aspect of the dancers' relationship with their bodies, and with the teacher. The notion of 'do what you can' was emphasized in class by the teacher and amongst the dancers in order to prevent injuries. In this way the aesthetically stylized body was put into relief by consideration for and appreciation of the injury-free body.

6.6.2 Carefully negotiating health.

The careful body was intended to remain injury-free, which was one way in which dancers defined being healthy. Therefore, the healthy ballet body was an injury free body. Participants also valued dance as a means through which they stayed 'fit' and 'healthy' and explained that dance helped them 'stay in shape'. As Rachel put it, dance allowed her to "eat what I want and not get fat." In this way, discourses of health and fitness crept into conversations about the ballet body. These conversations pointed to the intersections of dance and fitness and illuminated how salient the discourses of the fit feminine body are for girls and women (Clark, Spence, & Holt, 2011; Duncan, 1994; Jette, 2006; Markula, 1995, 2001). Markula (2001) suggested that the idealized fit feminine body is constructed as an illness free body and as a body that complies with the aesthetics of the healthy looking body. My participants valued staying 'fit' but constructed the healthy dancing body slightly differently than the fit body. For example, they described healthy ballet body as an injury free body, but no mention was made of illness. This injury free status was valued because it determined their ability to dance, or not dance, not because it categorized them or diagnosed them in any way (Jette, 2006; Markula, 2001). Additionally, dancers described feeling healthy when they could keep up in class and when they felt strong instead of looking solely to bodily aesthetics as a health signifier.

Dancers described being careful with their bodies and looking after them well through adequate rest, yet described feeling tired a lot of the time when they talked about how often they danced. Rachel shared: "Sometimes I'm just so dead tired after class I'll go to bed hardly eating dinner…" Anne added: "I've gone into

my room on a Saturday afternoon when I get home [from the studio] and had a three hour nap…one day my parents didn't know where I was because I didn't hear them calling me." This revealed that while the dancers are very careful in some ways (for example demonstrating restraint and caution when practicing new steps), they still push their bodies to extremes. Dancers' bodies are, therefore, discursively understood as careful bodies that monitor themselves closely for injury and refrain from engaging in unknown or non-mastered movements with extreme effort or in a way that puts them at risk for injury. However, the careful body was still understood as a hardworking, hyper-able body. It is a careful body that can maintain its status as a high-performing and physically proficient body. In this way, perhaps the ballet body as a careful body can be understood more broadly than the fit body, and is again linked more to what dancers' bodies are capable of doing, rather than what they look like.

6.7 The Expressive Body

Fieldwork and conversations with the girls revealed that the dancing body was also an expressive body. Participants and the teachers articulated over and over again that being a good dancer requires more than strong technique and impressive extension, dancers must also be expressive and have the capacity to move the audience. As Jess explained: "Technique and expression are at the same level, because one can't be more important than the other, you don't want to watch someone who just has one, they depend on each other."

Therefore, dancing was about more than executing precise movement. There was an imperative to connect with those around them and to convey

something energetic, affective, to those watching, whether it was a full audience or simply the teacher. When teaching class, the teacher would use several cues to try to remind dancers of this quality. She would often call out: "Girls, I want you to ooze dance quality. Dance it, perform it, even if it's boring old *pliés*." The 'dance quality' she referred to could not be reduced to a physical characteristic or movement, but was meant to be sensitively conveyed through the moving body.

Dancers described the importance of expressing themselves through their bodies and also the pleasure they derived from doing so. "It's a good thing I have dance, because I'm not great with words," said Cassie. I asked her to explain what she meant by this and she continued: "I don't know…I just don't feel like I connect with the people the best through talking…I express better through dance." Anne also said: "I don't really express myself well with words…it's like, I can just express more truthfully through dance." When I asked Anne what she meant by truthfully, she thought for a moment and said:

> Well, it's sort of that sometimes feelings or something that you feel
> doesn't have a word to go with it…like if I try to explain to someone how
> I feel it's never really how I feel….so with dance it's just more true.

Several dancers said that dance helped them describe moods and states of being that could not "be put into words." It was as though naming how they felt inherently limited or failed to capture what it was girls felt or experienced: there was never the right word or adequate words. Yet it is through words that our society primarily communicates and functions. Therefore, I suggest that participant observations about the inability of language to capture what they

experience and express through dance, points the reliance we have on language and text in contemporary society, and the resulting limitations. Furthermore, participants struggled to describe their dance experiences through named, identifiable emotions. Emotions are often understood categorically and narrowly, and might not always capture the nuances or complexity of what the dancers might feel (Massumi, 1995). Ella shared:

> It's so hard to put into words, because sometimes I'll hear music that is sort of sad and slow, and I'll feel a bit sad when I'm dancing, almost like an ache…but at the same time I'm joyful because I'm moving to such beautiful music.

In Ella's example, her feeling of sadness is mingled with joy, and the sadness manifests itself in the 'ache' she describes as she dances, but is not traceable to an action or specific feeling. Through dance she is able to convey this 'messy' expressive state without having to name a particular emotion. Dance also allowed participants to express a wide range of emotions that might not be appropriate or easy to express in other settings. Jess elaborated:

> I love dance, because you get to be so many different things in it, one piece might be sad and slow, so you might express something that you're sad about, but then you can also be like crazy and almost angry, or funny.

When asked if she could be like that in other areas of her life, Jess said: "Um, well, not really, because everyone kind of expects you to be one way…I couldn't really be like crazy or bad at school, my teachers would be shocked, laughs…so I guess that's what I like about dance, I get to experiment…"

When I asked the dancers why they thought dance was such an important forum for expression, Violet replied:

> It just helps you deal with your emotions, you know, sometimes we bottle them up…if I'm having a bad day I just dance and feel so much better…like everything that I felt bad about myself that day has just like lifted off my chest. It's so amazing.

Curious about how she put her feelings into movement I asked her a few more questions and she tried to explain:

> I think you express through your arms…I like big arm movements, I feel so open…and then you can just dance with your heart in all movements, in anything you do you're giving a little piece of yourself, you're bearing the truth to the movement…I feel so honest when I'm dancing, there's no way you can hide behind anything when you dance.

This bodily expression also facilitated unique ways of connecting with others. Anne described: "Sometimes when we're all dancing together, and the music is perfect… it just feels that we're all on this same road, the same journey for something, and it feels so personal, even though we haven't said one word." And Violet shared this anecdote:

> My Mum came to our show, and she doesn't really like understand why I love dance so much…so, I just decided I would throw myself into it, just 120 per cent…and I danced so hard and put so much into it, I was actually crying on stage…and afterwards my Mum gave me a big hug and said 'Wow, I think I get it now.'

These quotes revealed how dancers created relationships and shared experiences with those around them in non-verbal ways and without articulating defined emotions. Through dance they were able to express aspects of their selves that shaped their relationships with other dancers and family members in inarticulable ways. This ability to express, although difficult to put into words, was important to the dancers.

The teacher also emphasized the experience of connecting and relating to others through the dancing body. As she observed the dancers performing their exercises in the centre and at the *barre*, she often reminded them to "perform." She often repeated: "Girls, dance with feeling, share yourself; give a piece of yourself to the audience." Her cue suggested that the dancing body has a capacity for connection and relating that is not reliant on words or verbal language, and that this capacity is celebrated and fostered through dance. Indeed, it is this very aspect of non-verbal expression that my participants described enjoying.

6.8 Conclusion

Given the dancers' and my own struggle to articulate and understand the expressive body more clearly and coherently, I am left to propose that perhaps we do not have words or language that is spacious enough to accommodate this bodily force, this bodily capacity for expression and connection. The kinaesthetic tension and seeming contradiction of the very physical, energetic practices required in dance (reflected in such cues given by the dance teacher as "push down through your supporting leg and send your other leg up") may in some way create spaces and ways of being that I call 'in between.' This concept of being 'in

176

between' manifests in physical practices, bodily movement, and even the girls' subjectivities (selves). When dancing, the girls could exist 'in between' emotions. The physical complexity of dance may act to quiet the social complexity of being an adolescent girl in contemporary society. Perhaps in this particular socio-political and historic moment, the discursive repertoire or vocabulary available to girls is limited and limiting. But perhaps in the studio they have access to a more satisfactory or productive repertoire of practices. At least for these white, middle class girls.

This chapter points to further ways of knowing the ballet body that may have potential to complicate the dominant understanding of the ballet bodily ideal as simply corporeal perfection, and of ballet as an oppressive practice. These multiple discourses hold potential to further disrupt the totalizing discourse of the impossibly thin and perfect aesthetics of the ballet body. As Foucault (1980) reminded us, discourses can be used as "a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (p. 101). He maintained that no discourse or practice is itself good or bad, but that its intentions, uses, and effects must be examined. In this study, the dancers acknowledged that the idealized ballet body was thin and difficult to obtain for most people. The extraordinariness of the idealized ballet body was an undeniable presence in the studio and in our conversations. However, participants generally did not perceive the need to attain this body to be particularly relevant to them. In conversations it became evident that they had other stories to tell that they perceived to be more interesting. While the status of the aesthetically precise and evocative body was not questioned as the normalized

and desirable body of the prima ballerina, it was not a body that the girls felt they needed to obtain. They were more interested in obtaining a skilled body. However, the skilled body was still defined along the lines of normalized ballet vocabulary and the ability to perform extreme movements. Yet, the discursive understanding of the ballet body as corporeal perfection existed alongside the low murmur of many other understandings. Participants spoke animatedly about the skilled body, thoughtfully about the careful body, and passionately about the expressive body. For my participants, the idealized, dominantly represented ballet body was negotiated and put into relief by their own moving bodies; bodies that were physically skilled, derived pleasure from physical accomplishment and mastery, defined health in multiple ways, and that had a profound capacity for expression and relating to others in nonverbal ways.

7.0 Multiple Spaces, Multiple Selves

In this chapter I draw upon Foucault's (1988b) understanding of how a self is actively constructed within power relations, and apply it in the context of the dance studio. As explained in chapter three, Foucault's (1997d) later work was concerned with the ways in which individuals understand, and act, upon the self. To support my overtures to these topics I turned to the work of Foucauldian feminist poststructuralist scholars who have also grappled with these themes in a contemporary context (i.e., Heyes, 2007; Lloyd, 1996; Markula, 2011; Probyn, 1993, 2004). These scholars have explored how the self is constituted through the ethical and aesthetic practices of self-stylization. Their works maintain the spirit of Foucault in their insistence both on the importance of problematizing the discourses that normalize and shape identities, and on the creative construction of the self as a fluid from. Lloyd (1996) noted that the task of actively constructing a self requires the cultivation of an "attitude" of thinking critically (p. 244).

This creative work on the self is not undertaken to arrive at or 'find' an essential inner core, but to establish a set of practices that inform the aesthetic stylization of the self (Heyes, 2007; Lloyd, 1996; Markula & Pringle, 2006). As discussed in my theory chapter, actively creating a self involves three important aspects. For the purpose of this dissertation I conceptualize these aspects as a series of steps, although I do not intend for these to be prescriptive. Rather, they provide an organizing framework for my analysis that maintains the sensibility of Foucault's theoretical positioning. First, an individual problematizes existing discourses and practices that shape one's identity and in so doing cultivates a

position of critical reflection. Second, one creates of new set of ethics in order to rethink the way one does things and to re-imagine the ways in which one can be (Probyn, 1993). Finally, one engages in aesthetic practices that reflect one's ethics in a process of the active self-stylization (Lloyd, 1996). I will now elaborate on how these processes guided my examination of the ways in which participants constructed a self through the dancing body and the construction of my own researching, dancing self.

7.1 Problematizing the Adolescent Feminine Self

It was important to first identify how my participants might problematize the discourses and practices they were exposed to as adolescent girls and as dancers. Foucauldian scholars have similarly interrogated how sport, dance, and fitness participants construct a self through physical practice (Green, 2004; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010). For example, Markula and Pringle (2006) examined whether mindful fitness instructors engaged in critical self-reflection about their instructor selves and practices in order to actively construct themselves as "more ethical users of power" (p. 172). The overarching goal of this ethnographic project was to determine whether these instructors expanded the limitations of the discursively constructed fitness identity by actively problematizing dominant fitness discourses and practices. As Markula and Pringle (2006) stated: "Any everyday fitness practice has the potential to become 'a practice of freedom' through which an individual, with increased self-understanding, can transform him/herself" (p. 164). After conducting interviews, Markula and Pringle (2006) concluded that the instructors were not aware of their

ability to use their power to problematize the dominant discourses that shape fitness identities. As a result, they did not practice differently. Although the instructors likely had more knowledge about fitness practices than the class participants, the authors suggested that they did not have knowledge about how to problematize the discourses, and therefore, did not engage in practices of freedom by building another type of instructor self.

In this example, the authors emphasized the importance of problematization and critical self-reflection. In my study, participants had a lesser capacity to use their power in the ballet studio than their instructor as a result of their age and developing knowledge of ballet technique. However, through interviews and fieldwork I gained insight into how participants actively problematized some aspects of their adolescent feminine and dancing identities.

Participants explained how dance fits into the larger context of their lives. As adolescent girls, they clearly grappled with complex subjectivities, and negotiated multiple expectations of how to be "the right kind of girl" (Sophia). As Lily put it, it's difficult to be "…the smart girl, the pretty girl, the good student, the good daughter…but also the cool girl but not a bad or slutty girl." In this powerful conversation I was reminded of the complicated social environment in which my participants lived. The intricate fabric of their daily lives, which involved complex school, family, and social settings, formed the backdrop against which their experiences in the studio were set. Participants noted that they could express and conduct themselves differently in the dance studio in ways not available in other areas of their lives. Chloe reflected:

You know at school people know I dance but they don't really get it, and

[at school] I get sucked into wanting to look good…you know, for guys or

whatever…. And you know, being pretty, being skinny is important.

…and I feel like, I dunno, I feel like a lot of girls just think they need to

look good to be popular and looking hot is super important. But… when I

come to dance I don't have to think about being 'pretty,' I just have to

think about dancing, and it's fun. It's about being strong and flexible

and…graceful and being able to do the moves well…but not about being,

well, pretty or popular or whatever. I actually like that…when I dance I

don't worry so much about all the other stuff.

In this quote Chloe challenged the dominant ideals of desirable femininity that

were salient in her social context (e.g., 'pretty,' 'hot,' 'skinny'). She

acknowledged her own desire to comply with this these criteria, but

simultaneously pointed to ways in which they were limiting. In other words, she

thought critically about the need to be 'pretty' and 'popular' as an adolescent girl

in her school context. Similarly, Sophia elaborated on the ways in which the

school setting shaped her adolescent girl self in this powerful anecdote:

I have a business class a couple of days a week and to get there I have to

walk through what we call 'Jock Hall,' you know where all the popular

guys, the jocks hang out. And…I don't even know why I do this… but I

always go into the bathroom before I walk down it to like, make sure I

look ok, you know, fix my hair, or whatever. And, I don't…I don't even

know why I do it… it doesn't feel good… it's almost like creepy…but it's

like I'm supposed to want the guys to look at me so I have to look

hot…and then I kind of want them to but I don't really… I dunno, it's

weird. Every time I walk down that hall it's weird.

Sophia described an awareness of being looked at through a particular social lens,

one that decided whether she is 'hot' according to the young men who are looking

at her. This walk down 'jock hall' prompted Sophia to critically reflect both on

her experience of being looked at and her own response to the perceived

expectations that she 'look hot.' She described the experience as 'creepy,' but also

as confusing. She acknowledged that she 'didn't know why' she checked her

reflection in the mirror beforehand despite her feelings of discomfort. Here, I

argue that such an experience hints at the sexualization of Sophia's adolescent self

and reveals how deeply invested she is by the discursive 'norms' that shape her

adolescent girl experiences. However, although she is invested in this experience

in complicated ways, she still thinks critically and identifies something

problematic about it.

As noted in the previous chapter, participants repeatedly noted how dance

provided a vehicle for self-expression (Ella, Sophia, Rachel, Cassie, Violet, Lily).

In these discussions, participants reflected on their limited capacity to express

themselves verbally and in other areas of their lives outside of the dance studio.

Cassie explained:

I can express things when I'm dancing that I can't express any other

way…Sometimes you just can't… can't find the words….even if I could,

let's say I'm mad at someone or something, it's easier to show that …well

it's not always easy to express how you feel because people might get

upset…or it's just not cool to do that, but through dance I can express

whatever I want…I always feel better after I dance.

When asked why it was easier to express some things through dance than in 'real

life' Cassie pondered for a moment and articulated: "I think it's because…people

sort of expect me to be a certain way, like at school, or even my parents and

sometimes even my friends…but when I dance I can be however I want and

express how I really feel." In this conversation Cassie alluded to social

expectations she experienced as an adolescent girl and how they defined the range

of acceptable practices and means of expression available to her. Through the

physical practice of ballet she was able to expand, albeit slightly, these limits she

experienced on her adolescent girl self. For example, ballet enabled Cassie to

express herself in ways that did not require verbal articulation and were not

subjected to discursive understandings of 'acceptable' responses and feelings.

These findings resonated with other dance research literature that has

previously described dance as a form artistic expression, and as a means through

which one can express one's true self (Bond & Stinson, 2000; Gray & Kunkel,

2001; Hefferon & Ollin, 2007; Pickard, 2012; Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones, & van

Dyke, 1990). The girls' passionate descriptions of this aspect of dance also

resonated with me; I too have experienced (and still do) similar powerful

moments of expression through dance. However, I grappled with understanding

dance as a form of self-expression in relation to my Foucauldian framework.

Foucault (1972) rejected the notion of a fixed, inner self and maintained instead

that our subjectivities, attitudes, and desires are constituted through discourse and discursive practices. Yet, my participants alluded to something that resembled an 'inner self' in their anecdotes.

Thinking through this, I revisited my theoretical framework and the works of Foucauldian feminist scholars. They, like Foucault, uniformly challenged the existence of a fixed, essential core self. Probyn (1993) argued that when considering the self through a Foucauldian lens, "…no single state of being is offered; states of being are always in tension with the practices of being…a self [is] produced in the articulation of problematization and practice (Probyn, 1993, p.11). This process of problematization requires the careful examination of "the techniques through which we are made into the kinds of persons we believe ourselves always to have been" (Heyes, 2007, p. 9). Therefore, although my participants did not challenge the notion of an inner self, I suggest that the dance studio created conditions in which my participants could imagine being otherwise than 'the kind of persons' they were expected to be in other social spaces. The dance studio and the relationships they formed there opened up their "field of possible action" (Foucault, 1982, p. 221), and consequently opened up the different possibilities for being an adolescent girl. As Lily said: "When I dance it's all about me exploring who I am …and expressing myself in that movement." In this quote Lily described the exploration of a self that was fluid and changeable from moment to moment, not necessarily the 'finding' or revealing of a self that was always there.

7.2 A New Ethics for Adolescent Girls

After one has problematized the discourses that shape one's identity, one must think of how she would like to be and how it is possible to be otherwise (Markula, 2011). This process refers to the creation of a new ethics. As discussed above, my participants problematized aspects of their dancing, adolescent girl selves and in so doing pointed to different ways of doing things. For example, participants challenged the dominant understandings of ballet as a practice that celebrates the exceedingly thin feminine bodily ideal and described their own successful, pleasurable experiences of ballet that were unrelated to their bodily appearance. Therefore, in small ways they redefined what it meant to be a 'dancer' and created a new ethics for their dancing selves.

In the sporting context, Pringle and Hickey (2010) interviewed rugby players who problematized aspects of their sporting identity to examine how male sport enthusiasts negotiated their involvement in sport. The participants in this Foucauldian study had actively identified aspects of hyper masculine sporting performances (i.e., violence, misogyny) as problematic and had engaged in personal reflection about how they could still participate in the rugby despite these unpalatable practices. The authors illustrated how the players engaged in the technologies of the self by actively reflecting on the discourses that shaped the world of rugby and their own masculine identities. Importantly, the solution was not to wholly reject the sport of rugby, which the men enjoyed, but to examine and critically reflect upon the codes of behavior that define rugby. Practicing this critical reflection about the problematic aspects of rugby allowed participants to

186

re-establish a relationship to themselves as rugby players. Or in other words, this critical reflection prompted the creation of a new ethics. These rugby players did not need to adhere to a fixed masculine identity but could actively create an identity through their expanded understandings of rugby and masculinity. By actively problematizing the existing discourses and discursive practices, other possibilities for constructing a rugby-playing self emerged.

Similarly, my participants demonstrated self-reflexivity in the ways they negotiated dominant perceptions of the ballet body and their own ability to be skilled, proficient dancers. Many hesitantly acknowledged that they, indeed, wished they could obtain the ideal dancing body. However, they also rejected it as the defining feature of being a ballet dancer. Sophia admitted: "Yeah of course I would love to have a ballerina body, you know, super tiny everywhere and really long legs, that would be great… but what would really change if I did?" Violet added: "Everyone thinks ballet dancers are super skinny…and in the back of my mind I sometimes wish I was 10 pounds lighter, I can't pretend that it doesn't cross my mind…but, it doesn't stop me from dancing and I don't think it's what we all focus on…"

Both Violet and Sophia described their awareness of the social perceptions about ballet bodies. Similarly, Pickard (2007, 2013) reported that young dancers were aware of and able to articulate the demand for corporeal perfection that ballet placed on the body. However, Pickard describes her participants as accepting these discourses, whereas my participants engaged with these understandings in slightly more complex ways. While they reluctantly

187

acknowledged that the dominant image of the ballerina is one of exceeding slenderness, they were also adamant that being a ballet dancer was not *just* about being thin. They created an alternative ethics that accommodated a wider range of bodies and focused on what their dancing bodies could do. Lily passionately insisted:

> You know, I hate when people just think that ballet's about skinny girls in tutus…it totally misses how hard ballet is, how strong we are, and how many good things ballet teaches us…I mean ballet is where I learned to be comfortable in my body and it's how express myself, so I hate to say that there is pressure to be thin because that's not, that's not really what it's all about.

> Therefore, like Pringle and Hickey's (2010) adult male participants, these adolescent girls were not unaware or entirely uncritical of the discursive understandings of ballet. They thought creatively about how they might be a dancer differently than what dominant discourses suggested. Participants explained that they did not want to be 'skinny,' but rather they valued being expressive, skilled, and strong. They also valued developing close friendships with the other dancers. Therefore, they created a new ethics that emphasized dance as a means to develop good technique, strong, skilled, expressive movement, and close friendships and relationships.

As illustrated above, the dance studio provided a space in which they could think themselves differently. As Ella noted: "I don't have to worry about keeping everyone else happy or doing the right thing when I'm in the dance

studio…I just have to think about dancing." In this quote Ella revealed an ethics created through dance which challenged the idea that she had to 'do the right thing' all the time. Instead of meeting others expectations, Ella wanted to focus on becoming a skilled dancer. Taking dance lessons and spending ample amounts of time in the dance studio enabled her to practice these ethics in the studio context.

Dancers also created an ethics for their dancing selves by spending time in a predominantly female environment and less time in social spaces where they were sexualized or felt pressure around the topic of boys. As Sophia explained earlier in her powerful example of walking down 'Jock Hall,' she experienced her adolescent female self differently through ballet and in the dance studio than when she was at school or in other social settings. Ballet allowed her to know and understand herself in ways that exceeded being simply 'skinny' or 'hot' or as sexually desirable. Therefore, she created an ethics through the practice of ballet that allowed her to engage in expressive but non-sexualized ways of moving. In the dance studio, her body was assessed according to how it moved, not how closely it resembled the ideal of desirable heterosexual femininity. Consequently, through dance Chloe created different possibilities for how she is able to know herself as an adolescent girl. She created a new ethics for her dancing, feminine self.

7.3 Towards the Aesthetic Practices of the Dancing Self

My findings suggest that it is through moving body and the *doing* of dance that girls are able to create more fluid and capacious understandings of the self. Importantly, the dance studio and the practice of dance afforded space and

opportunity for dancers to be physical in non-sexualized ways. As an observer, this aspect of the studio was striking. The dancers could move their bodies in forceful ways, be clad in very little, and not be subject to a sexual gaze. This may be one of the dance studio's most valuable contributions. There are few if any other social spaces where girls' passionate, expressive bodily experiences matter, can be safely expressed, or are not subsumed by a consumer culture saturated with sexualized images of young female bodies. Ballet provided a small space in which girls understood their bodies and selves in ways that exceeded that of the corporeal perfect ballet body and sexually desirable femininity. Ballet also provided participants a means to actively choose and participate in activities they enjoyed. Cassie reflected: "Well, I can either go to the mall with friends from school and you know, hang out, chase boys or whatever…or I can come here and dance which makes me feel good…and like [I'm] accomplishing something, and it's much more fun than hanging out at the mall." I suggest that by actively choosing ballet over other activities Cassie was actively negotiating multiple feminine identities and constructing a self within the power relations she was situated within.

Dancing in this space was then an aesthetic practice as it was the manifestation of the ethics girls created. Although they problematized both the adolescent girl and dancing identities, they did not seek to construct a self in opposition to these ideals, rather they engaged in practices that built a skilled, expressive body, that alleviated them (even if briefly) from social spaces in which

their bodies were sexualized, and built close friendships and relationships to each other. These are examples of aesthetic practices.

The physical practice of dance allowed for more capacious understandings of their adolescent feminine selves that exceeded the categorically defined 'good girl,' 'good student,' and 'popular girl.' Through dance they could more easily exist in the spaces 'in-between' categorical understandings of adolescent girlhood and express feelings or states of being that fell 'in-between' named emotions.

7.4 Multiple Spaces, Multiple Selves

Thus far in this chapter I have demonstrated how my participants critically reflected upon dance and their adolescent girl existence, and how they actively constructed new ethics and aesthetic practices of the self. Their stories resonated with my own memories and experiences, as dance was profoundly important to me as a young adolescent girl. I too felt that the dance studio afforded me with a certain space *just to be*. Now, as an adult, feminist poststructuralist researcher immersed in a dance setting, these memories often surface. At times they bump stubbornly against existing dance critiques. For, the rich, nuanced, and at times pleasurable dance experiences shared by my participants are often overlooked in the literature. As a result I experienced a pronounced 'epistemological tear' at the outset of this research. My ambitions as a feminist researcher seemed irreconcilable with my own pleasurable experiences of dance and I explicitly grappled with my relationship to my own researching self.

Rekindled memories and the affective longings of my younger, dancing self were ignited as I delved into ballet spaces and danced with ballet bodies. These longings unexpectedly (but forcefully) brought my own subjectivity into focus and promoted me to actively negotiate what I describe as the 'multiple selves' that came to bear on this project, particularly my dancing and researching selves. I now turn to an examination of the ways in which I actively constructed my researching self through the process of problematization, creation of ethics, and aesthetic practices of the self.

7.5 Problematizing the Researching Self

As Foucault (1976,1988b) would maintain, I have been and continue to be constituted as a dancer, a (conventionally feminine) white woman, a graduate student, and a feminist scholar according to various discursive understandings and practices. Additionally, like my participants, I have been and am always disciplined through technologies of power as they operate on and through my body in the different social spaces I inhabit. Therefore, the very power/knowledge nexus this project interrogated has contributed to the production of my own researching and dancing selves. Yet these selves often conflicted over the course of this project, leaving me questioning my research practices and increasingly aware of the conditions of my own subjectivity.

Therefore, to further understand and illustrate the relationship between power, knowledge, and self, I include my own biographical and self-constitutive experiences. I follow the lead of feminist scholars (Heyes, 2007; Markula, 2011; McWhorter, 1999; Probyn, 1993, 2000, 2004) who have drawn upon their own

experiences to examine the construction of the self through a Foucauldian lens. Probyn (1993) noted that the use of experience can allow us to understand "the construction of the self as a practice and as a speaking position" (p. 24). She also reflected that "there is no line of demarcation between an academic self and a personal one" (p. 102). Therefore, I interrogate my experiences not to arrive at, or share some truth about my self, but rather to facilitate critical reflection on the production of myself as an ethical researcher.

Throughout this project I asked myself what limitations and possibilities did I face as a dancer and researcher? What could I know about dance and what could I know about theory, methods, and 'doing research' that could allow me to negotiate these limitations and actively produce myself as a (researching dancing) subject? How could I expand my freedom within the discursive formations and power relations in which I was embedded? Markula (2011) argued that discourses and power relations can be used by the individual to "transform codes and dominance" (p. 65). This does not mean that one strives to escape power relations, but that rather that one bends them so that one can "be recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge" (Delezue, 1988, p. 86 cited in Markula, 2011, p. 65). This bending enables "the relation to oneself" to be "continually reborn" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 86, cited in Markula, 2011, p. 65). I will now outline how I engaged in problematization, ethical practice, and aesthetic self-stylization to rethink my relation to my researching and dancing selves.

7.5.1 Problematizing theory.

At times I feel like a 'reluctant Foucauldian.' I cannot shake the feeling

that what I'm studying is predictable; one only has to read Foucault's

chapter "Docile Bodies" to conclude that ballet class is a textbook

example of the techniques of discipline. Of course ballet class disciplines

bodies!! And ballet bodies are *disciplined bodies! That seems indisputable;*

in fact producing a disciplined and skilled body is arguably the point of

ballet training. Where does this leave me? Why am I embarking upon such

a project? On one hand, it seems embarrassingly trivial, and perhaps even

predictable. Is there anything to 'find'? On the other, I like ballet. I have

been and continue to be invested in it both physically and emotionally. If

this study leads me to conclude that ballet class is indeed disciplinary,

what does that mean? Do we then conclude that ballet is bad? What are

the implications? Whom do these implications concern? Am I a 'bad'

feminist for liking ballet? Am I a 'bad' researcher for taking on such an

obvious project? How do I ethically navigate my own investments in

ballet, in this project, in feminist scholarship? I'm not sure of the answers.

But I'm clinging to one lifeline; I believe the spirit of my curiosity extends

beyond the predictable. My questions are not "are ballet bodies

disciplined?" or "how does ballet discipline bodies?" But rather, how

does the dancing body come to be known within power relations in the

dance studio? How does this moving, dancing body shape the way girls

who dance understand themselves in the world? It is the moving body I

hope to access. It is the moving body that I am invested in... Can Foucault

help me do this?

This journal excerpt reveals moments of personal, theoretical, and practical dissonance I experienced throughout this project. In a study concerned with the moving body and its energetic capacity, I struggled to find the theoretical tools needed to adequately describe and analyze it. Specifically, I struggled to sufficiently grasp and articulate the body's cultural and material complexity without diminishing or quieting its vitality. It was the very ephemeral quality of the moving body I longed to convey in my writing. It was its very capacity to exceed categorization I wished to harness to prompt new lines and spaces of inquiry. But it was also these qualities of the moving body that exceeded the knowledges available to me. I struggled to find space in Foucault's (1976) analysis of disciplinary power that accommodated the vitality of the material body in which I was so interested and invested. Consequently, I spent months feeling at odds, even paralyzed, "caught between high emotion and a theoretical high ground" (Probyn, 2004, p. 29).

With these reservations pressing upon me, I reflected upon my theoretical decisions. There was no reason I had to use Foucault. It was not a requirement of my faculty, my program, or my supervisor. There were other rich and comprehensive theoretical approaches that focused on the body. During my PhD I had taken a yearlong course in phenomenology taught my Max van Manen, a prominent scholar of phenomenology and pedagogy. Phenomenology's insistence that we perceive and come to know the world through our body (Merleau-Ponty,

1962/2002) resonated with me and with the goals of this study. So too did its focus on evocative and stylized writing as a means to illuminate the richness of experience (van Manen, 1990, 2002). Therefore, I engaged in multiple conversations with my supervisor and peers and explored the possibilities of conducting a study from a phenomenological perspective. I considered how it helped me answer my questions, and how it might differ from or expand upon a poststructuralist project. Phenomenology's focus on the body and experience presented a viable means to access girls' embodied dance experiences. It would also afford rich description of bodily experiences, in which I was interested. Therefore, I spent some time reflecting on what a phenomenological study of dance might look like. While I pondered this option, I also continued my conversations with my supervisor and my peers about Foucault. I read and re-read Foucault and questioned the utility of his theoretical axis to my project. I sought to understand the breadth of his work instead of focusing solely on disciplinary power, which has been used previously in dance studies (Green, 1999, 2001; Ritenburg, 2010). As I sat in this space of uncertainty, I became increasingly interested in Foucault's theoretical axis of power/knowledge/self and how it provided an analytical tool through which I could explore how girls come to understand their ballet bodies. I understood that Foucault could help me extend a phenomenological framework and examine more closely how girls' dance experiences might be constituted within a complex social environment. In particular, Foucault's assertion that meaning is not fixed but produced through power relations and discursive practice could allow me to exceed rich description

of girls' experiences and apply a political analysis. This framework also enabled me to ask how girls actively construct a dancing self, rather than 'what is a dancing self?' and 'how does one find it?' Finally, Foucault offered a deeply situated and contextual approach to examining experience that would not reveal universal truths about the dancing self but rather the processes through which it is constructed. Therefore, his theoretical framework presented itself as the most useful for my question, but I was aware of potential limitations and did not assume my project would fit neatly inside of it.

This uncertainty about Foucault's utility in relationship to my research question(s), prompted me to actively reflect upon my theoretical choice and reasoning. I thought more critically about the concepts of Foucault' theory I was proposing to use, and the ways in which I might use them. In this way I problematized the discursive practices that have constituted me as a researcher. I did not want to blindly choose a theory because it was 'popular' or sophisticated. I wanted to be sure my theoretical framework could enhance by understanding of the topic at hand. In this case, a theoretical lens was needed that could help me not discover or identify ballet as a 'good' or 'bad' practice, but that could provide a deeply contextual analytical framework for understanding how ballet bodies and selves are produced and experienced by young girls who dance. As a result of these problematization processes, I confirmed that a Foucauldian theoretical framework would guide my study. However, my relationship with 'theory' was altered as I had reached a more nuanced understanding of how it could guide, but not predict, my analysis.

7.5.2 Problematizing method.

In addition to struggling with the utility and appropriate use of theory to guide my project, I encountered further tensions when I started to collect data through participant observations and fieldwork and faced the material reality of my researching body in the dance studio. At once perfectly at ease in this space, (as a young adolescent the dance studio was the only place *I knew how to be)* my researching body was now a bewildering hindrance.

> *I sat awkwardly in my chair at the front of the studio, trying to take notes as discreetly as possible. I was painfully aware of my conspicuous black notebook and pen. Their very presence seemed to betray me; a material exclamation of the difference between the dancers and me, between researched and researcher. These items also felt terribly inadequate. In a moment I knew I could not capture in words what I would see in the studio. Yet I needed to write something, I needed to* find *something. I closed the book and tucked it behind me. I wanted nothing to do with it. It relegated me to the role of 'observer' and 'researcher' when what I really wanted in that moment was to be a 'dancer.' I remained stiffly in my chair as the dancers inhabited the studio space with ease. I felt inelegant and clumsy. I didn't what to do with myself. I didn't know where to put my researching body.*

The methodological tools cultivated through coursework and extensive reading as a graduate student provided me with a detailed, systematic approach to collecting data. However, when these research practices were translated from the

pages of my proposal into the dance studio setting I encountered unanticipated moments of practical and personal fissure. My dancing and researcher selves (and bodies) collided. At one time a place of solace, the dance studio was now the site of confusion. I felt awkward and displaced, my researching body felt cumbersome and clunky.

My researching self possessed the capacity to perform the same ballet technique as my participants. I even recognized many of the exercises they performed at the *barre*. Yet the purpose of my physical presence in the studio did not necessitate this kind of movement or practice. My bodily knowledge of ballet technique was not accommodated in my proposed methodology. Instead, the research practices I proposed reflected the effects of academic discourses and disciplinary techniques that have produced me as a researcher; taking good field notes, making theoretically informed observations, scheduling my time so that I could be in the studio often. Instead of being in the studio to 'do,' I was now in the studio to 'find.' As a researcher I had to *find* something through the methods I had designed. However, my plan and these assumptions shattered spectacularly when I stepped into the studio.

> *I sit in my chair at the front of the studio and observe the dancers. As I watch, I realize I don't care about 'finding' anything in particular. Finding implies looking for or searching for something and I don't want to 'search' for anything. I just want to watch. I'm not interested in theorizing why and how ballet might be disciplinary, docile body making or 'bad.' In fact the thought of critiquing ballet feels tired. I have a sense that I'm*

expected to critique it, but this narrows the possibilities for how I can

interpret and analyze what I'm seeing. What if I don't critique? What if I

don't see anything to critique? What if I don't want to critique? As a

researcher am I allowed to want? Am I allowed to theorize about how and

why ballet might be good? Because it looks like it feels good. And my own

memories and physical history remind me that indeed ballet can be

pleasurable.

> *As I continue to sit in my chair and observe the class, a persistent,*
> *physical longing distracts me. I just want to dance. I don't want to sit here*
> *and think. I want to dance. As the dancers perform familiar exercises, I*
> *anticipate their movements and perform the exercises alongside them in*
> *my mind. My muscles even engage and feel activated, as though they are*
> *waiting for the chance to move at any moment. It is all I can do to not leap*
> *out of my chair and dance.*

What was not written into my methods section was how my body in the dance

studio would be affected by, and affect, the other dancing bodies. I did not

anticipate the powerful bodily response elicited by merely being in the studio. My

researching self was agitated and disrupted by the memories and longings of my

dancing self. With the goal of being a reflexive yet rigorous and sound researcher,

I attempted to keep my own biography and memories separate from the project so

as not to sully it with subjectivity (Probyn, 2004). Yet, this approach only

succeeded in distancing me from the project and diminishing its vitality. The

overall result was a palpable sense of feeling epistemologically and practically

'lost' (Lather, 1999). I had terrifyingly come up against the limits of what I could know. I did not know *what to do* as a researcher. I became quite literally, stuck. The project, and my personal investment in it had become so messy that I could not see a clear or 'correct' way forward within the discursive practices available to my researching self.

7.6 Problematizing Dance and the Dancing Body/Self

During participant observations, interviews, and analysis, the multiple knowledges embodied by my dancing and researching selves came to bear on this project in productive but complex ways. For example, as a graduate student I had studied social theory and been exposed to feminist poststructuralist writers. I had also spent extensive amounts of time reading the works of Foucault and dancing with his theory. As a result, I had access to specific knowledges through which I could make sense of and analyze ballet, the ballet body, and most importantly, the ballet practices taking place in the ballet studio. However, my history as a dancer also equipped me with extensive theoretical, experiential, and bodily knowledge about ballet technique, training, and performance.

Consequently, these knowledges had to be negotiated. The knowledge I had acquired through years of ballet training allowed me to assess my participants' technique, and to pinpoint in an instant who possessed the 'ballet body' and who did not. Unintentionally, these were among the first things I noticed as my dancers took their positions at the *barre*. I immediately took in the range of body shapes and sizes in the class and recognized that two of the dancers' bodies closely complied with the idealized ballet body. I was also able to

quickly identify the technically strongest dancers in the class because of my own dance history and accumulated knowledge about ballet technique. These observations were followed by guilt. I was more deeply invested by the power relations of the ballet world and by dominant understandings of the ballet body than I realized. As a feminist scholar I tried to actively reject these discursive understandings, yet in this moment I realized how deeply power invests.

This realization animated the very theoretical premise of this dissertation, that is, that a self is always constituted within power relations (Foucault, 1988b). Identities, experiences, and practices are always understood within the nexus of power and knowledge. This means that as a feminist researcher and a dancer, I cannot step outside of the power relations that produce knowledges about dance and dancing bodies, particularly as they invest my own dancing and researching self.

I chatted somewhat shyly with the other dancers in the change room as I attempted to work my mid- length hair into a neat bun. I was dressed in the same black body suit and pale pink tights as my participants and keenly aware this was my first time in this space. The smell, a not unpleasant but distinct combination of the residue of sickly sweet hairspray and well-worn leather ballet slippers, was familiar. However the experience of occupying this space as a 'researcher' and a 'dancer' was not.

I continued to wrestle with my hair and lamented aloud that I was out of practice. One of the dancers sweetly offered to help and soon a

cluster of dancers came to my rescue, deftly arranging my hair using the pile of bobby pins I had come prepared with. The physical contact broke the ice and we collectively giggled and rolled our eyes at this age-old ballet protocol; in no other genre of dance class do teachers expect such perfect coiffeur. But in ballet, it was part of the entire grooming experience. Once my hair was up, in unspoken agreement, the dancers exited the change room and made their way to the studio. I followed.

In the studio, I tried to quell my nervousness. Did I look ridiculous in a bodysuit? I furtively checked my reflection in the mirror with a mixture of curiosity and dread. I wanted to see a thin reflection. But wanting this made me feel guilty. Shouldn't I be 'over' worrying about my body? And then I worried about my performance. Could my body still perform technique proficiently? Would the girls notice my less-than-enviable extension?

Despite my nervousness, I was also exhilarated. My body thrummed with a fluttery lightness and an exquisite ache danced in my chest. At last, I knew where to put my body. At last I knew how to be.

Inhabiting the studio as a dancer rather than a researcher animated the effects of the power/knowledge nexus in ways not perceived through observation. As a dancer I *felt* the ways in which discursive understandings of the ballet body (skilled, expressive, and aesthetically precise) manifested in ballet practices. My body was subject to the same expert gaze of the instructor as my participants and rendered similarly visible in my tights and bodysuit. Concepts such as discipline,

rank, and surveillance became corporeal and weighty rather than textual and abstract. For example, 'discipline does enable *and* constrain' I realized as I performed an exercise in front of the mirror. As I watched myself I simultaneously noticed and cheered at my strong technique, but lamented my poor extension. Years of disciplinary practice enabled proficient technical ability. It also facilitated the joyful experience of dancing in the ballet studio with my participants. But subjection to the dominant understandings of the ballet body prompted me to criticize my diminished extension and to quickly, almost automatically, identify where my body deviated from the ideal ballet body. In this way power and discourse had manifested in my attitudes, beliefs, and relation to my own self.

This revelation propelled me to a terrifying place of not knowing. How was I to move forward without reifying any potentially dangerous or harmful ideas about dancing bodies? By making these observations about the dancers' bodies and my own body was I simply reproducing potentially dangerous ideas? If I recognized the idealized ballet body as problematic, why did I still desire it? If discursive understandings about the idealized ballet body are so salient can we ever hope for change? If so, what is my role in this? To answer the questions that resulted from critical reflection, I needed to build new codes and new ethics to guide my practice. I now describe the problematization of my researching and dancing selves prompted the creation of a situated ethics.

7.7 Creating New Ethics for the Researching Self

By troubling the codes that guided my researching and dancing practices, I was suddenly in need of new ones. Without a set of ethics to guide me, I did not know how to proceed. To move beyond the point of 'stuckness' I again turned to literature. Probyn (2000) and Lather (1999) among other feminist scholars (Davis, 2002) have articulated the value of the 'ability of not knowing' in feminist methodology. To exceed categorical thinking and theoretical dogmatism, Probyn (2000) argued that we must embrace "a challenge to learn, not to *know"* (p. 54). Indeed, I found myself in a state of not knowing. I did not know which direction to go in, as my researching and dancing selves pulled so strongly in seeming opposition to render me still. However, Lather (1999) has argued eloquently for the value of being lost in feminist projects. She suggested that we celebrate "This…disorientation where openness and unknowingness are part of the process, a self-reflexive, non-dogmatic feminism that relishes conflicting interpretations without domesticating them…" (p. 5). Reflecting on her writing prompted me to engage more creatively with the strange 'stuck' space I found myself in. Over time, the frightening sense of not knowing eased and gave way to a sense of expanded possibilities. Perhaps, I slowly realized, 'not knowing' was actually a *particular way* of knowing and of orienting myself to my project. Perhaps the new codes I created for myself accepted this state of not knowing, and recognized it as productive.

This realization was consistent with my Foucauldian approach. Foucault's (1972) understanding of knowledge suggests that some knowledges become

dominant and hold gain the status of 'truth', obscuring marginal knowledges in the process. Therefore in not knowing, I simply inhabited a marginalized knowledge space that flattened the plane of possibility and expanded the intellectual landscape in which I worked. In embracing this space of not knowing I created a new ethics for my researching self, both in relationship to methods and theory.

The sense of not knowing or 'being lost' was prompted by the discord experienced between my dancing self and my researching self. The two presented seemingly contradictory investments; the messy, physical, and emotional investments of my dancing self threatened the clarity my researching self sought. Yet, it was when I pushed the feeling, 'messy' dancing self aside that I felt the most lost and disconnected from my project.

To find my way again, I turned to the work of feminist scholars who have grappled with similar themes. In Probyn's (2004) exploration of teaching bodies in the classroom, she described what she calls the "goose bump effect" as "that moment when a text sets off a frisson of feelings, remembrances, thoughts, and the bodily actions that accompany them" (p. 29). Reading these words I found myself nodding in eager agreement. There is something about the 'goose bump effect' that points us towards something important. However, I suggest that this same 'frisson' described can be elicited through practice as well as through text. The practices and affects of the researching body might set off 'feelings, remembrances, and thoughts' and turn our attention to more obscure, less tangible knowledges. In this study, the goose bump effect was elicited when I watched the

girls dance and my own corporeal memories were stirred. It was the "goose bump" effect" that both terrified and animated my researching self, yet consequently propelled me into a new space of knowing. Therefore, I revised the codes guiding my researching self to create an ethics of conducting research that accommodated the disruptive, productive, forceful quality of bodies that elicit goose bumps.

The creation of these ethics facilitated a sense of opening up of possibilities for my project and for me as a researcher. These ethics allowed for the experiences of the dancing body (my dancing body) to be considered alongside the more formal knowledges afforded through my theoretical framework. In Probyn's (2004) eloquent investigation of the ways in which concepts, ideas, and bodies come together in the classroom, she reminded us "that theories and ideas are about opening up new ways of seeing and understanding the rich complexities of the lived social" (p. 36).

7.8 Ethical Knowledges

As a dancer and a researcher, I also negotiated how the multiple knowledges that have shaped my multiple selves came to bear on this project. Markula and Pringle (2006) emphasized that the role of the intellectual (researcher) involves thinking about how to use one's knowledge and power ethically. As a researcher with extensive practical knowledge about dance, I thought about how this knowledge might inform my project in constructive ways without producing prescriptive ways of thinking or reifying what is 'familiar and accepted.' I wondered how might I ethically use the knowledge I had acquired through once being a dancer myself?

To answer this question, I considered my role and capacity in the studio. I was not teaching, so could not work towards more ethical teaching. I was not dancing with the participants (at this time), so I could not dance more ethically, although an example of that will be provided later. However, I could engage with my knowledge about ballet and what I gleaned from observations in an ethical manner. For example, although I recognized the 'idealized ballet body' I did not need to focus on its appearance in my research, nor did I need to write in length about it. Instead, I could purposefully attend to other discursive understandings and practices and expose them to exploration and examination. Furthermore, as I continued to think about how I could put my knowledge of dance into ethical practice I realized I could dance with the girls and subject myself to similar power relations in the studio space. This reflected an ethics that enabled me to analyze and understand the dance practices they engaged in from multiple perspectives and in multiple, material ways. This ethical practice allowed me to expand upon my observations and analysis from a 'researching' perspective and accommodate also the 'dancing' (bodily) perspective.

7.9 A New Dance Ethics

Indeed, dancing with the participants crystallized my understanding that a self is constituted within and through power relations. I was so invested by the very power relations that have constructed the idealized thin, flexible ballet body aesthetic that a part of me still desired this body for myself. As much as my researching self attempted to discursively reject this ideal, power invested me in ways that I could not and cannot 'escape.' I could, however, critically examine

these power relations and discursive understandings to reflect on how they have shaped me and to ultimately become less dependent on them (Markula & Pringle, 2006). For example, although impressive extension is discursively constructed as an important aesthetic aspect of ballet performance, as a recreational dancer there is no functional purpose for me to demonstrate extreme extension. In the field journal excerpt below, I share an example of how actively I created new ethical practices for myself as a dancer.

Tonight at the barre we did an advanced exercise called battement frappes, a movement performed on one leg that involves flexion and extension of the knee of the 'working' leg. The leg extends with some velocity to the front, side, and behind the body and the foot strikes the floor quickly before arriving at a full point. The movement is meant to be sharp, controlled, and precise. The teacher asked us to perform a second set on relevé, or on a rise (as though standing on tip toe). This increased the difficulty of the exercise immensely. As I attempted it on relevé, I felt my technique and body alignment deteriorating. My supporting leg was unstable and my movements felt sloppy; I didn't possess the strength needed to perform the exercise well on rise. In a swift moment I decided to perform the rest of the exercise on flat foot. This way I could execute the exercise strongly and with better technical proficiency, without risking injury. Around me the rest of the girls continued on rise, some wobbling slightly, others executing it perfectly.

In this example I negotiated the discursive understandings of the aesthetically 'correct' way to perform a specific ballet exercise. Executing this exercise on a demi-point contributed to the aesthetic of long, clean lines that

characterize ballet. However, the movement could still be performed on flat foot. In that particular context there was no purpose or need (beyond that of achieving a particular aesthetic) served by me performing it on demi-pointe. In fact continuing the exercise in this way placed me at risk for potential injury resulting from compromised technique. If I were a professional ballerina, the expectations of me to perform the *frapp*és on *relev*é would be linked to my professional role and I would be invested differently in the power relations. I would need to be able to demonstrate the particular aesthetic that professional ballet required. However, as an adult dancer who dances for recreation and skill development, there was no necessity to achieve or perform the 'correct' exercise. Consequently, I decided that the purpose for me to perform this exercise was to develop strength and to perform the exercise in a manner that diminished risk of injury. Therefore, this was an example of reflecting upon and problematizing the discourses and changing my practice. Critical reflection upon the discursive understandings that shape one's attitudes and desires can lead to a new ethics of practice.

7.10 Aesthetics of the Researching, Dancing Self

The concept of pleasure permeated my participants' descriptions and stories about dance and infused my own remembered and lived dance experiences. While the pleasurable aspect of dance evaded, or perhaps exceeded, my ability to write about adequately, it demanded space in this dissertation. However, the overwhelming majority of feminist dance scholarship describes ballet as so highly disciplinary that there is very little room in which to imagine it as a pleasurable practice. Worse yet, it almost seems suspect to find such a

disciplinary practice pleasurable and I have harboured feelings of guilt over my own enjoyment of both watching and performing dance. However, the field notes, observations, interviews, and dance experiences gathered in this study called for this contradictory space to be inhabited.

Therefore, I critically reflected on how, as a feminist poststructuralist researcher, I could accommodate this aspect of dance in my work. I asked 'what kind of researcher do I want to be?' and imagined how I might put that into practice. This reflection resulted in the creation of the aesthetic practices of my researching self. In turn, these aesthetic practices enabled me to examine ballet from a perspective of openness. I did not need to critique ballet in totalizing ways. Nor did I need to celebrate it uncritically. Instead, I could give space to multiple understandings and present them for further consideration and reflection to others in this field. As a poststructuralist researcher I could be curious about the seemingly contradictory aspects of ballet and be open to their potential meanings.

For example, although the dance studio is in many ways disciplinary and implicated in the creation of docile bodies, I agree with (and to some extent my data supports) Heyes (2007) who argued: "I see nothing in Foucault's work to suggest we are incapable of critical reflection on normalization, or of maneuvering ourselves into a different relation to some particular instantiation of docility" (p. 116). It is the second part of Heyes' statement that emerged in my fieldwork and dialogue with participants. The dance practices my participants engaged in did not produce them as (completely) docile bodies and the effects of disciplinary power were not predictable or linear or causational. In movement and

211

through discipline there existed the possibility to exceed; there existed the

possibility to create new space. Feminist scholar McWhorter (1999) addressed

this paradox in her description of the unexpected pleasure she took in learning

how to line dance: "Dance, of whatever kind, is a disciplined activity" (p. 171).

Yet discipline's effects were not totalizing. As McWhorter marveled at her

enjoyment she argued that: "Freedom is the expanse of possibility; as such, it is

not opposed to discipline at all" (p. 172).

Heyes (2007) also reminded us of this enticing, but potentially slippery,

understanding of discipline as a force that increases capacities. In her analysis of

women's experiences (including her own) with a well know weight-loss program

she noted:

> To understand dieting as enabling is to understand that we have reason to
>
> embrace the increases in capacities it permits without acceding to the
>
> intensification of disciplinary power it currently requires. (p. 64)

Similarly, contemplating the productive or enabling aspects of ballet required a

nuanced engagement with the concept of disciplinary power. It was through

movement that my dancers found some reprieve from the determinism of

disciplinary techniques and from the totality of the discourse of corporeal

perfection that defined the ballet body. However, the dancers' capacity for skillful

bodily movement and the subsequent exhilarating physical experiences were

made possible through techniques of discipline. In other words, it was the very

structure of dance movement (which was enabled through disciplinary power) that

pointed to these positive, creative experiences. Therefore, movement (and its

associated pleasures) and disciplinary power were in intimate relationship to each other.

Likewise, it is the disciplinary practices of being a graduate student that increased my capacities to critically reflect upon and theorize my research experiences, practices, and findings. By engaging in these critical reflections (what I consider a form a practice of the self) I was able to navigate theoretical and methodological spaces of tension and contradictions. This process pointed to new theoretical spaces of both uncertainty and possibility. Additionally, being flexible and creative in my methodological approach extended my relationship with my participants beyond that of researcher and researched, observer and observed. I created an aesthetic practice of the self that prompted me to dance with my participants and consciously blur the lines between researcher, participant, and dancer. In these ways I *responded* to the power relations that constituted me as a researcher and a dancer. Power relations did not oppress me, nor did I resist them, rather I actively reflected upon the field of possible actions available to me within them. This very act of reflection prompted recognition of increased possibilities for practice, such as dancing with my participants instead of merely observing them, performing an exercise on flat foot as opposed to *relevé*, and expanding my analysis to accommodate the profound and often messy physical and emotional experiences of my participants (and myself).

Consequently, it was through the bodily responses of my dancing self that my theoretical curiosity was renewed. Although I often felt physically bereft in the studio as well as epistemologically lost as a feminist researcher, the bodily

longing I experienced prompted that moment of 'frisson' and propelled me forward. It was this bodily response that re-infused the project with energy and demanded that I examine the tension between my researching and dancing selves. Therefore, the messy, physical life of the body prompted prolonged, difficult, but ultimately creative and perhaps more expanded analysis.

As articulated previously, the aesthetic practices of the self are the visible manifestations of the ethics one creates. Therefore, as an adult dancer and feminist researcher, I contemplated what ethical practice *looked like*. I actively reject the extremely thin ballet body, but that does not mean I need to create a body that opposes it to express my critique of it. To counter the image of idealized femininity that ballet body represents, I do not imagine a pre-defined 'better' body. Instead, I think how can the body be created in different ways and produce different meanings. I create my own aesthetic researching and dancing body as one that works to become technically proficient, a 'good mover,' expressive, and one that can do. My ethics as a dancer and a poststructuralist scholar manifest in a body produced to be technically proficient, expressive and that can do.

7.11 Conclusion

This dissertation prompted and required the aesthetic self-stylization of my researching and dancing selves. Like my participants, I worried and do worry about being the right kind of feminist, the right kind of scholar, the right kind of woman, and the right kind of dancer. Although I locate myself in the poststructuralist paradigm, the categorical understanding of self is seductive, and ubiquitous. Therefore, I argue that the creative fashioning of a self rests upon the

214

practice of problematization and a continuous orientation to questioning and

disrupting that which is taken for granted or perceived as inherent, or 'neutral'

(Foucault, 1987; Lloyd, 1996; Probyn, 1993). I further suggest that this practice

"opens up the possibility of a creative life" (Probyn, 1993, p. 102) and enables us

to think (and want to think) differently. As Foucault maintains: "[A]s soon as one

can no longer think things as one formerly thought of them, transformation

becomes both very urgent, very difficult, and quite possible" (cited in Lloyd,

1996, p. 155).

8.0 Conclusion

This dissertation sought to examine how adolescent female dancers construct a self through the dancing body within a commercial dance studio. To achieve this, I framed my study as a mapping project and engaged in an in-depth analysis of the commercial dance setting and the power relations and discursive practices that define it (Markula & Silk, 2011). Foucault's theoretical axis (power/knowledge/self) facilitated a nuanced examination of the ways in which subjectivity is shaped through bodily practice and allowed our attention to shift to the moving body and its capacities. Although the dancing bodies of my participants were subjected to disciplinary power, the body also prompted its own unpredictable, energetic effects in the space.

A case study methodology (Markula & Silk, 2011; Stake, 2005) provided the parameters of this study and data were collected through ethnographic research techniques including participant observations, field notes, interviews, and through my own physical participation in dance. These methods allowed me to interrogate the workings of disciplinary power and the ways in which my participants discursively understood their dancing. My own participation in the dance classes allowed me to understand how power and discourse operate on and through the dancing body in a more situated and animated way than mere observations afforded. Indeed, I discovered that in my quest to research and theorize the dancing body, my own researching body was compelled to dance. Thus, the politics of my researching body also necessitated examination.

8.1 Foucault at the *Barre*

The first analysis chapter examined the commercial dance studio and the ways in which disciplinary power circulates within this space and is mapped on to the dancers' bodies. This chapter analyzed the ballet studio and the structure of ballet class using Foucault's (1979) technologies of discipline. Specifically, I interrogated how dancers' bodies were controlled through the specific arrangement of time and space in the studio, and importantly, how bodies were managed through movement. Analysis revealed that the dance studio was designed so that dancers' bodies were continuously organized in ways that facilitated the efficient instruction and learning of ballet technique. Bodies were also arranged in space in ways that rendered them 'knowable' in particular ways. For example, each layer of space in the studio had a certain task assigned to it (waiting, changing, dancing) and bodies were organized according to age, gender, genre of dance, and skill level. Bodies were arranged to maximize visibility and the omnipotent presence of mirrors in the studio meant that dancers' bodies were constantly visible to dancers themselves, the teacher, and to each other.

Time was also utilized in strategic ways to ensure the most efficient use of space. Timetables regulated the overall ebb and flow of activity within the studio on a yearly, monthly, weekly, daily, and hourly schedule. The structure of each ballet class was further broken down into the specific division and use of time so that the entire repertoire of movement could be efficiently covered in ninety minutes. As dancers performed the required exercises, time further "penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power" (Foucault, 1979, p. 152).

The organization of time and space decided not only where the dancers' bodies were (allowed) to be in space, but also what activities were permissible and rewarded in that space. On one hand, the spatial organization of the studio facilitated the operation of disciplinary power through ongoing surveillance and by eliminating outside distractions. Yet on the other hand, this very spatial organization also enabled close and productive relationships with other dancers and the teacher. The enclosure provided an aspect of figurative 'safety' or respite that provided girls with the space to physically *be and do* in ways not feasible in other social spaces in their lives. Therefore, although the space was disciplinary, it also acted as a respite.

Finally, this chapter revealed that the accumulative effects of disciplinary power produced technically proficient dancing bodies that could perform intricate physical tasks and move with a graceful, evocative quality. In other words, as the disciplinary power intensified, so did the dancers' bodily skill. Through a Foucauldian lens, it can be concluded that anatomo-political power, which employs the technologies of discipline to regulate individual bodies into useful and obedient bodies, was exercised in the ballet studio. The specific exercises imposed by the syllabus for each grade level functioned as a form of anatomo-political power that normalized and legitimized certain aesthetic requirements (i.e., extreme flexibility) of ballet. However, I argue that the ballet bodies in this study were not rendered completely docile. The specific arrangement of time, space, and bodily practice in the studio was the very thing that enabled creativity and bodily expression, the development of new physical skills, and intimate

relationships for my participants. Therefore, discipline was not totalizing and my participants were not rendered completely unthinking or docile. In fact, they actively shaped the dance studio space through their own actions and practices and through the relationships they formed within it. Foucault stressed that disciplinary power makes bodies useful and obedient (Foucault, 1978). But it is important to question what purpose do these bodies serve? Are they politically obedient? Does ballet, simply because it utilizes these techniques and produces efficient bodies, necessarily produce bodies that are unthinking? I suggest that it does not. Rather, the context in which ballet is studied, performed, and understood becomes of utmost importance for further study. Additionally, it is important to ask what are the effects of the ballet body in practice? If the effects of the technologies of discipline are a highly skilled, efficient ballet body, what are the effects of this body when it performs the movements it has been trained to do? This, I argue, is where the potential lies for identifying fissures and fractures and lines of flight that alleviate disciplinary power as a totalizing form.

8.2 The Discursive Construction of Ballet Bodies

My second analysis chapter identified the discourses through which girls understood and came to know their dancing bodies in the commercial studio setting. Foucault (1988b) maintained that it is through the power/knowledge nexus that a self is produced. In other words, discourse (knowledge) both enables and limits the ways in which an individual understands his or her self. Therefore, understanding how a self is produced requires an examination of the discourses that circulate in one's socio-historical milieu. Because my overarching question

pertained to the dancing body, I sought to examine the discursive understandings my participants had constructed in relation to their own dancing bodies.

Existing dance scholarship from a Foucauldian perspective has emphasized the discursive understanding of the ballet body ideal as corporeally perfect and exceedingly thin (Green 1999, 2001; Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010; Ritenburg, 2010). This extraordinary body tends to dominate discussions of ballet so pervasively that it becomes difficult to imagine ballet as anything other than an oppressive physical practice. However, my dancers identified multiple discourses through which they understood their dancing bodies. During our conversations they described their dancing bodies as skilled, aware, careful, and expressive. The skilled body was closely related to the aesthetically perfect body; the physical movement involved in ballet training both created and required a body that moved in particular ways and demonstrated impressive flexibility, extension, and skill. Yet my participants' understandings of their ballet bodies were informed but not dominated by the exceedingly thin ideal. In fact they actively negotiated the dominant understanding that the ballet body was primarily an extremely thin body and emphasized instead the skill demonstrated by the dancing body (including their own). However, participants did not critique the skillful movement and physical capacities that were normalized and celebrated in the ballet discourse such as extreme extension and flexibility.

Importantly, the skilled dancing body was also linked to pleasure. As discussed in the first analysis chapter, learning ballet was often fulfilling and pleasurable for my participants. Acquiring the ability to perform ballet movement

with great proficiency resulted in my participants describing their bodies as skilled, expressive, and capable. These understandings revealed the body as an active and energetic force that has great capacity *to do.* This counters dominant understandings of the (represented) dancing body as an object to be passively read which emerges in much feminist dance scholarship. Finally, dancers described their bodies as aware and careful. These concepts have not emerged in dance or physical activity literature but may be important indicators of further areas of study and inquiry. Participants also touched upon physical fitness discourses and sometimes described dance as a practice that 'keeps them in shape.' Importantly, these conversations were very marginal overall and dance was not understood as a means of illness prevention or body shaping in the same way that physical activity often is.

While feminist dance scholarship has emphasized and critiqued the oppressive nature of the idealized ballet body, my study revealed other less dominant discourses that flourished in the dance studio and enabled a slightly more spacious understanding of the dancing body. My participants actively negotiated the discourses that informed their understanding of the ballet body and took pleasure in both the doing of ballet and in the knowledge and recognition of their physical skill. This is not to assert that the idealized, thin ballet body was not a noticeable presence in our conversations and in the studio. Indeed it haunted this project. Yet the understandings and experiences of the dancing body were not adequately captured nor conveyed through the discourse of corporeal perfection alone. My participants pointed to more capacious and productive understandings

of their dancing bodies and to the 'in between' spaces their dancing bodies allowed them to inhabit which were otherwise not accessible to them in other movement or social settings.

8.3 Troubling the Notion of a Singular Self

Finally, my third analysis chapter examined how my participants actively constructed a self within power relations and through discursive practices. Drawing on Foucault's concept of technologies of the self (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Foucault, 1988b), I sought to examine how the girls actively understood and created themselves within the power knowledge nexus. This chapter revealed the complex lives of adolescent girls. Over time it became apparent to me that the dance studio was inextricably connected to and understood in relation to the other important spaces (i.e., school, home, social settings), and these multiple spaces produced multiple selves. In conversations, my participants explained how there always existed parameters on their possible *ways of being* that were created by the discursive understandings of what it meant to be a middle-class, adolescent, conventionally feminine girl. Participants described awareness of discursive expectations about what it meant (and what it looked like) to be a good student, a popular girl, a good daughter, and a good dancer. The participants described feelings as though their bodies were read in particular ways in these spaces. These spaces also facilitated and necessitated multiple physical practices and performances that contributed to the ways in which the girls constructed a self. The ballet studio, although disciplinary and replete with its own bodily expectations, provided unexpected physical freedoms, fissures, and fractures in

these expectations. There was something about the studio space and their physical capacity in that space that allowed girls to be active initiators of their (physical/bodily) experiences and relationships in ways not available to them in other spaces.

In this chapter I also interrogated my own "multiple selves" and how my own constituted subjectivity came to bear on the project. As a former dancer and now a feminist scholar who also dances, I too have been produced within specific power relations and through particular discursive practices. The process of conducting this research prompted me to reflect upon these various 'selves' and to interrogate the research culture I currently inhabit and the practices it normalizes. I critically examined the utility and purpose of my theoretical approach. I altered my methodological plan so that I shifted from observing my participants to dancing with them. This gave way to what I interpret as theoretical vitality to my project as concepts that once seemed categorical and totalizing were recognized in more fleshed out means. This process allowed me to understand that discipline and capacity are inextricably linked (Heyes, 2007) and give way to unpredictable effects through the moving body.

8.4 Contribution to Literature

The primary contribution of this project is a nuanced understanding of the ways in which adolescent girls who dance in a dance studio experience and understand the dancing body, as well as insights into the productive, pleasurable aspects of ballet for this population. This project has shifted attention away from discussions about what the body looks like to what the body does, the effects of

223

its physical practices, and its energetic and relational capacity. The result is a more expansive understanding of ballet than those currently afforded in much of the existing dance and physical activity literature. Previous dance scholarship has focused primarily on the disciplinary aspects of ballet that are then deemed oppressive to dancers (de Bruin, Bakker, Oudejans, 2009; Green, 1999, 2001; Ritenburg, 2010). A recent exception is the work of Millar (2013) who examined the positive experiences of university-aged contemporary dancers from a phenomenological perspective. However, this approach fostered a clear division between positive and negative experiences and I did not base my study on this same division.

In general, dance, particularly ballet, is often excluded completely or framed as a disciplinary, feminizing activity by dance, physical activity, and sport sociology scholars. As a result, I argue that ballet seems to elicit critique from all angles. This critique acts to maintain ballet on the periphery of physical culture and leaves little space in which to wonder about the productive capacity of the body and to imagine the dancing body in ways that exceed categorical understandings such as disciplined and feminine. This study provides a compelling starting point from which I hope these imaginings can continue.

This study also contributes to the existing body of Foucauldian scholarship in sport sociology and dance education. My analysis revealed and emphasized the intricacy and at times contradictory aspects of Foucault's (1979) concepts of discipline and docility. He maintained that discipline is productive as well as constraining; yet the constraining aspects of discipline seem to be more easily

224

identifiable than the productive aspects. I found that disciplinary power enabled certain physical practices, which in themselves facilitated productive relationships, understandings of body and self, and spaces for expanding the feminine identity for adolescent girls. Therefore, the effects of disciplinary power were not predictable, nor linear. As Foucault maintained, power is relational and fluid. Therefore it does not oppress but rather, I argue, it is responded to. In the case of ballet, the dancing body *responds to* (is not oppressed by and does not 'resist') disciplinary power in multiple ways. Through responding, the relational nature of power is illuminated: disciplinary power and the body are in a complex relationship to each other. The effects are unpredictable, yet hold potential to both maintain and disrupt certain discursive understandings through force of the moving body. Therefore, I call for further research that privileges more nuanced readings of docility, discipline, and its effects on the moving body.

Additionally, findings from this study may be important for scholars studying girls' physical activity and health. The dance studio clearly facilitates physical activity but dance's status as an art form may buffer it from dominant discourses of physical activity as a means to prevent illness and to achieve a desirable fit feminine body. Instead, discourses related to the skilled body and expressive body were linked to girls' dance experiences. Expanding understandings of physical activity and the physically active body in other settings may be a productive exercise for scholars in this field.

Finally, I believe my study points to the utility of Foucault's ideas in the study of the moving body, but also to their limitation. I struggled at times to

225

imagine how Foucault's concepts helped me capture the fluidity and complexity of the relationships and experiences of my participants. Specifically, the body's capacity for expression, creating relationships, and facilitating exhilarating experiences were ideas that emerged in my study but were not adequately understood through Foucault's theoretical framework. I struggled to relate these seemingly positive aspects of dance with the effects of disciplinary power, which is often conceptualized as having negative, repressive effects. However, my own physical participation helped me realize the effects of disciplinary power in nuanced ways and challenged the limited understanding I held. What struck me was that the effects of disciplinary power are perhaps more unpredictable than usually imagined. Bodies subjected repeatedly and over time to the technologies of discipline employed in the dance studio were definitely produced as highly efficient and skilled. However, what occurred through and during the performance of dance practices was not determined or predicted by power relations. Neither were the relationships girls created with each other. Therefore, discipline is always in conversation with possibility and thus, there always exists a capacity for rupture and change.

Importantly, this study also reminds us of the complexity of adolescent girls' lives and the paucity of spaces in which non-sexualized, expressive physicality can be explored. This may be important to those in the area of physical activity and health trying to promote girls' engagement in physical endeavors. My participants experienced joy in the physical act of dance. In bodily movement they came to expand their understandings of the practices available to them as

adolescent female girls. They discussed the joy of movement and in developing skills, of the ability to express themselves through dance in ways not otherwise available to them, and of developing strong body awareness that positively impacted the way they experienced their bodies outside of the dance studio. These discussions differ from the discussions that dominate much of physical activity literature which emphasize movement as a means through which to obtain fitness, improved health status, and a healthy looking body. Expanding scholarly dialogue about the benefits of physical activity is an important and productive addition to research in this area. It may be particularly important to focus on movement settings such as dance studios to determine ways to promote and foster the positive aspects identified in this study. If we merely conclude that ballet is an oppressive practice we risk losing the very spaces that hold potential to facilitate positive physical experiences for girls. Although ballet presents both dangers and potentialities, it is the imperative of scholars of physical activity, health, sport sociology, dance, and physical cultural studies to foster the possibilities dance offers, and critique and diminish the dangers.

8.5 Moving Towards Reflexive Research Practice

In addition to contributing to the fields of and dance education and physical activity and health, my project builds upon the burgeoning dialogue in physical cultural studies (Andrews, 2008; Giardina & Newman, 2011; Silk & Andrews, 2011). There has been a recent call for increased attention to the role(s) played by the researcher's body in relation to his or her "object of study" (Giardina & Newman, 2011). Giardina and Newman (2011) exalted the need for

physical cultural studies projects to articulate "the body – of the researcher and researched alike – as locus of politics and praxis" (p. 37). I interpret this to mean that work of this kind also requires a careful consideration of the body (the researching body in particular) as a thinking, feeling, acting entity that is continuously produced by and productive of the social relations in which it exists. Therefore, this project also required an interrogation of my own subjectivity.

The politicized nature of my own body (a white, middle class, conventionally feminine body) and my knowledge of and ability to perform ballet technique enabled me access to the studio and build relationships with the dancers in particular ways. It allowed me to become "visibly invisible" in the studio space (Newman, 2011, p. 552). My body was similar to other bodies in the studio and I could perform the role of dancer as well as researcher. By dancing with the girls I created a new ethics for my researching self and practiced flexibility and responsiveness as the research project unfolded and took on its own, unpredictable form. Furthermore, participating in dance class allowed me to develop relationships with my participants based on a shared interest, understanding, and practice. It also made spaces in the studio available to me (i.e., the change room), which in turn enabled an even richer understanding of the space.

It is important to note that ballet was something readily available to my body and to my participants (i.e., white, conventionally feminine, middle class). As a result, any reprieve ballet may offer girls from oppressive discursive practices and disciplinary power in other areas of their life must be understood as

conditional and contextual, not universal. Ballet, like any practice, is experienced in particular ways by particular bodies in any given socio-historic location. However, questions that explore the capacity of ballet for providing alternative understandings of physical femininity act as an important starting point for further dialogue.

Finally, this study illustrated how acknowledging the researching body and self and locating its investments in a project can prompt rigorous reflections, creative engagement with theory, and open new spaces of knowing (or unknowing). The dissonance I experienced between my academic, researching self (which tended to be concerned with observing and producing knowledge *about* the practice of dance) and my dancing self (which found bodily pleasure in the *doing* of the dance,) revealed important binaries and dichotomies that continue to limit our understandings of the capacity of the moving body, and of what it means to be a researcher. For example, why did I believe that it was somehow 'wrong' for my researching body to take pleasure in performing ballet? Why did I feel somewhat guilty for *liking* ballet? As a scholar concerned with the production of knowledge how do I find a space that accommodates these difficult and messy questions? These questions and considerations are important to the field of physical cultural studies and provide a compelling case for more innovative forays into methodological and theoretical work that is done with and through moving bodies.

8.6 Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of this study include its in-depth examination of a previously understudied population and setting: young adolescent girls in non-elite commercial dance studios. Examining this population revealed less dominant discourses through which the ballet body can be understood and opens up the totalizing discourse of ballet as an oppressive bodily practice. I believe it provides a starting point to ask different questions around the potential of dance (ballet and other genres) as a positive physical endeavor for girls. It also highlights the need for further conversations about the complexity of discipline and feminine bodies started by feminist scholars (i.e., Heyes, 2007; Markula, 2011; McWhorter, 1999; Probyn, 2004). It is difficult (and anti-Foucauldian) to imagine any contemporary physical practices that we might engage to be completely exempt from disciplinary power. In today's health frenzied society we are increasingly compelled to partake in physical activity of some kind. However, I argue that simply because physical pursuits (i.e., sport, dance, leisure activities) are facilitated by the technologies of discipline to some extent, they are not necessarily bad or harmful. I suggest that the question is not *if* or *how* these activities are disciplinary, but rather what productive, creative, expressive forces of the body may be invoked through physical practice? How do we move closer to asking about and understanding the potential of the body to create relationships, facilitate non-verbal expression, and prompt fractures in the effects of disciplinary power? I believe my mapping study has the potential to initiate this conversation and I have suggested that discipline is not totalizing: there are fractures and

fissures (often afforded through the body) that occur in movement. In fact, it is often discipline that enables those moments, however ephemeral they may be. Additionally, I argue it is imperative that we recognize and sensitively explore what it is that the dance space affords to young girls that other spaces do not. We can then start to ask how we might make dance spaces even more positive and diminish their potential for harm. We can further ask how other movement spaces may be imagined similarly.

Finally, this study points to, respects, and celebrates the ephemeral quality of movement. I struggled continuously to translate the beauty, magnificence, and vitality I perceived when watching my participants dance and dancing myself into words and a coherent, theoretical analysis. I do not think I succeeded fully, but I attempted to make space for the exuberance of the body and its ability to express, feel, and evoke affective responses from others. My attempts felt clumsy at times, and I struggled constantly to avoid returning to language that simply described the representative (still) body. Yet this very observation may be important in our continuing academic dialogue about the moving body. It may be difficult or impossible to capture in text, but perhaps we can expand our capacities for attending to movement and movement experiences. It is this aspect that might help us evade the very categorical and binary thinking that hinders our understandings.

8.7 Future Directions

Guided by a case study methodology, this dissertation provides rich and extensive insight into one particular setting. However, one cannot generalize from

these findings. It is reasonable to speculate that in a commercial ballet studio setting where professional dance status is a pronounced goal, bodily pressures may be more explicit. Further research into different types of commercial studios would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the discourses and practices to which dancers are subjected. Additionally, I studied one class and one genre of dance. In the future researchers may want to explore different genres of dance and different types of dance settings. My participants were extremely familiar with the dance studio environment and demonstrated a great degree of technical proficiency due to a lengthy history of dance experience. It would be important to study dancers of varying ages with diverse dance histories to determine if the pleasurable aspects of movement are consistent across skill levels. Furthermore, the intimate relationships the dancers formed in the studio were a very important part of my participants' experience at the studio. How might relationships differ or be similar in different types of commercial studios or dance settings?

Another important question raised by this study concerns what dancers in similar situations as my participants do when they move on from their dance studio in order to pursue post-secondary education, career opportunities, or simply because they outgrow it. The studio was clearly such an important part of the girls' lives it is conceivable that a large gap will be left in their lives when they leave it. Future research that examines the dance or physical activity settings these girls seek out (if any) could provide valuable information for dance educators and those interested in providing physical activity opportunities for girls and women.

What are dance experiences like for them and what settings do they seek out? How are those settings understood? How do girls and women without a history of ballet/dance training experience these settings? What is it like learning dance skills as an adult? All of these questions could yield potentially interesting and important results and may add to an area of inquiry on the intersections of dance, physical activity, and health.

Finally, I did not interview the teacher in this project as I was interested primarily in the experiences of the dancers and wished to understand them through the stories and experiences they shared. However, it is clear that the teacher is incredibly influential in shaping the culture and environment of the dance studio. Additionally, the relationship between the teacher and the dancers was revealed as extremely rich, nuanced, and close. Speaking to teachers about some of the issues that emerged in this study and other dance literature around the body, discipline, relationships, and the studio as a place of respite would yield valuable insights that would complement and expand the understandings that emerged in this study.

8.8 What's Next For Girls and Ballet?

This project was intended as a mapping study (Markula & Silk, 2011) to enhance understanding of the power relations and discursive practices that circulate in the commercial dance studio. Markula and Silk (2011) suggested that a mapping study informs further critique and ultimately acts as a catalyst and provides direction for proposed change. While an explicit critique and proposal for change is beyond the scope of this study, I offer reflections on what I deem

important considerations and potential future directions for research and practice in the fields of dance and physical cultural studies.

The results of this suggested that disciplinary power operates and through the dancing body to regulate it, train it, and produce it as highly skilled and capable of performing a complex repertoire of movement. This same repertoire of movement simultaneously afforded my participants moments of physical exhilaration, experiences of exceeding their own understandings of their bodily capacities, and a form of non-verbal expression and communication with each other. I suggest that these aspects of dance are important to the lives of adolescent girls and merit further attention. I believe our understanding of these experiences is constrained by the language and knowledges available to us, but this very limitation is what infuses such a project with vitality and hope.

It is important to examine dance within the local and socio-political context in which it is practiced. While I hope I have drawn attention to some of the positive potential of ballet, I maintain that dance cannot and should not be celebrated uncritically. Foucault (1997c) reminds us that any practice has the potential to be dangerous. Indeed, each year on the University campus I attend, a large citywide dance competition is held in the University's facilities. Dancers ranging from five-to-16 years old are present and can be seen traipsing around the University's student union building in their stage make-up and dress. Often, the sight of these young dancers, adorned in an exclamation of sequins, brightly coloured spandex, and exaggerated stage make-up is jarring. My response is overwhelming visceral; *"This is bad"* I think to myself, or, in Foucauldian terms,

dangerous. My interpretation is that the garish make up and provocative costumes act to produce and celebrate a sexualized, hetero-normative, desirable feminine identity (in girls as young as five) through the discursive practices associated with dance. In this context, the make-up and costume are seemingly unintended to enhance the dancers' physical ability to perform the movement, but rather to produce a particular (feminized, sexualized) aesthetic.

This extreme, sexualized aesthetic presentation of the dancing body is far-removed from what I observed in the studio and what I gleaned from my conversations with the participants. The particular practices required and performed in the dance studio were intended to increase the girls' physical capacity for skilled movement. These practices also enabled unexpected forums for non-verbal expression and facilitated dynamic and positive relationships between the dancers and with the environment around them. Therefore, there is a gap between the local context of the ballet class, and the discursive understandings and performances of dance in other settings. Dance practices occur and are understood within wider discursive contexts and meanings of femininity, beauty, and even to a certain extent health. Consequently, one must be careful not to celebrate it uncritically, and not to imagine the studio as 'immune' to these things. The potential exists for dance to be utilized as a tool to support certain power relations, discursive identities, and neoliberal attitudes and practices.

Consequently, I still call for the feminist scholarship in this area to be expanded. Consistent with my Foucauldian positioning, I maintain that the

practice of dance is not inherently good or bad, but its effects and purpose merit critical investigation. Dance's status as a feminized activity also needs to be carefully explored and any critique leveled against ballet or dance should not rest upon this categorization alone. Such a position suggests that it *is because* dance is feminine/feminized that it is problematic and leaves our understandings and assumptions about what is feminine unchallenged. Additionally, the logical conclusion that results from such an argument is that practices considered masculine are 'better' and less limiting for girls and women. This produces and maintains a problematic binary relationship between masculine and feminine that uncritically privileges masculine behaviours without examining their effects, contexts, and the power relations being supported. Instead, I suggest that we work to flatten our plane of understandings so that the best practice is not predetermined but is subjected to a reflective, contextual analysis and assessed for dangers and possibilities.

I conclude by calling for scholars of dance, physical culture, sport, and physical activity to pursue renewed and re-energized explorations of the moving body and to leap from places of sureness towards less solid ground. We can take inspiration from dance itself and imagine that moment when a dancer performs a *grand jeté*, where she seems impossibly suspended in air. In that moment a sense of wonder is evoked, a sense that possibility has been exceeded, and a fleeting uncertainty about when and whether she will descend. It is these moments of unpredictable force and inhabiting new spaces that we need more of in our scholarship. We need more recognition of these inarticulable occurrences so that

dance (or any physical) practice may be employed ethically and in ways that foster these productive capacities and diminish the potential dangers.

Drawing further upon the metaphor of movement, I conclude with a description of one of my own favourite movements in dance, the high release. Recognizable in ballet and in Martha Graham technique, the high release occurs "when a dancer opens her breastbone to the sky" (Blun, 2009). The chest lifts upwards and an exquisite openness is created across the clavicle, the front of the shoulders, and in the breastbone. Perhaps it is because we do not open this part of our body in everyday movement, or perhaps it is for no reason at all, but that movement feels exquisite each and every time I perform it. It also elicits a bodily response from me when I see it performed by others. If I think about why such a movement might 'feel' so good to perform, my attention is called to the space it creates in the body, the expanse across the front of the chest, an openness that is not part of our day-to-day bodily experience or knowledge. It is difficult to articulate why this openness is so appealing, but if I had to try, perhaps it is that the space created in the body through dance allows further possibilities for being. Dance brings forth energy, muscles work together and in opposition, new relationships and spaces are formed within the body, between the body and the floor, the body and the *barre*, the body and other dancing bodies.

The openness created by this movement feels important. While the openness occurs within the material body, perhaps it can also manifest in an increased openness to new knowledges, to the ways we think about and engage with theory, practice and ethics, our relationships to ourselves and others, and the

space of not knowing. Importantly, that openness knows no end and we cannot predict where it leads. The very structured movement of dance is what brings us to this openness, which in turn points to uncertainty and energetic possibilities. This we must be open to as well.

Notes

1. The "fit body" in my dissertation refers to the fit *looking body* (toned and thin) as discussed by feminist researchers (see Bordo, 1993; Jette, 2006; Markula, 1995, 2001) and does not necessarily equate to physiological fitness.

2. While feminists using different theoretical approaches acknowledge the current requirements for the acceptable feminine identity (e.g., thin and toned body, emotionality, caring and nurturing nature, gentleness, physical weakness) as social constructions and limiting women's potential, they differ in their explanations of how such an identity continues to dominate. The liberal feminists advocate equal access and equal opportunity for women, they do not question the social structures that uphold the feminine identity. Feminists using critical theory assert that such an identity is anchored in the ideology of masculinity that defines women as polar opposite and always lesser to men, who represent the desirable, dominant identity. From a poststructuralist perspective, identity is itself a construction maintained in current power relations by both men and women based on dominant discourses (or ways of knowing) about gender differences. Therefore, rather than assuming masculinity and femininity as polar opposite, poststructuralist feminists aim to examine the ways of knowing that keep both women and men locked into these identity categories.

3. The commercial dance studio in a Canadian context refers to privately operated studios that provide organized dance classes, often in a variety of genres, to students for a fee. These spaces are much more recreational than elite academies and the ballet schools run under national ballet companies. Commercial dance studios are the primary space available for girls and boys to take organized dance instruction and can vary in the number of different dance genres taught and the certification required by teachers. I chose the commercial studio as the site of this research as I suspected that the culture and environment would be different than that of the elite academies and university settings most often discussed in the literature.

4. Another form of power discussed by Foucault is that of the bio-politics of the population. This form of power is concerned with managing and regulating the entire social body to promote the biological process necessary for life. It targets the practices of individual bodies in order to govern the population (Wright, 2009). An example of the workings of bio-politics can be seen in the current governmental campaigns promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles in order to prevent illness and enhance longevity of the population. Physical activity, thus, becomes a strategy for preventing illness and is promoted among the population through the workings of discourse.

5. The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is an international dance education and training organization founded in England. It is one of the largest dance organizations in the world and promotes education and training for teachers and students by providing standardized syllabi and examinations that recognize dance achievement. Trained examiners travel from England to provide international exams annually.

6. Dancers at this dance studio are invited and encouraged annually to participate in examinations, competitions, and a year-end recital. Examinations take place in February, competitions February through May, and the recital in June. Additional rehearsals and classes are mandatory for dancers who are performing, competing, or taking exams. Few dancers choose not to participate.

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243

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Appendix A: Interview Guide 1

Introduce myself, share my ballet history and current dance involvement, and explain my Phd research project. Outline my interest in understanding how girls make meaning of ballet and their ballet bodies in context of adolescent lives. Acknowledge existing critiques of ballet.

General questions: Dance background

1. Can you tell me the story about how you started dancing?
    Prompts: What brought your attention to dance? What reasons did you have for wanting to take dance lessons?

2. What do you remember about your first dance class?
    Prompts: Who do you remember being there?

Questions about ballet training

1. Can you tell me about the typical structure of ballet class?
2. What do you think about this structure?
3. What is your favourite part of ballet class? Can you tell me about it?
4. When you go to dance class, are there things you look forward to? If so, please describe them to me.
5. Can you tell be about anything you don't look forward to so much?
6. What are favourite dance exercises? Can you tell me what they are like and how they make you feel?
7. What is exam time like in the studio? How are exams for you?

Questions about the ballet body

1. How do you think people, perhaps even your friends, who don't dance would describe ballet and ballerinas?
2. How would you describe a ballerina?
3. What do you makes a 'good' dancer?
4. Sometimes I've heard people criticize ballet because some professional ballerinas are so skinny. Have you heard anything like this before? If so,

what sort of things did you hear? How did it make you feel? What did you think about this critique?

Questions about the experience of being a 'dancer'

1. What is the most important thing about ballet to you?
2. How do you think your life would be different if you didn't take ballet? What would you miss the most?
3. How do you think you would be different if you didn't dance/How has ballet shaped who you are?
4. How would your friends and family describe you as a ballet dancer? How would you describe yourself?
5. Can you tell me a story of one of your most powerful memories of dance?

Is there anything you would like to share with me that we haven't discussed yet today?

Introduce myself, share my ballet history and current dance involvement, and explain my Phd research project. Outline my interest in understanding how girls make meaning of ballet and their ballet bodies in context of adolescent lives. Acknowledge existing critiques of ballet.

General questions: Dance background

1. Can you tell me the story about how you started dancing?
   Prompts: What brought your attention to dance? What reasons did you have for wanting to take dance lessons?

2. What do you remember about your first dance class?
   Prompts: Who do you remember being there? How did you feel after?

Questions about ballet training and the dance studio

8. Can you tell about the typical structure of ballet class?
9. What do you think about this structure?
10. What is your favourite part of ballet class? Can you explain why you like this part so much? How do you feel during class?
11. What do you think the purpose of barre work is? And centre work?
12. How do you feel when you're working at the barre?
13. How would you describe the dance studio to your friends that don't dance?
14. What do you like about coming to the dance studio?
15. Are there things you can do in the dance studio that you can't do at school or at home?
16. I've noticed that all of you seem really close to each other, are your 'dance' friends different in anyway than your school friends? If so, why do think this might be?
17. Is there anything about ballet class that you don't really look forward to?
18. What is exam time like in the studio? How are exams for you?
19. What do you think exams are for?

Questions about the ballet body

5. How do you think people, perhaps even your friends, who don't dance would describe ballet and ballerinas?
6. How would you describe a ballerina? How would you describe a ballerina's body?
7. What do you makes a 'good' dancing body?

8. Sometimes I've heard people criticize ballet because some professional ballerinas are so skinny. Have you heard anything like this before? If so, what sort of things did you hear? How did it make you feel? What did you think about this critique?
9. How would you describe your dancing body? Is it any different than your 'school' body for example?
10. Ballet dancers wear certain things in class – why do you think this is?
11. What does your body think about dance attire? How does it feel in it?
12. I've heard some people say that ballet and dance can help people express themselves. What do you think about this? Can you help me understand what it means?
13. How do you express yourself through dance?

Questions about the experience of being a 'dancer'

6. What is the most important thing about ballet to you?
7. How do you think your life would be different if you didn't take ballet? What would you miss the most?
8. How do you think you would be different if you didn't dance/How has ballet shaped who you are?
9. How would your friends and family describe you as a ballet dancer? How would you describe yourself?
10. Can you tell me a story of one of your most powerful memories of dance?
11. How would you describe your relationship with ballet? With your ballet body?
12. How do you feel about your ballet body and the way it moves?
13. How would you describe your relationship with the other dancers and with your teacher?
14. How do you think people at school understand you as a dancer?

Is there anything you would like to our discussion today that we may not have covered? Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix C: Follow-Up Interview Guide

1 When I think about ballet and even when I talk to my friends or other people, the pressure for ballet dancers to be skinny often comes up. Have you ever heard that same concern? What is your reaction to it?
   a. **Prompt**: I didn't hear so much about that when I was talking to you and your peers. Why do you think that might be?
2 When I was looking over my field notes and reviewing the interviews, one thing that came up a lot was how much you guys like learning new moves and getting better at dance. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?
3 I get the sense that the studio is a really 'homey' comfortable place for a lot of the dancers. Can you tell me more about this feeling?
   a. **Prompt:** Why do you think this might be?
   b. **Promp**t: How is the dance studio different from other places you might hang out a lot, like school, or home?
4 The idea being able to express one's self came up a lot too, and I'm really interested in this but I don't think I quite understand it. Can you help me understand why dance helps with expression?
   a. **Prompt:** Can you tell me a little about what you can express through dance that you might not be able to in other areas of your life?
   b. **Prompt:** Why do think this might be?

Dear Parent:

My name is Marianne Clark and I'm a researcher in a Doctoral program at the University of Alberta. For my study entitled, 'constructing a self through dance,' I'd like to know more about how taking regular dance classes affects girls ideas about the self. I am also interested in their ideas about health and physical activity. Dancers often face pressures about having a certain body type. Dancers also think of dance as a good form of self expression. If it's ok with you, I would like to talk with your daughter about her thoughts on her favourite dance activities, and her thoughts on what makes a good dancer. During the interview we would discuss how long she has been dancing, what type of exercises she likes and does not like. We would also talk about her thoughts on dancing and health. This information will help us think how to best train dancers and will provide young dancers with a chance to share their thoughts and feelings about dance.

For this study I hope to observe weekly dance classes and interview your daughter for about one hour. The interview will be recorded and then typed out word for word, you and your daughter may see the transcripts at any time. During an activity before the interview your daughter will be asked to draw a timeline . . . or a drawing . . . which I will ask her about during the interview if she agrees. I will also ask her if she will allow me to use her drawing in my study I may ask your daughter if she would like to take part in a second interview so I can share some of my early findings with her and ask for feedback. Information from each participant will be kept private. This will be done by using fake names when the interview is typed out. All the interview material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. This study is for my doctoral dissertation, which is being supervised by Dr. Pirkko Markula. Only me and my supervisor Dr. Markula will have access to the data. The interview material will be kept secure for a period of 5 years.

There are no risks involved in this study. The worst that might happen is that during the interview your daughter may feel uncomfortable sharing her thoughts and feelings on dance. To prevent this, it will be explained very clearly that she can pass on any question and can stop the interview process at any time.

Your and your daughter's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Along with your consent she will be asked to give your assent to participate in the study and has the right to refuse with no penalty to her. During the interview, if she doesn't want to answer all of the questions, we will go right away to a different question. The tape recorder can be turned off at anytime as well. Your daughter can also withdraw from the interview at any time without consequence. You or your daughter have the right to withdraw the information you provided from the research up until May 31, 2012. You and your daughter can also request to see the transcripts as well as publications resulting from this research. Your daughter's name will not be used in any publications and therefore, she will not be explicitly identified. If your daughter's timeline or drawing were to be used in publication, the only identifier it would be given is the pseudonym chosen by your daughter. As she is under the age of informed consent, her real name will not be used in association with the time line or drawing. In the case that you or your daughter do not want the artwork to be published if it is not credited to her real name, the document will not be published.

I will be using the information from this study to write my doctoral thesis and to prepare academic presentations and publications in the area of physical activity, dance and health .If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. You are also free to contact the researcher at the number provide below if you have questions at a later time. The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Thank you for your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Marianne, Clark, MA
Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
University of Alberta
Phone: 780 492-2004

Pirkko Markula, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
University of Alberta

Phone: 780 492 7192

Appendix E: Informed Consent

Title of Project: **Constructing the self through dance.**

Principal Investigator:	Marianne Clark, Phd Candidate
Affiliation and phone number:	Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta
	780 492 7192

Supervisor:	Dr. Pirkko Markula
Affiliation and phone number:	Physical Education and Recreation, University of
Alberta	
	(780) 492-7192

To be completed by the parent/legal guardian of the research participant

I understand that my daughter has been asked to be in a research study – to participate in a one hour interview which will be audio recorded and transcribed and also to engage in a pre-interview activity drawing a timeline or drawing to express the meaning of dance which will be discussed during the interview and included in the study if she agrees.	Yes	No
My daughter and I have read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet.	Yes	No
I understand that my daughter and I understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study.	Yes	No
My daughter and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	Yes	No
I understand that my daughter and I are free to refuse to participate, my daughter is free not answer any questions, or to withdraw from the interview at any time, and that my daughter or I can withdraw her data up until May 31, 2012 without consequence.	Yes	No
The issue of confidentiality been explained to me and my daughter. I understand that the interview recording and transcript will only be seen by Marianne Clark and her supervisor and will be stored in a secure location. I understand that my daughter will not be identified in the study. If she wishes her artwork to be credited using her real name the artwork will not be published as she is under the age of informed consent.	Yes	No
I understand I will have access to my daughter's interview transcript and a copy of the final report if I request it.	Yes	No
I understand that the information my daughter provides will be included in a doctoral thesis and in academic presentations and publications.	Yes	No
I have received a copy of the information letter and this consent form.	Yes	No

I give my permission for my child to participate in this study:

_____   _____   _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian   Date   Printed Name

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator or Designee   Date

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Appendix F: Assent Script

Hello, my name is Marianne. I'm interested in what you think about dance and being a dancer. I'm going to ask you a few questions about how you started dancing and how you feel in dance class. I'm interested in what the best things are about dance, and what might be hardest thing about dance. Does that make sense so far?

I'm also interested in talking with you about the timeline or drawing you've created if you're ok that? We only need to talk about it if you would like to share. You won't be named as the artist and you can pick a fake name that I'll use when typing up your interview and looking at your time line and drawing. This means that no one will know what you said or what you drew. Does that make sense so far?

When I'm writing my research paper I might want to use the drawing to show the interesting things we talked about, but just the fake name you choose will be used. If you don't want your artwork to be published without your real name I won't publish it.

I want you to know that you don't have to answer my questions. I won't be upset if you don't want to do the interview and nothing bad will happen to your grades. It's completely up to you.

If it's ok with you, I'd like to record our talk, because I can't write everything down fast enough. But you can turn the recorder off or ask me to turn it off at anytime. Do you think you would feel ok doing that?

Also, if you decide later on when we're talking, that you don't want to talk anymore, that's ok, all you have to do is tell me and we'll stop anytime. If I ask a question that you don't feel like answering, that's ok too, all you have to do is tell me. Does that make sense to you? Would you like to start the interview?

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.