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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF FEEL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF MODERN
DANCERS USING A RESONANCE-BASED APPROACH:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

by

Chantale Lussier-Ley

B.A., University of Winnipeg, 2004

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So, I think I would say, enjoy the process of learning to dance.

The process of our profession, and not its final achievement,
is the heart and soul of dance.

~ Jacques d'Amboise

ABSTRACT

The present qualitative study aimed to explore the role of feel within the creative process of pre-professional modern dancers. Grounded in the participatory paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997), this ethnographic study was informed by the resonance approach to performance and living (Newburg, 2006). It chronicles the creative and affective experiences of six dancers and I over a four month period. Qualitative data was collected through participant observation, full participation, field notes, reflexive journaling, videotaping of rehearsals and performances, informal conversations with informants, and 12 weekly focus group discussions. Deductive and inductive content analyses (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993) as well as narrative analyses (Polkinghorne, 1995) were used to examine all data collected. Results suggest that the RPM is an effective framework for discussion, reflection, and creative exploration with modern dancers. Findings indicate that *individual feel* is an integral element of creativity in the dancers. Furthermore, *collective feel* emerged as a meaningful aspect of the dancers' creative experiences. Applied research and educational implications are highlighted.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dance is a universal phenomenon, transcending national, geographical, and cultural boundaries (Vartoogian, Vartoogian, & Cooper Garry, 1997). Requiring little more than the human body, it has often drawn the metaphorical comparison of poetry in motion and has thus inspired countless people through the ages (Vartoogian et al., 1997). Dance has been compared to a wordless drama and a visual embodiment of music (Hall, 1989). Reyna (1964) defined it as “a demonstrative action, in harmony with the melody of a few voices”. Yet, at its core, dance is a kinesthetic and aesthetic movement experience. Culturally speaking, however, the reasons for people engaging in this physical form of self-expression are numerous. For centuries, people have danced communally for many purposes: dance as worship, dance as stories and history, dance as a courting ritual, and finally dance for the sheer joy and pleasure of it (Vartoogian et al., 1997). As suggested by Ecclesiastes in the Bible, people have always danced, and dance thus represents an integral expression of the whole human experience:

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

(Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, p. 55)

Although dance has been studied over many years, there are still aspects of it that require further empirical attention. One of these aspects is the creative process underlying the art of dance. Through 20 years of experience in dance, as a professionally trained classical dancer and teacher, I gradually became displeased with the minimal, if not complete lack of emphasis on creative development and expression in the daily lives of dancers. Furthermore, this lack is reflected in the common physical and curriculum-based approach to dance education, without

regards to the holistic, emotional development of artists that I believe in many ways impedes the creative development of many dancers. It is a lack that I have seen and experienced myself and am now witness to, as a consultant working with dancers. As such, the focus of this study is on how dancers feel while engaging in their creative day to day experiences.

The Role of Creativity in Dance

Dance has often been a means for making tangible something often otherwise inexpressible (Vartoogian et al., 1997). Its appeal is said to go “*straight to the heart* with its expressive dance-images, cutting across cultural barriers” (Hall, 1989, p.11). It seems logical then to assume that emotions and their expression are part of the reasons dancers engage in this performing art. When describing Evelyn Hart’s dancing, it is said that “it usually happens in the ballet *Giselle*, when she is feeling at her most creative... freed by her confidence in herself and her partner to abandon herself into her role” (Wyman, 1991, p.118). This felt experience describes the important connection for artists between the emotional and creative processes integral to their performance. Yet, what do dancers mean when they say they *feel* creative? What process do they engage in, affectively speaking, when being creative?

Creativity, empirically speaking, seems to escape clear definition. It is said to be an ineffable quality demanding the combination of previously separate elements into a novel, harmonious whole (Bane, 1999). Bane further explains that creativity is an “undeniable urge to express what we see and feel and think” (p. 60). Formal definitions are broad and vague at best. For example, the Random House Dictionary of the English Language explains creativity as “a *state* or *quality* of being creative” and describes it as either an *ability* or a *process*. Yet, the word creative is defined as having the *quality* or *power* of creating while the word creation refers to the *act of* producing. What can thus be observed is the discrepancy and perhaps limitation in the

syntax of this language to truly account for the act of, meaning the process of, creating. Linguistically, these words are closely related to creator and creation, echoing the sentiment that power, as in Godly powers, perhaps breathes inspiration into creative works. These subtle yet distinct takes in the conception of creativity consequently impact our societal view of the process of creativity, as well as the best ways to access and understand it, both for educational and research purposes.

Arnold (2005) proposes the notion that creativity in dance relates to the work of composition, also known as choreography. He further explains that creativity in dance should involve intentionality and imagination to produce something original and of merit. Particularly interesting is Arnold's view that compositional creativity in dance, when regarded from an educational perspective, be observed as a product rather than as a process. Worth mentioning however, is the contrasting argument he presents saying that dancers are not merely mediators between choreographers and audience but active agents. In other words, dancers must actively create the performance, in addition to deliver a choreographed sequence of movement. What this highlights is the complex role of creativity in dance, varying depending on the task and role of the dance artists themselves.

Recordon (1994) states that "the artist balances the tension between intellect and emotion. Somewhere within this constantly changing balance, lies the source of his or her creativity" (p. 330). It is this emotional component of creativity that is here of particular interest as I feel that it is at the crux of the creative process itself. In fact, Radford (2004) commented on the necessity of emotions as it relates to creativity and also suggested that this was a shared experience:

“...emotional feelings (are) at the heart of intelligent action. They influence the way we select and process information and account for the differences that we experience in different people’s perceptions and interpretations of reality. They are at the heart of individual subjectivity. At the same time, having been acquired through acculturation, it might be suggested that they are also shared... the creative act of one person speaks to the emotional informational representations of others.” (p. 62)

In addition, some researchers suggest that the notion of creativity has been damaged due to the historical romantic period because it emphasized mystical properties as opposed to the social basis of creativity (Daykin, 2005). Daykin further notes that the production and reception of artwork is now recognized as a social process. Because of the fluid nature of creativity in dance, constantly influenced by the cultural traditions in which it is embedded, and the different agents (dancers, teachers, choreographers, audience) participating in the creative experience, creativity in dance appears to be an interactive social phenomenon. It is this social perspective of creativity, how dancers feel within their creative process, and how it is manifested in a community of dancers that was explored throughout the course of this study.

Creativity and Dance Education

In the training of dance, a contradiction seems to prevail. “Dance is physical, not emotional” Larry Rhodes from NYU School of the Arts once said (Franklin, 1996). There are also Balanchine’s famous words “don’t think, just dance!” These words are linked to the frequently held belief in dance that dancers should not add to or question what they are told to do, but in fact, respectfully just do it. Therefore, in my experience, a misguided belief exists in the performing arts where fear of a negative impact on physical performance subtly seems to discourage the exploration and expression of how dancers feel. Consequently, we know and

understand very little about, and support even less, the felt experiences underlying the creative process of performers.

There is in fact one school of thought that argues that in dance “expression arises from physical experience rather than from an abstract concept of emotion or from a whimsical desire to express emotion” (Franklin, 1996, p.9). Consequently, I believe this leads to a certain disconnection or disembodiment between the dancer, the body, and the movement. According to Hall (1989), there exists an inherent inability for dancers to truly assess their own art. Engaging in this artistic means of expression is said to be a source of both joy and frustration for them since their instrument and art are their own bodies, and as such forbids them from accessing it themselves (Hall, 1989). Furthermore, there is an unfortunate frequent lack of emphasis on the personal, holistic development of dancers in professional dance schools and dance companies in general. For example, Bannon and Sanderson (2000) suggested that improving aesthetic awareness and attending to empowerment issues could increase this personal development in dancers. This can, of course, have important implications for both teachers and performance psychology consultants working within the performing arts domain.

Dance as a performing art as well as an educational domain has experienced many changes through the years from a physical training focus in the 1920s, a self-expression medium in the 1960s, and a performance model in the 1970s (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000). Emerging from this performance model seems to be a type of training that has removed the development of aesthetic sensitivities in many of today’s dance schools and programs (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000; Morris, 2003). However, many still argue that creativity is an inherent component of dance that cannot be overlooked (Arnold, 2004), thus educational approaches that can powerfully impact the creative development and productivity of dance artists warranted investigation.

To date, an important question remains: How are most dance educators and dance communities facilitating the development of creativity in the people with whom they work? I would suggest that in most cases, little is being consciously done to facilitate the creative development of dancers thus leaving a great deal of room for improvement and collective learning within the community of dance at large. Most often, creativity is nurtured in dance through an approach called improvisation. Various creative dance and improvisation techniques stem from the methodologies of Virginia Tanner and Rudolf Von Laban (Not Just any Body, 2001). Dance improvisation can be defined as “an engagement in the manipulation of the potentialities of form, open to the instantaneous moment of creation and performance” (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000, p. 18). Dancers, however, typically only engage in improvisation at a very young age in their dance training, unless they pursue modern dance where improvisation is more commonly used. What appears to ring true is that most dance educators rely on intuition and instinct to address this important aspect of a dancer’s training (Not Just any Body, 2001).

One approach that might be fruitful in empirically exploring the creative process of dancers is resonance. Resonance is a person centered focused approach to performance and living. It is a process that empowers people to design their life based on how they want to feel. Consciously and regularly engaging in one’s own personal process of resonance can lead to increases in motivation, satisfaction, and well-being (Arcand, Durand-Bush, & Miall, in press; Doell, Durand-Bush, & Newburg, in press; Faubert, Durand-Bush, Trudel, & Newburg, 2005). Since creativity is an important part of dance and how we feel underlies the expression of creativity through dance, it appears that the Resonance Performance Model (RPM, Newburg, Kimiecik, Durand-Bush, & Doell, 2002), which summarizes the components of the resonance process, may be a valuable framework from which to explore how dancers feel when engaged

creatively. In my own personal experience as a dance artist, as well as in my preliminary studies at the undergraduate and graduate level, resonance appeared to be well-suited for the emotion-filled world of dance and the underlying process of creativity in dancers. To date, there has been a lack of research on creativity in dancers, particularly from a process perspective. Furthermore, empirical research on resonance has yet to address the needs of dancers and the potentially facilitative power of this model to explore creative processes and develop research based interventions.

Purpose and Justification of Study

It is in light of the aforementioned findings that this study focused on exploring the creative experiences of dancers using the Resonance Performance Model (RPM) as a consulting framework (Newburg et al., 2002) with a group of modern dancers. In order to fully understand and capture how dancers feel while creating, an ethnographic approach grounded in the participatory paradigm was used. I felt that this study was justifiable considering the current state of research focusing on the emotional and creative experiences of dancers. From an empirical perspective, this study adds to the general scientific knowledge due to (a) the lack of empirical research exploring the potential use of a resonance-based approach with dance artists, (b) the lack of empirical research exploring the potential value of using a resonance-based approach in a group setting, (c) the lack of empirical research exploring creativity as a process, and (d) the lack of empirical research addressing feel and creativity. Methodologically speaking, this study is innovative in that a participatory approach to research involving ethnography was used. It is the first time that a resonance-based study was conducted using the participatory approach. This methodology led to rich experiential and contextual information that helped us better understand how dancers feel while creating. Finally, from an applied perspective, this study sheds light on

the use of resonance as a consulting framework in group settings. It is said that there is a dire need to “research and validate new ways of contemplating teaching and learning in and from dance” (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000, p. 22). This study has significant implications for researchers, practitioners, and artists alike and thus warranted being carried out.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the following section, I review the literature on creativity as it pertains to the field of dance as well as the Resonance Performance Model (Newburg, et al., 2002) as a way of potentially facilitating creativity. The purpose of this section is to review the literature on creativity, emotions, and resonance, drawing out the links pertinent to the domain of dance, and finally highlighting the gaps that currently exist within the literature. A case will be built for exploring creativity from a psychosocial perspective, using the RPM as a means to access and explore the role of feel in the creative experiences of dancers.

Creativity

Creativity is said to be a central source of *meaning* in people's lives, and as many might agree, nowhere is this more true than in the daily lives of artists, including dancers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Empirically speaking, it is difficult to find a consensual definition of creativity. It is difficult to distinguish and define creativity since it has been addressed as a personality trait, a state, and as a process often believed to involve a universal sequence of steps (Hennessey, 2003). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) defines creativity as "any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one" (p. 28). Radford (2004) describes creativity as an intricate process whereby information is processed, guided by and set in a given framework of reference. In dance for example, this means that choreographers, teachers, and dancers use their knowledge of technique, along with known sequences, variations, and repertoire as a foundation from which they create. Their experiences, training, and historical influences thereby guide this information processing and eventual

creative efforts. More precisely, Montuori and Purser (1995) suggested that creativity is “the function of a judgment made by people, and these judgments are influenced by the trends, traditions, and social, political, economic, and aesthetic perspectives of their time and place” (p. 72). What these multilayered definitions offer are glimpses into two fundamental dichotomies that exist in the research and debate on creativity, that is, the study of creativity as a **process** or a **product**, and as an **individual** or **cultural** phenomenon. Crucial to our current common understanding of creativity is the fact that research has predominantly provided an individual, egocentric psychological account of creativity because it was examined as a product. Increasing our understanding of the culturally shared nature of the process underlying creative production is now needed to understand this phenomenon in a more global, socially interactive sense. I will now discuss these dichotomies further in order to establish the social, systems approach to creativity upon which this study was based.

Process or product. As suggested by Hennessey (2003), the empirical process of inquiry into the construct of creativity has a rather extensive history. In fact, two different directions have emerged in the study of creativity: the creative personality as a trait, and the creative process as a fluid, dynamic systems approach. Another important aspect of creativity is that it has most often been defined, researched, and evaluated as a product instead of as a process (Hennessey, 2003). Though creativity involves producing something new, the discovery process is said to be one of the most exciting and engaging activity available to humans (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Products of creative value do contribute to our society in many meaningful ways, however, it is the process of such discoveries that was of interest in this study because it had not been adequately addressed in the literature and it is this process that allowed us to explore the role of feel underlying creativity.

The Eastern Zen approach to creativity emphasizes emotions and felt experiences. Paramount to this approach is the notion that the creative *process* is intuitive and experiential (Daido Looi, 2004). Daido Looi describes how Zen arts contain within their practice techniques and methods for opening up the creative process, without concern for the creative product. He explains how Western culture tends to teach through explanations and instructions whereas in Eastern traditions, “space is created for the process of discovery to take place” (p. 6). Problematic then in Western society is our traditionally directive educational approach to learning itself, let alone creative practice. From the Zen perspective, the creative process is seen to encompass five basic elements:

The first of these elements is the *muse*, a sense of inspiration that initiates the process of creation. The second is the *hara*, a place within us that is still and grounded. Then there is *chi*, the energy contained both in us and in the subject. Out of *chi* emerges *resonance*, a feeling of recognition between the artist and subject. Finally, there is the *act* of expression itself, where the expression is allowed to flow unhindered from the artist to the creation. The artist steps out of the way and lets the art happen by itself. (Daido Looi, 2004, p. 86)

What this author powerfully articulates is the element of resonance as an integral aspect of the creative process. Resonance, from a physics perspective, can be described as the harmony between two vibrational frequencies, embodied by the artist and subject (Daido Looi, 2004) or by a person and his environment (Newburg et al., 2002). As Daido Looi (2004) reasons, it is only by getting in touch with our inner body and feelings and by letting resonance guide us that the creative process can occur unobstructed. He further argues that “attending to *chi* and resonance can facilitate the process considerably” (Daido Looi, 2004, p. 93). It follows then that

using the RPM (Newburg et al., 2002) in artistic creative environments may very well facilitate people's experience of resonance, in turn contributing to the *process* of creativity in artists.

Furthermore, what the Zen approach to creativity highlights is the role of culture in impacting our basic human understanding of creativity in general. In the following section, I therefore expand on the differences in exploring creativity at an individual or cultural level.

Individual or cultural. Cultural notions pertaining to creativity hold a powerful influence on creative works produced (Daykin, 2005). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), creativity involves the interaction of three components: a culture, a person, and experts who validate the innovation. What this suggests is the existence and importance of social, interactive elements to the process of creativity. In her extensive work on creativity and motivation, Hennessey (2003) concluded that "whatever an individual's particular talents, skills and creative thinking abilities, the conditions under which he/she works can significantly impact on the level of creativity produced" (p. 266). Furthermore, according to Hennessey, creativity does not exist within a vacuum, yet many researchers have chosen to examine it in a rather decontextualized manner. Creativity requires some form of communication and therefore is in need of a social context to even be said to exist (Montuori & Pursuer, 1995). It follows then, that when researchers isolate the creative individual, they might be removing important aspects of the creative process.

Historically speaking, creativity has often been linked to the notion of mastery of self over the environment and resulting from this seems to be a commonly held belief sometimes referred to as the myth of the lone creative genius (Montuori & Purser, 1995). Montuori and Purser explain that a connection exists between the "rise of individualism during the Renaissance" and the notion that creativity stems from gifted individuals. These authors describe how this hyper-individualism, which directly relates to our concept of the self, has affected our

contemporary understanding of creativity. Furthermore, they suggest that when creativity is viewed strictly as an individual phenomenon, some of the potentially beneficial roles of social interaction and creative environments that may actively foster creativity may be omitted (Montuori & Purser, 1995). It becomes evident that an individualistic view of creativity, empirically, has some serious limitations. Because of this, Montuori and Purser (1995) argue for the need to use an ecological, systems approach that recognizes the interconnectedness between individuals and their social environment.

In the past century, psychoanalysts have been very interested in the study of creativity, this “mysterious and multidimensional expression of originality, beauty and inspiration” (Rubin, 2004, p. 10). More often than not, psychoanalysts have perceived creativity and art as representations, symbols, and reflections of childhood trauma and escapes from reality (Rubin, 2004). Yet, even from such an intrapersonal perspective as Freud’s tradition of psychoanalysis, Rubin, a psychoanalyst himself, argues that creativity can be viewed as multidimensional, complex, and embedded within an interaction with the external world.

“To be creative is to have a receptivity to one’s self and the world, a great pleasure in exercising one’s capacities, an internal openness and flexibility, an attraction to novelty, a sensitivity to discrepant perceptions and observations, an alertness to seize opportunities, the courage to challenge traditions and conventions, the capacity to integrate apparent opposites, and the ability to imagine and devise new approaches to a problem or question by bringing together two previously separate and segregated frameworks in a new and fruitful way” (Rubin, 2004, p. 16)

This psychoanalyst’s view and definition of creativity acknowledges a social component. Furthermore, he argues that creativity is crucial to our health both individually and collectively

as a larger culture. Finally, he pointedly comments on the fact that we perhaps know more about creativity itself than *how* best to facilitate it (Rubin, 2004). This is yet, another important gap in the literature which suggested the need for more applied research involving creativity.

More recently, a study by Daykin (2005) explored the way in which stories maintained musicians' moral status as creative workers when they faced obstacles, challenges such as disruption, and threats of dissonance. Using narrative analysis, this study examined how disruptions affect creative works in process. Two main narratives were identified including hegemonic creativity and embodied creativity, the first of which emphasized the separation between the artist and society, and the second suggesting that "cultural notions about creativity exercise a powerful influence on creative work" (Daykin, 2005, p. 70). This finding is an important one as it highlights the need to address and research the creative process of artists embedded in its social context. However important this study is in giving a voice to the creative experiences of artists, the fact remains that these narratives were strictly individually collected. Because dance is experience in a collective context, a socially constructed approach to the development of narratives on artistic creative processes was needed, thereby giving power and a voice to the collective as well as the individual.

Directly related to the idea of social interaction pertinent to the study of creativity, and drawing a bridge between individuals and their environment, is the conception of a third space. According to Winnicott cited in Rubin (2004), human beings have the tendency to divide their world into two: the world within and the world outside themselves. Winnicott argued, however, the existence of a third space, or zone of being, where creativity is said to take place. Being neither an internal or external space, it partakes in both and is transitional in nature. According to Rubin (2004), what this teaches us is that creativity is not the possession of solitary persons but

is born out of a “creative relation between a person who is internally receptive and an outer world” (p. 20). From this observation, it appeared necessary to consider both individuals and their social context when researching creativity in an attempt to shed light on this third space. Winnicott’s third zone of being or third space might very well be compared to, and reside in, what some researchers are now calling creative climates, the subject of this next section.

Creative climate. Important research contributions in the area of creativity pertain to the notion of creative climate. This area of research is relatively new and is thus beginning to address some of the vital gaps in the study of creativity previously discussed. Climate is an important variable for addressing performance and change as it can affect not only the overall well-being of an organization but also the learning and creative processes of individuals within organizations (Isaksen & Lauer, 2002). In a key study conducted in the area of business but of relevance to this study, 154 participating managers shared their thoughts and feelings about both their most and least creative experience within their management teams. Using teams as the unit of analysis, the quantitative results demonstrated that there were clear and distinct climates that encouraged creativity and that these were both observable and measurable (Isaksen & Lauer, 2002). Based on the work of Ekvall, the nine dimensions of creativity (Challenge & Involvement, Freedom, Trust & Openness, Idea Time, Playfulness & Humor, Conflict, Idea Support, Debate, Risk-Taking) were shown to effectively discern between creative and non-creative experiences in teams (Isaksen & Lauer, 2002). The importance of this work is in its demonstration that a creative climate is something that people experience, in either a positive supportive manner or not, and that can tangibly be observed through research inquiry with groups of people. Though grounded in organizational psychology research, creative climates exist in any social group working together towards common goals, especially when these goals

are of a creative nature such as the work demanded of artists. The nine dimensions of a creative climate with which participants in this study clearly identified proved important to consider when further researching creativity as a social process. Considering creative climate was necessary when exploring the role of feel in creativity in a collective of modern dancers.

For some researchers, the study of creativity seems to have gone historically full circle as they now acknowledge the value of culture and social context as critical to the creativity of individuals and collectives. What we are beginning to see in the research literature is a new emphasis on social creativity, in other words, creativity as a social phenomenon. Notably absent, however, were studies examining creativity as a social, procedural experience, particularly in the context of dance. This was an important gap that deserved empirical attention due to its important implications for artists, researchers, and practitioners alike. The implications of the above mentioned studies and their respective approaches to creativity research contributed to our understanding of creativity in the social context. Furthermore, these invariably influenced and guided the current research in exploring '*how to*' nurture creativity and creative climates in order to better support artists while they engage in the creative process of artistic development, art making, and artistic performance. In order to understand '*how to*' nurture and cultivate creativity from an applied perspective, we began by paying attention to, exploring how, feel impacted the creative process and experiences of artists.

Emotions and creativity. Emotion is an important component of dance and creativity. In fact, the very structure of our social life depends heavily on emotions and their expression (Domingues, 1997). Specifically, affective processes are known to play a vital role in the mediation of the impact of all environmental constraints on interest and creativity (Hennessey, 2003). In other words, our internal processing of feelings and emotions is crucial when

responding to our social environment and has a dramatic effect on creativity. In this context, emotions are described as bodily-felt referents, while feelings are described as the subjective experience of emotions (Arcand et al., in press). As Goleman (1998) suggests, those who are unaware of their feelings are at a tremendous disadvantage.

Radford (2004) stated that there is an emotional dimension to knowing and an association between emotions and creativity. He explains that creative efforts are accompanied by intense feelings and that these feelings lead us to choose one path over another thus edging us deeper into creative artistic construction. Another important point discussed by Radford is the idea that this emotional guiding system is learned within a cultural context. However, Radford (2004) argues that though the “creative act reveals the emotionally reflexive dimensions to our intelligent consciousness... it is doubtful that we can consciously cultivate this emotional reflexivity” (p. 64). Contrary to Radford’s view, Newburg et al. (2002) and Durand-Bush et al. (2004) have argued that emotional reflexivity is a conscious and deliberate activity that can be cultivated and lead people performing in different domains to pay attention to how they feel and design their life based on specific desired feelings. Their findings suggest that emotional reflexivity is essential to resonance, a process that can be facilitated and developed through the use of the RPM and will be subsequently discussed. The association between emotions, reflexivity, *and creativity* was, however, not clear and whether or not reflection and creativity can be cultivated in the context of dance had yet to be empirically examined, particularly from an applied research perspective.

Aside from his views on emotional reflexivity, Radford (2004) postulated that emotions are fundamentally data and should be used as a guide towards creative acts. He suggests that tensions, such as dissonances, or obstacles, often act as the impetus for creative development.

Radford (2004) describes how “tension is a form of emotional discomfort that arises in various circumstances and may affect us more or less significantly. Conversely, the reconciliation of such tensions is an emotionally satisfying experience” (p. 54). What this implies is that how we feel provides a reflective guidance system that helps persons engaging in the creative process. However, do individuals engaging in a creative process pay enough attention to how they feel to use this data to guide their actions? What Radford does not explore is *how* people go about using the way they feel in an ‘emotionally satisfying’ way to optimize creativity and performance. As such, many questions remained. For example, how do we use feel to develop creativity? How does getting rid of dissonance help us be more creative? Because the RPM (Newburg et al. 2002) accounts for obstacles or experiences of dissonance, it was thought that using resonance while engaging in the process of creativity could potentially address the reconciliation of emotional tension thereby allowing the creative process to occur.

Recordon (1994) explains how artists “use their knowledge to see what lies under the surface” (p. 333). What lies there is our felt experience of the world, our internal emotional response to what is external. Recordon shares how emotions and tensions are part of her creative process in silk dying. She explains how “feel” informs her in this process:

“I may have spent many days working my design onto the silk, while also thinking about the colors I am going to dye it. Then comes the time when the silk is ready for dying, but I must wait until the moment ‘feels right’, even if it takes several days before I am ready to use the tension which has been building up within me; this is the moment when I stand the best chance of using my skills intuitively to bring about the transformation that I have in mind.” (Recordon, 1994, p. 332)

Using “feel”, emotions, and intuition to guide artists in the creative process has become more and more a topic of discussion in research on creativity, particularly in the context of dance. Bannon and Sanderson (2000) explain how two polar opposite views of creativity exist in dance; one view suggests ‘skilling’ that can be shown and in a sense apprenticed while the other view suggests leaving all creative process to our innate sensitivity and feelings. Since our Western approach to dance education is fundamentally based on a technique, curriculum based focus, finding a balance between these two divergent approaches to creativity may be the ticket to consciously facilitating the process of creativity. As such, paying attention to “feel” and our internal, emotional responses appeared to be a much needed perspective towards enhancing and bettering our creative process in dance.

The importance of feel can also be found in the study of aesthetics and somaesthetics. Particular to dance, Dewey (as cited in Arnold, 2005) recognized that aesthetic experience engages the whole person, and that like somaesthetics, encourages “organically felt experiences” (p. 52). Aesthetics is often explained as the raw data we encounter, the sensuous aspects of our experiences (Fenner, 2003). Aesthetic experience is when we are present, in the here and now, subject to the experience in order to know how it feels (Arnold, 2005). Because dance artists perform their art using their bodies, being sensitive to and aware of their internal process including their five senses, feelings, and emotions is crucial to their creative dance process. This is why dance can be thought of as “objectively known and subjectively lived” (Fraleigh as cited in Arnold, 2005, p. 60). This subjective sense of knowing allows dancers to truly feel movements from an embodied place, instead of performing well-drilled movements without any connection to feel. Somaesthetics, concerned with being a whole person, emphasizes the physical, the senses, and the felt aspect of living (Arnold, 2005). According to Arnold, much more should be

done within the realms of dance to somaesthetically educate people which can be done by focusing on individuals as a whole and emphasizing “their soma in the form of its physical skills, senses” (p.48) or in other words their felt experience within dance and the creative process.

Unfortunately, most professional dance schools typically focus on training the body while following and conforming to traditional syllabus and ways of moving the body that do not take felt experiences and the creative process into consideration (Morris, 2003). This emphasis in training has rendered a field, and potentially a generation of dancers, concerned predominantly with the execution of “flamboyant skills, and the mechanics of executing the codified technical movements” at the expense perhaps of expression, enjoyment and creativity (Morris, 2003, p. 18). As suggested by Morris, most schools and companies now select dancers through auditions taking place in the form of a technique class instead of choreographed performance. This supports the notion that for many, the physical execution of correct dance movement is valued over and above creative expression and artistic abilities. Furthermore, inherent in the culture of dance, is an admiration for (a) discipline at all costs, (b) excessive thinness, (c) conformity, virtuosity, and the pursuit of perfection which may ultimately restrict dancers’ interpretation of choreography and their own creativity (Morris, 2003). Contrary to some aspects of the above described reality, however, participation in the arts is sometimes seen as a way to nurture and encourage problem solving and creative thinking in young people (Minton, 2003). What therefore becomes evident is the disjointedness between the perceived creative nature of dance and common technical training and educational approaches.

Some researchers have argued that in the early years of a child’s development, play creates meaning and thus forms the basis for the child’s creativity. As such, play, which usually makes people feel good, could be thought to be a preliminary step to artistic creation (Lindqvist,

2001). Unfortunately, in dance education, technique and imitation is often emphasized instead of play and the creative process (Lindqvist, 2001). Moreover, because of their emphasis on evaluation and rewards, educational systems have been designed and structured in a way that unfortunately discourages play, creativity, and intrinsic motivation (Hennessey, 2003). Lindqvist (2001) advocated that dance must be meaningful, particularly for children and developing young artists. According to Bannon and Sanderson (2000), the dance medium should incorporate equal and fundamental elements such as the dancer, the space, the time, and the context of creation and creativity. This therefore implies that creativity is as important an element to dance development as technique, form, and musicality.

Some teachers, pedagogues, and researchers are now beginning to express dissatisfaction towards the common 'teacher-centered' and 'emotionally removed' approach to dance because it is contributing to the ever-expanding gap between the development of technique and artistry (Morris, 2003). What Morris (2003) is suggesting is that making dance training fixed in past traditions "impede[s] its creative development" (p. 27). Of particular concern in dance is the notion of the creator versus the created that exists between the choreographer, the dancer, and ultimately, the dance. In other words, the dancer is often compared to a blank canvas on which a choreographer imposes a vision to be felt and communicated for the sake of the audience. As Yeats (1980) so powerfully expressed, "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, how can we know the dancer from the dance?" (Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, p. 584). Many theorists, in fact, differentiate between art and aesthetics; art being the creation of the artifact (the choreography, the dance), and aesthetics representing the experience of feeling and relating to such an artifact (the experience of the dancer) (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000).

Related to this, Bane (1999) explains how a distinction must be made between creative products and the creative process. She suggests that “creating for process always supports and develops your ability to create a product. Creating a product often gives you insight, supporting and developing your process. We need to balance and blend *creating for process* and *creating for product*” (p. 198). This crucial distinction must be made clear: creativity is both a product and process. Yet, in this obsessed producing society, it is not the process of creativity that is nurtured, only the product. Because of the importance of maintaining a balance between these two components of creativity, exploring, understanding, and perhaps rekindling our awareness of the process is needed to optimize the development of dance artists. Finding a useful, practical way to incorporate an emotionally sensitive approach to creativity in the development of dance artists, and the forum of dance education, was therefore thought an important area to research.

One practical way of exploring emotions and the creative process in dancers is through resonance. As previously mentioned, resonance is a process in which individuals engage to feel the way they want to feel. Given that how we feel is at the heart of not only resonance but also creativity and dance, the RPM (Newburg et al., 2002) seemed to be a valuable tool to empirically explore these concepts. Research on resonance so far suggests that most people believe that how they feel directly impacts how they perform (Arcand et al., in press; Doell et al., in press; Durand-Bush et al., 2004; Faubert et al., 2005; Newburg, 2006). In the following section, I describe the RPM framework and its potential use in the study of the creative process of dancers.

Resonance

Feelings are said to be at the very core of resonance (Newburg, et al., 2002) and thus the RPM. Resonance is defined as:

“A process that allows people to feel the way they want to feel, prepare to experience desired feelings, recognize obstacles that prevent them from feeling the way they want to feel, and reconnect with desired feelings when they are not experiencing them.” (Durand-Bush et al., 2004, p. 3).

The Resonance Performance Model (RPM). The RPM stemmed from Newburg’s extensive work with over 300 individuals and groups in the domains of elite sport, sciences, business, medicine, law, and the performing arts (Newburg et al., 2002). It is a model that emerged inductively from research guided by the constructivist paradigm. Open-ended interviews were conducted in a variety of social contexts based on a grounded theory and story-telling approach. As such, the model is a summary of the main themes emerging from the analysis (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). Engaging in the process of resonance on a regular basis led to enhanced human performance and overall well-being in a variety of domains (Newburg et al., 2002). Circular in shape, thereby having no end and no beginning, the RPM comprises four components that represent a dynamic process: dream feeling, preparation, obstacles, and revisit the dream feeling (Newburg, et al., 2002). Individuals experience this process in a very holistic and personal manner, sometimes moving quickly or slowly, smoothly or haphazardly, consciously or unconsciously through the various phases of the process (see Appendix A).

The **dream feeling** in the RPM represents how individuals wish to feel as they engage in their daily lives. It is not an outcome goal but rather reflects how people want to feel when involved in particular activities (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). It is based on the idea of “finding and building on what is right” for the individual working through the process of resonance (Newburg, et al., 2002, p. 250). One Olympic gold medalist described his dream feeling as “easy speed,” which represented for him a ballet or harmony with the water where he was swimming

with 100% maximum output with only 80 % perceived effort (Newburg et al., 2002, p. 252).

Dream feelings are defined based on personal context. In Soulard's study (2003), for example, a Canadian badminton competitor expressed wanting to feel "on fire" during competitions, confident in his day to day training, and relaxed in the rest of his life (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). The main indicator of resonance is how one feels (Arcand et al., in press) and how one then makes choices to protect that feeling. This can take many forms and expressions and can change over the course of one's life. By identifying and protecting desired feelings, particularly those facilitating creativity, it was thought that dancers might be able to tap into their creative processes more readily.

The **preparation** phase in the RPM represents the work in which people actively engage to allow desired feelings to occur. It is what allows them to participate in activities that serve the purpose of both eliciting dream feelings and nurturing skill development necessary for the realization of performances (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). It is important for people to align their dream feelings with their preparation practice. Keeping dream feelings in sight, setting useful goals that allow them to hold on to the feelings that inspire them to prepare has been found to be critical in the process of resonance (Newburg et al., 2002). Dancers, for example, engage in daily technique classes regardless of technical expertise, performing status, or work schedules because this preparation is perceived to lead them to successfully perform on stage. However, facilitating the experience of desired feelings during this preparation does not appear to be a prevalent concern in many dance schools (Morris, 2003). Thus we thought it interesting to see if dancers could be empowered to feel the way they want to feel during their preparation, despite imposed traditional views, and if this would facilitate their creative process and performance.

The **obstacles** in the RPM represent embedded life and performance challenges that we all inevitably face. Obstacles are an inherent part of the resonance process and individuals are encouraged to embrace them, note how they feel when they encounter them, and reconnect to how they would rather feel. Obstacles can be either internal (e.g., fear, doubt, anxiety) or external (e.g., parental pressure, losses, competitors) and result in a disruption of the resonance experience (Newburg et al., 2002). In fact, Newburg and colleagues (2002) warn us of the **obstacle-preparation loop**. This loop is not unlike a pothole in the road, where people end up feeling stuck in this vicious cycle between obstacle and preparation. Instead of reconnecting, people work harder and lose touch with why they are doing what they are doing in the first place. This can result in a demoralizing, energy draining experience. In my personal experience as a dancer and teacher, a common example of how dancers get stuck in the obstacle-preparation loop is when trying to push through an injury that would be better served with rest and respect.

The **revisit the dream feeling** component of the RPM is the fourth aspect to consider in the process of resonance. It is often said to be particularly reflective and is meant to allow individuals to reconnect to their original dream feeling that led them to engage in a particular activity (Newburg et al., 2002). People tend to use strategies and tactics that re-energize and renew their motivation to engage in more preparation through their meaningful life choices and activities (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). Doell and colleagues (in press) were able to identify common patterns of revisiting strategies that were performance and non-performance related, as well as momentary or delayed depending on the perceived most opportune time to revisit. Revisiting how we want to feel on a daily basis is the way to not only sustain our experience of desired dream feelings but also to prevent getting caught in the obstacle-preparation loop. For the injured dancer, for example, a day or two of rest and reflection might be rejuvenating and more

beneficial in the long run than the alternative option of engaging in more intense and painful preparation.

Research to date. Beyond Newburg's initial research, 13 extensive studies have been conducted using the RPM as a framework. This has resulted in data from over 50 athletes participating in a wide range of sporting activities at both competitive and recreational levels (Arcand et al., in press; Burke & Durand-Bush, 2005; Callary, 2004; Doell et al., in press; Faubert et al., 2005; Durand-Bush et al., 2004; Durand-Bush, Trudel, & Short, 2004; Soulard, 2003). Notably, all participants involved identified with the RPM components and 90% of individuals who participated in a resonance-based intervention were able to fully experience their own personal process of resonance. In general, research using the RPM as a framework has demonstrated that a resonance-based intervention improved self-awareness and self-knowledge, which resulted in a heightened sense of resonance, performance, and well-being (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). More specifically, "participating in a resonance-based intervention has had a positive impact on the participants because it helped them to realize that how they feel matters" (Durand-Bush et al., 2004, p. 18).

Pertinent to the current study, Soulard (2003) brought a cultural aspect into the research on resonance by examining the process of resonance of athletes from different cultures, that is, France, Canada, and Singapore. The focus was on identifying similarities and differences between individuals from collectivist and individualistic countries when developing and engaging in their personal process of resonance. Interestingly, results showed that regardless of culture, all participants were able to identify and experience their dream feeling by learning resonance and applying their personalized process of resonance in their lives. Some interesting differences, however, pertain to the choice of preparation and revisiting strategies used by the

athletes of differing countries, revealing that cultural differences must be considered when using the RPM as a framework (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). It is with this in mind, that this study incorporated the cultural context of dancers as an important component of their lived experiences and as a necessary part to fully understand their creative process. As Sands (2002) stated, “the concept of culture needs to be seen as part of the human experience” (p. 46). Culture is often used to mean large segments of populations, age generations, sociological references, distinct attitudes, and even sports (Sands, 2002). An important finding of Soulard’s study is that the environment, suggested to be most influenced by culture, needs to be taken into account when working with athletes (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). As such, this study researched the role of feel in the creative experiences of dancers from the perspective that dancers live in and experience a distinct cultural world.

Burke and Durand-Bush (2005) studied the resonance process of mountain climbers as they attempted to summit Mount Everest. In this unique study, the main researcher used an ethnographic approach, which facilitated the observation of and interaction with each participant, in addition to recording her own process of resonance throughout the climbing exhibition (Durand-Bush et al., 2005). Defining and engaging in their personal process of resonance was found to contribute to the climbers’ motivation in their quest to climb the mountain. The ethnographic methodology that was used was a unique feature and strength of this study as it allowed the researcher to immerse herself and collect rich and in-depth contextual information (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). In light of these findings, an ethnographic approach was used in this study in order to be able to access, on a socially interactive level, the cultural reality experienced by the dancers in an attempt to best understand their experiences within their process of creativity.

In 2004, I used the RPM as a foundation to develop a performance-enhancement workshop-based study with professional ballet dancers from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School (Lussier, 2004). Using a quasi-experimental, mixed methods design, this study quantitatively demonstrated significant improvements in the dancers' self-efficacy following an 8-week intervention. Furthermore, results showed positive trends regarding the participants' self-esteem and coping response styles. This study is crucial as it is the first to demonstrate the appropriateness and effectiveness of using the RPM as a group consulting approach with dancers. Strengths of this study include the group discussion workshop approach, which was shown to be effective in producing desired outcomes, and equally important, was enjoyed by the participants. This study was thus used as a guide for designing this current research. An important empirical limitation of the above-mentioned study, however, is the fact that the RPM was used in conjunction with other models of performance enhancement, thereby making it impossible to determine conclusively which aspects of the intervention contributed most significantly to change.

Also relevant to the current study are some of the qualitative discoveries resulting from the above-mentioned research. Common themes emerged from both the group discussions and the individual journals, which suggested that dancers shared at least three significant characteristics; they thrived on (a) the work, the challenge, the "positive" stress, (b) being in the moment, immersed, experiencing flow, and (c) emotional experiencing, particularly joy. It is this third characteristic, emotional experiencing, that was further investigated in this most recent study. Using the RPM as a framework has hopefully shed further light on this culturally shared characteristic among dancers and their desire to fully experience emotions, more specifically, joy, and how feel is an integral part of their creative process.

Summary of Existing Gaps in the Literature. Though research using the RPM as a framework is both growing and exciting, there exist some serious gaps needing researchers' attention. As suggested by Newburg and colleagues (2002), resonance may be used in groups. Yet to date, there is no empirical data to support this claim. Additionally, the RPM alone had yet to be used and empirically examined within the performing domain of dance. Furthermore, as suggested by Grey and Kunkel (2001), there have yet to be any psychological accounts of dancers' experiences, let alone bringing to light how they feel while engaging creatively both individually and collectively. Since creativity has most often been researched as a product instead of as an experiential process (Hennessey, 2003), using the RPM as a consulting tool to bring to life the lived creative experiences of dancers will hopefully begin to fill this gap in the literature. Finally, the role of the RPM as a consulting framework has thus far received little empirical attention. By attending to these gaps in the current research on resonance and the role of feel in the creative process of dancers, this study provides rich data leading to applied implications for performers, educators, support staff, and performance consultants.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

Based on the previous literature review, and my 20 years of experience in dance as a performer, teacher, and consultant, the purpose of this study was to explore the role of feel in the creative process of dancers using a group resonance approach. Due to the fact that research on process and social aspects of creativity in the context of dance is limited, this study was exploratory in nature. Research questions were therefore broad and open to allow the emergence of ideas as the study evolved and as participants created the process. This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of feel in modern dancers' creative process?
2. How do dancers feel when engaging in their creative process?
3. What facilitates and inhibits how dancers want to feel?
4. Do they reconnect with how they want to feel when faced with obstacles?
5. If so, how? If not, why and how does this affect their creative experiences?

The specific methodology used in this study will be detailed in the following section.

As mentioned previously, feel in the creative context of modern dancers was studied as a process thus an exploratory and inductive approach best suited this inquiry. A qualitative research design involving an ethnographic approach, grounded in the participatory paradigm, was used. The following sub-sections will present the theoretical framework, the participatory paradigm, participants, as well as the ethnographic process and procedures that were used to carry out this study.

Theoretical Framework

The RPM (Newburg et al., 2002) was used as a theoretical framework. This framework informed what I, as a participant-researcher, brought to our group discussions on feel and creativity. Research questions of interest were developed based on the RPM thus the process of data collecting was invariably influenced by this theoretical framework. Arcand et al. (in press) proposed that from a consultant's perspective, the concept of resonance allows practitioners to help individuals do the real work" (p. 6). By supporting participants to pay attention to their felt individual and collective experiences, it was hoped that the creative process would emerge and be brought to a conscious level. The RPM provided a straightforward, comprehensive framework, and thus reference point, from which participants were able to collaborate, learn, and grow. Consultants using a resonance approach view their clients or participants as the experts of their life (Arcand et al., in press). Together they create meaning, which originates from the participants themselves.

Resonance as a consulting approach is ultimately embedded in a humanistic, client-centered philosophy of counseling (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). It is influenced by the Rogerian approach to counseling, which stipulates three necessary yet sufficient counselor qualities to create a therapeutic relationship: empathy, congruency, and unconditional positive regard (Corey, 2001). As suggested by Durand-Bush and colleagues, the personal nature of the work involved in resonance-based counseling and interventions necessitates these qualities from the consultant in order to facilitate growth. Additionally, the resonance approach is directly in line with positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), a line of research focusing on the positive assets of humans. Empowering individuals to identify and build on positive assets is important in the resonance process. From an applied perspective, the resonance approach fits

well with the participatory paradigm in which this study is grounded because it is based on the notion of collaboration and the understanding of meaning and reality.

Paradigm

The participatory paradigm allows researchers and participants to “be co-participants in defining and altering” situations (Joyappa & Martin, 1996, p. 2). It is an approach that seeks to empower both individuals and communities in a way that allows and perhaps even facilitates eventual social change (Joyappa & Martin, 1996). As argued by Heron and Reason (1997), the participatory worldview allows us, as researchers, to unite with other persons in a collaborative approach to inquiry.

An important aspect of participatory research is its attempt to share control of the actual research process with those involved in it. What becomes important in this research approach is who produces, validates, and is empowered by knowledge. Participatory research is ultimately a bottom-up approach that is participant driven and favors individual meaningful outcomes over a broader generalizability of findings (Joyappa & Martin, 1996). This approach is exactly in line with the resonance approach (Durand-Bush et al., 2004).

Ontology. In terms of how we view the world, the participatory paradigm asserts that in no way can we ever have absolute experiential knowledge, and as such, what must be remembered about experiential knowing is that “the very process of perceiving is also a meeting, a transaction” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 278). Heron and Reason state: “To experience anything is to participate in it, and to participate is both to mold and to encounter, hence experiential reality is always subjective-objective” (p. 278). For example, if I place my hand in a lake, I am objectively doing so, but by participating in this meeting with water, I am also molding it. In other words, objectively, the lake is not the same and nor am I because of this

experiential transaction. Yet, my experience of this meeting will always be fundamentally subjective. As Montuori and Purser (1995) also eloquently put it; “for a creative musician to even exist, there must be a musical discourse for the musician to participate in” (p.89). This relationship means that we come to know a world at an interactive interface, which exists between one and what is encountered (Heron & Reason, 1997). This can be linked to Rubin’s (2004) argument that a space exists between the external world and ourselves and that it is in this ‘space’ that knowledge moves and takes form. It is suggested that it is in this space that creativity also takes place (Rubin, 2004).

Epistemology. Heron and Reason (1997) describe that a knower comes to know in four different ways; that is an experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical way (see Appendix B). The first kind of knowing, experiential, stems from an “empathic resonance with a being... it is also the creative shaping of a world” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 280). Presentational knowing is grounded in experiential knowledge but takes shape as “metaphors of aesthetic creation” and ultimately represents the meanings we have embedded from our experiential knowing. Propositional kind of knowing is description based, taking form through statements, theories, and concepts. Finally, practical knowledge refers to knowing how to actually perform a skill of some sort and is based on the three prior forms of knowledge (Heron & Reason, 1997). Important to note in doing research from a participatory world view is the conscious acknowledgement of our own subjectivity. There inherently is an acceptance of our perspective of knowledge, and while authentically valuing that, we recognize its biases and articulate this consciousness and awareness (Heron & Reason, 1997).

Methodology. Heron and Reason (1997) suggest that from a participatory worldview, methodologies need to reflect this democratic dialogue creation between both the participants

and the researchers through co-operative methods of inquiry. According to Heron and Reason (1997), a co-operative method means;

People collaborate to define the questions they wish to explore and the methodology for that exploration (propositional knowing); together or separately they apply this methodology in the world of their practice (practical knowing); which leads to new forms of encounter with their world (experiential knowing); and they find ways to represent this experience in significant patterns (presentational knowing) which feeds into a revised propositional understanding of the original question (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 282).

In this study, a collaborative approach was used to explore the role of feel in the creative process of dancers. Both myself and the dancers participated in this exploration. Due to my active participation, I acknowledge my role in this study as a co-participant, co-researcher, and in some regards a co-agent of change. I was as transparent as possible with the participating dancers about every decision taken along the way in order to involve them whenever possible in the choices and options before us. Yet, throughout the resulting text, I acknowledge my role as a facilitator, interpreter, and ultimately author or story teller sharing my own subjective understanding of our collective experience. In conjunction with this collaborative approach, ethnography was used, which allowed me to immerse myself in the cultural context and daily realities of the dancers (Sands, 2002). As Montuori and Purser (1995) suggest, an “important avenue for creativity research will be the study of creative groups where creativity is an emergent property of the collective” (p.105). One of the ways to be able to capture this is through ethnography as it includes extensive field observations, group interviews, individual interviews, journal narratives, field notes, and reflective practice narratives. This qualitative research approach will be described in greater detail shortly.

Axiology. Questions of axiology pertain to the intrinsic value of what is being questioned. One of the most important factors to remember from a participatory worldview is the idea that “participation implies engagement which implies responsibility” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 285). Implications for this study include taking ownership for how one feels, for one’s creative process through engagement and furthermore responsibly contributing to the artistic domain of dance. This is in line with the resonance framework as it empowers individuals to fully engage in their endeavors and take responsibility for their actions (Newburg et al., 2002). What is valued in the participatory paradigm is the ‘raison d’être’ itself, meaning being a part of the world. In other words, creative individuals participate in a collaborative discourse, which is inspiring enough to warrant a contribution of their own (Montuori and Purser, 1995). In terms of social change, the axiology of the participatory worldview emphasizes the need for responsibility as well as empowerment.

Ethnography

Ethnography, in simple terms, refers to a way of describing a particular culture in a qualitative way. More specifically, it is “an amalgam of research activities, mediated through the researcher, culminating in a textual account of the culture of a social group” (Krane & Baird, 2005, p. 88). By diving into a particular culture, ethnography sheds information and insight into the behaviors, values, social norms, emotions, and mental states of a group (Krane & Baird, 2005). Ethnographic studies use many methods common in other qualitative research yet remain grounded in the cultural context, giving it a sociological influence and therefore viewing life from a broader, global lens. The goal of ethnography is to generate in-depth understanding of certain groups of people living in certain social contexts. Empirically, it is the method that allows

a researcher to 'walk a mile in someone else's shoes.' In order to do this, a great deal of time is spent within the cultural context that is being explored.

Active participation in a cultural context allows a researcher to go beyond surface description by participating, listening, asking, probing, in the quest of cultural meaning (Sands, 2002). Methods used by ethnographers include: participant observation, semi-structured interviews (groups or individual), informal interviews, life histories, historical sources, field notes, research logs, reflexive journal, photography, audiotaping, videotaping, and experiential ethnography (Krane & Baird, 2005; Sands, 2002). Experiential ethnography means taking the sociological notion of going native to the extreme of full immersion. As Sands (2002) suggests, this type of ethnography can reveal a great deal of rich data particularly relevant to emotions and "feel":

"Any type of performance-based ethnography, or experiential ethnography, is situated not only in the cognitive or idealist and learned and shared spheres of culture but also in a more sensuous, bodily, or kinesthetic experience of the performance, whether it be sport, theatre, or dance. Because they go through the same process of unlocking doors and experiencing rites of passage, performance ethnographers are poised to access this sphere of body-intense activity because they have experienced the same somatic and kinesthetic experience." (p. 130)

Since participant observation is the main fieldwork method in ethnography (Krane & Baird, 2005; Sands, 2002), I spent four months immersed in the context of the dancers in order to capture their experience of creativity and the processes underlying it. In addition to the multiple focus group discussions I facilitated, I observed and experientially participated in many of the dancers' weekly activities for the duration of the study. Given that the design in ethnographic

research is emergent and continually develops as more information is accessed (Krane & Baird, 2005), I involved myself as participant in a multitude of ways as the opportunities presented themselves including observer, group discussion member, facilitator, supporter, videographer, volunteer, dancer, co-creator, and performer. Because this study was grounded in the participatory paradigm, and because as mentioned above, ethnography is an emergent design, I continually negotiated with all parties involved the level of my immersion throughout the study.

According to Montuori and Purser (1995), knowing the cultural context of creativity results in the creation of ground from where numerous narratives can emerge. As such, it is through ethnographic methods that the culture of dance provided rich soil from which to position the emergent collaborative knowledge of the role of feel in dancers' creativity processes. As supported by Krane and Baird (2005), it is believed that ethnography research can enhance knowledge for the benefit of the field of sport psychology, particularly when concerned with evaluating or exploring the process of applied research. It is important however to acknowledge that this was not a pure ethnography in the traditional sense as I brought with me a resonance-based perspective which informed the way in which I participated in the focus group discussions, and the way in which I analyzed the data. This will be further described in the data analysis section.

Intervention

Participants. The participants consisted of 6 pre-professional modern dance students, that is, 1 man and 5 women, training at an internationally recognized professional dance school in Canada. As volunteers in this research, they participated in resonance-based focus group discussions once a week for 12 weeks. All participants were over 18 years of age.

A recruitment poster was first displayed at the dance school and an information session was held to communicate the aims of the study and provide an opportunity for questions to be asked. Those who expressed interest received a letter describing the intended study in detail along with consent forms for participation (see Appendices C and D). In this letter, the study was outlined and explained (a) the use of the RPM as a framework, (b) the intervention involving focus group discussions, (c) the creative production component, as well as (d) the commitment level and length of involvement required. Furthermore, participants were made aware of the participatory nature of this study and thus, of their valued personal expertise and decisional input in this exploratory study on creativity. Finally, they were informed that confidentiality of their responses would be protected, unless they chose otherwise following the study, and all participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty of any kind.

Focus Group Discussions. The dancers participated in 12 resonance-based focus group discussions. Each focus group discussion lasting approximately 1.5 hours was facilitated by myself and consisted of a participant-centered group discussion surrounding themes pertaining to the process of creativity and affective experiences brought forth and negotiated between the participants and myself. The first focus group discussion consisted of getting to know one another and establishing rapport, an important component in any collaboration. It was held at the start of the dancers' training season in September 2005. As such, returning dancers already knew one another yet new students were also joining the group along with myself, thereby creating an entirely new group culture, dynamic and collective creative process to explore. Ice breaker activities, such as "My life in 400 words" (Newburg, 2006) were conducted and we first explored the question, "Why do we dance?"

At the beginning of each of the remaining focus group discussions, all of the participants were asked to reflect on what had been most important to them during the past week and share their lessons learned. This allowed me to further establish rapport with the participants and thus be more easily able to submerge myself as a member of this particular dance community. It was also hoped that this practice encouraged self-reflection, given that the focus group discussions were assuming a participant-centered approach. The second phase of each workshop consisted of briefly reviewing the themes collectively discussed the previous week as a transition to potential new themes or issues. The participants were encouraged to bring something to the discussion that had become meaningful to them in their reflections over the course of the previous week. I thus facilitated discussion yet the content was constantly negotiated among us based on themes generated by the group or myself. As evident from some of the research questions, one of the topics that I addressed pertained to resonance, more particularly feel and emotions and their role in facilitating or inhibiting creativity. With the group's consent, I gradually attempted to help them enhance their awareness and understanding of how they wanted to feel within the context of dance and their creative process. All discussions held during our meetings were audio taped and later transcribed verbatim. In addition, dancers each engaged in a creative process during the course of this study by choreographing either a solo or a duo for an on-stage performance demonstration.

Creative work. The participants were encouraged to pay attention to thoughts, feelings, and experiences throughout the development of their personal dance work (solo or duo) and to narrate their process within our focus group discussions. Final creative works were presented at the National Arts Centre as part of a show entitled "Solo Dances" on December 1st 2005. The purpose of this creative work was twofold; it was considered an assignment as part of their

program and provided the ground from which to address how they felt within their creative process. The creative product of choreography was not meant to be measured, evaluated, or critiqued in any way.

Data Analysis

From an analysis perspective, it is important to note that an ethnographer interprets and derives meaning from human behaviors in naturalistic settings. All ethnographic data collected in this naturalistic setting were aggregated into a text where the voice inside the text stood as a perspective representing a slice of an experience (Sands, 2002). As Sands explains, traditional ethnography favored a distant voice, sterile of all emotions. Now, there are many accepted perspectives from which an ethnographer can write. Many would argue that there exists an “intimate involvement and sympathetic emotional connection” which is essential to solid ethnographic work (Sanders, 1999, p. 670). This connection and perspective should then be reflected in the written text the ethnographer produces. Krane and Baird (2005) stated that “the process of describing other people’s experiences crosses scientific, epistemological, moral, and political boundaries. The question of whose voice is being heard must be asked” (p. 99). In light of this, and because of the participatory nature of this study, three types of voices were considered: the dancers’ individual voices via individual citations, the dancers’ collective voice via dialogue, and my voice as participant-researcher via journal excerpts and narration developed predominantly from field notes. I used deductive and inductive content analysis (Côté et al., 1993), along with narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) to create evocative text (i.e., tales) to best represent the lived experiences of the participants, including myself.

In my first article, I have created a realist tale to highlight the role of *individual feel* in the creative experiences of modern dancers. This form of writing is characterized by an almost

complete, explicit absence of the author's voice in the text, except for the methods section (Sparkes, 2002). According to Van Maanen (as cited in Sparkes, 2002), another key component of realist tales are the use of highly edited quotes meant to substantiate evidence pertaining to proposed themes, and to contribute depth to the information provided. The aim of using such tightly edited quotes is to convey to the reader a powerful sense of the participants' voices (Sparkes, 2002). Sparkes further explains that the conventions of realist tales facilitate the connection between data and theory in such a way as to create space for the participants' voices. By engaging the reader using a realist tale, I was able to share the dancers' experiences in their own words, yet demonstrate how individual feel emerged as an integral part of their creative process by making links to the RPM framework.

In my second article, I have chosen to write an autoethnographic tale (Sparkes, 2002) also known as an experiential ethnographic tale (Sands, 2002). This form of writing is characterized by "lived evocative experience expressed through text" (Sands, 2002, p. 123). By using experiential ethnography, Sands (2002) explains that the ethnographer can access otherwise inaccessible data such as feelings, ambiguities, and temporal sequences, just to name a few. Ellis (as cited in Sparkes, 2002) notes certain characteristics of autoethnography including the researcher's vulnerabilities such as emotions, the production of evocative text, and the featuring of multiple voices in the hopes of understanding a particular way of life. In this second article, I take the reader on a journey using non-fictional vignettes (Sparkes, 2002) while incorporating "feelings and participatory experiences as dimensions of knowing" (Sparkes, 2002, p.102). The goal of such a tale is to experience the same cultural reality as that of all cultural members (Sands, 2002) in hopes of gaining a better understanding of others, and ourselves.

In essence, to create the realist and autoethnographic tales, data from my ethnographic field notes, research log, and reflexive journal as well as the data gathered from the dancers' focus group discussions and post study feedback forms (see appendix E) were first transcribed and analyzed deductively using the RPM as a framework and inductively based on emerging data (Côté et al., 1993). The software program Nvivo was used to help organize and categorize the extensive data that was collected. Essentially, the analysis steps involved: (a) transcribing the data, (b) importing the data in the Nvivo program, (c) creating meaning units, and (d) categorizing the meaning units based on common existing or emergent categories or themes. Of particular importance is that the data were analyzed for content but then re-analyzed within their context through a narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) to develop the tales and transcend the experiences and voice of the dancers. Additional data (videotapes) were used to both enrich and validate the findings. Creative works were not evaluated or analyzed in the traditional sense however, the creation of these works generated awareness, thoughts, and feelings, powerfully reflected in the group discussions. The creative works were an additional source of data that enriched our understanding of the emerging data. Finally, parallels and comparisons were drawn between the data gathered from participants and myself, the participant-researcher, in order to shed some light on the role and impact of an ethnographer in a dance context using resonance as a facilitative approach. Important to consider in qualitative research and particularly relevant to ethnography is that "writing and representation cannot be divorced from analysis, each should be thought of as analytic in its own right (Sparkes, 2002, p.15). As such, data analysis continued throughout the development and writing of these ethnographic tales.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an important aspect of all qualitative inquiry and is demonstrated in this research through multiple means. As emerging forms of qualitative research are explored, emerging criteria for evaluating it must be considered (Sparkes, 2002). Therefore, five criteria were taken into consideration throughout the course of this study: (a) substantive contribution, (b) aesthetic merit, (c) reflexivity, (d) impact, and (e) expression of reality (Richardson, as cited in Sparkes, 2002). As ethnography involves a lengthy immersion in a community of people, concerns for the participants in this study was of prime importance. Thus, the voice as a representative text was considered (Sands, 2002). As Sands (2002) explains, for ethnography to truly bring a cultural reality to life, the narrative must frame experience in “lived representation of both ethnographer and cultural member, supplemented by the use of other tools of ethnography, such as interview, observation, life histories, field notes, and so on” (p.136). These important research tools were rigorously applied. In addition, extensive rich text data were collected through in-depth multiple focus group discussions, which allowed all participants to individually and collectively elaborate and define their experiences in great detail. Member checking was used from one focus group discussion to the next to verify derived meaning from verbally shared lived experiences. Anonymous post study feedback was volunteered through the use of forms (see Appendix E) one month following the last meeting. Finally, creative works supplemented the rich text data, and provided a means to discuss the dancers’ creative process and how they felt within it (Polkinghorne, 1995). Together, these areas of consideration ensured the trustworthiness of this study.

It was anticipated that important and meaningful themes would emerge through the various data collection techniques, including the focus group discussions, participant

observation, experiential participation, and the creative works. Importantly, supervision with my advisor and peer debriefing occurred with my research team to facilitate awareness of my own perceptions, assumptions, and personal experiences in the domain of dance and how they might be influencing my perspective. This debriefing allowed me to remain open to the lived experiences of the participants, as well as my own in-the-moment experiences, as authentically as possible.

Complementing the data were my field notes, research log, and reflexive journal compiled as both a participant and ethnographer fully immersed in the dancers' context for a period of four months. As Krane and Baird (2005) strongly suggest, "reflexivity should be of concern to most nonpositivist research perspectives" (p. 101). Reflexivity is said to be the process of reflecting on the self as researcher, as human being, aware of how we may impact the course of the research (Krane & Baird, 2005), and aware of how our own cultural background affects the process of ethnography (Sands, 2002). As Robidoux (2001) states, "it is through self-revelation that authorial authority is minimized allowing for a more effective dialogue" between the author, the readers, and the initial experiences (p. 12). Open and honest communication with the reader through the text therefore further ensures trustworthiness.

Additionally, a 6-week pilot study was conducted to test the methodology and address any potential research design issues that could not have been anticipated. Three participants from the same dance community participated in an abbreviated 6-week resonance-based study. Through 6 weekly focus group discussions, we collectively explored their creative process. In addition, participant observation was carried out once a week by observing one of their weekly ballet classes. I volunteered and attended one of the dancers' performances as an audience member and volunteered as a backstage hand for another. I completed field notes immediately

after leaving the location and later wrote in my reflexive journal, reflecting and processing my experiences of the day as researcher and participant. The dancers carried out daily journaling for most of the 6 weeks but this tool was found to be used in different ways by each participant. Throughout the pilot study, discussions and reflections were carried out pertaining to the creative process of dancers. This sample in particular, being classically trained ballet dancers, expressed that much of this reflection on their creative process was new to them and rarely if ever addressed as part of their training. Finally, a multi-day activity revealed that a group resonance process could be discussed, identified, negotiated, and articulated within the cultural, creative context of ballet dancers. This pilot study supports the design as well as the implementation of this study and further increased the level of trustworthiness in this research.

Equally important to consider when questioning issues of trustworthiness, particularly in applied, qualitative studies is the knowledge and experience of the researcher. As participant-researcher, I used an ethnographic approach embedded in the participatory paradigm which allowed me to become a participant and thus have a powerful impact on the study itself. My extensive background in dance as a dancer and 12 years of dance teaching experience has given me an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the culture of dance. Furthermore, my extensive background in psychology, counseling, and sport psychology, combined with my undergraduate field research with dancers and supervised consulting experiences in swimming, skating, and dance has given me a solid foundation. As such, I felt well prepared and equipped to conduct the study at hand.

Innovative Contributions of the Study

Finally, noteworthy are the unique and innovative contributions of this study to the field of dance and performance psychology: (a) It is the first study from a resonance perspective to

empirically address a performing arts population, more specifically dancers, (b) it is also the first study to explore the use of resonance as a collaborative consulting approach with a group, (c) this research is the first of its kind to explore feel in the creative context of dance using the RPM, and (d) this study is also the first to be guided by the participatory paradigm and to be combined with an ethnographic approach. As Warren G. Bennis once said, "There are two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance. Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish". This exploratory study was designed to create the latter; the results of which led to two articles, documenting the process in which this can happen.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of this thesis are presented in the form of two articles. The first article is a realist tale entitled **“Feeling Creative: Exploring the role of feel in the creative process of modern dancers”** and will be submitted for publication in the *Research in Dance Education* journal.

“Tuning into you: Exploring collective feel in modern dancers through ethnography”, the second article, will be submitted for publication in *The Arts in Psychotherapy* or in the *American Journal of Dance Therapy*. This autoethnographic account imparts my experience as well as those of my co-participants while immersed in a modern dance educational context. It displays a 'creative' form of writing that forced me as a researcher to explore my own creativity through writing. I tell the story of our experience, as it occurred across time, using non-fictional vignettes like scenes from a play.

ARTICLE 1: FEELING CREATIVE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF FEEL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF MODERN DANCERS

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FEELING CREATIVE:
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF FEEL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS
OF MODERN DANCERS

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Abstract

Radford (2004) postulated that emotions are fundamentally data that should be used as a guide towards creative acts. Yet, empirically speaking, we know very little about the role of emotions, and more specifically feel, in the creative experiences of dancers. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of feel in the creative process of pre-professional modern dancers using the Resonance Performance Model (Newburg, Kimiecik, Durand-Bush, & Doell, 2002) as a framework. Resonance is a person-centered approach to performance and living (Newburg, et al., 2002). It is a process that empowers people to design their life based on how they want to feel. Using ethnography embedded in a participatory paradigm, six dancers and I engaged in weekly focus group discussions as a means of exploring how we feel in our creative processes and experiences. What emerged is a realist tale (Sparkes, 2002) which shares that how dancers feel is an integral element to their creative process.

Introduction

Few would argue the fact that how we feel is an important element of dance and creativity. Empirically, however, very little is known about the role of feel in the creative process of dancers. Therefore, a question worth asking is: "How do dancers feel when engaging in their creative process?" Furthermore, what facilitates and inhibits how they feel when creating? Consequently, this article aims to explore the role of feel in the creative process of modern dancers

Dance Education Perspectives

Dance as a performing art as well as an education domain has evolved through the years from a physical training focus in the 1920s, a self-expression medium in the 1960s, and a performance model in the 1970s (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000). Unfortunately, emerging from this performance model is a type of training that has all but removed the development of 'aesthetic sensitivity' and the 'expressive elements of dances' in many of today's dance schools and programs (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000; Morris, 2003). Nevertheless, many still argue that creativity is an inherent component of dance (Arnold, 2004), thus educational approaches that can powerfully impact the creative development, experience, and productivity of dance artists warrants investigation.

There is one school of thought that argues that in dance "expression arises from physical experience rather than from an abstract concept of emotion or from a whimsical desire to express emotion" (Franklin, 1996, p.9). One could argue that this can lead to a certain disconnection or disembodiment between the dancer, the body, and the movement. Unfortunately, most professional dance schools typically focus on training the body based on the traditional syllabus

and ways of moving the body that do not always take felt experiences and the creative process into consideration (Morris, 2003). In addition, technique and imitation is often emphasized instead of play and creativity (Lindqvist, 2001). In fact, because of their emphasis on evaluation and rewards, educational systems have been designed and structured in a way that unfortunately discourages play, creativity, and intrinsic motivation (Hennessey, 2003). This has rendered a field, and potentially a generation of dancers, concerned predominantly with the execution of “flamboyant skills, and the mechanics of executing the codified technical movements” at the expense perhaps of expression, enjoyment, and creativity (Morris, 2003, p. 18). In essence, contemporary training has been criticized for prescribing performance outcomes rather than nurturing creative emergence.

Perplexingly, participation in the arts is sometimes seen as a way to nurture and encourage problem solving and creative thinking in young people (Minton, 2003). What therefore becomes evident is the disjointedness between the potentially creative nature of dance and dance educational approaches. According to Bannon and Sanderson (2000), dance education should incorporate equal and fundamental building blocks such as the dancer, the space, the time, and the context of creation, and creativity. This therefore implies that creativity is as important an element to dance development as is technique, form, and musicality. Some teachers, pedagogues, and researchers are now beginning to express dissatisfaction towards the common ‘teacher-centered’ and ‘emotionally removed’ approach to dance because it is contributing to the ever-expanding gap between the development of technique and artistry (Morris, 2003).

Emotions, Creativity, and the Performing Arts

The research literature on emotions and creativity, as distinct and individual constructs, is historically extensive, spanning the fields of philosophy, psychology, arts, and education. However, the literature addressing the relationship between the two, that is to say the affective components of creativity, is still in its relative infancy. Moreover, studies addressing these constructs have predominantly been theoretically based (Russ, 1996), lacking the richness of lived experiences found only in people and real life situations. As such, researchers know very little about the affective experiences of artists and their creative lives.

Russ' (1996) model of affect and creativity articulates the various relationships between affect, cognition, and personality as they relate to creative processes. The underlying assumption of this model suggests that particular affective processes impact and facilitate cognitive abilities needed for creativity (Russ, 1996). Specifically, five affective processes emerged as having facilitating qualities for creative thinking: (a) Access to affect-laden thoughts, (b) Openness to affect states, (c) Affective pleasure in challenge, (d) Affective pleasure in problem solving, and (e) Cognitive integration with affect. The two broadest affective processes suggested to influence creativity were said to be access to *affect-laden thoughts*, described as "the ability to think about thoughts and images that contain emotional content" and *openness to affect states*, described as "the ability to experience the emotion itself" (Russ, 1996, p.33). This model demonstrates the importance of these processes in creative living, however, it does not illuminate *how* one goes about developing and nurturing such affective processes to enhance creative functioning and experience.

Recordon (1994) stated that "the artist balances the tension between intellect and emotion. Somewhere within this constantly changing balance, lies the source of his or her

creativity” (p. 330). Agreeing is Radford (2004) who postulated that emotions are fundamentally data and should be used as a guide towards creative acts. Radford (2004) discussed that there is an emotional dimension to knowing and an association between emotions and creativity. He explains that creative efforts are accompanied by intense feelings and that these feelings lead us to choose one path over another thus edging us deeper into creative artistic construction. How aware dancers are of the way they feel, or how they actually proceed to use this information as part of their creative process is still unknown.

Radford (2004) argues that though the “creative act reveals the emotionally reflexive dimensions to our intelligent consciousness... it is doubtful that we can consciously cultivate this emotional reflexivity” (p. 64). Yet, contrary to Radford’s view, a group of researchers (Arcand & Durand-Bush, & Miall, 2005; Doell, Durand-Bush, & Newburg (in press); Durand-Bush, Faubert, & Newburg, 2004) postulated that emotional reflexivity is a conscious and deliberate activity that can be cultivated and lead people performing in different domains to pay attention to how they feel and design their life based on specific desired feelings. Though Radford (2004) points to important relationships between feelings and creativity, he does not explore *how* people go about using their feelings in an ‘emotionally satisfying’ way to optimize creativity and performance. Newburg et al.’s (2002) Resonance Performance Model (RPM) is thus a potentially useful tool for stimulating reflection, accessing affect-laden thoughts, and as such provide dancers, researchers, and educators alike an important window into the affective experiences embedded within the creative process in dancers.

Resonance in Dance

Resonance, from a physics perspective, can be described as the harmony between two vibrational frequencies, embodied by the artist and subject (Daido Looi, 2004) such as the

dancer and the dance, or by a person and his/her environment (Newburg et al., 2002). As Daido Looi (2004) reasons, it is only by getting in touch with our inner body and feelings and by letting resonance guide us that the creative process can occur unobstructed. As such, one practical way of exploring the affective components of the creative process in dancers is through resonance.

Resonance-based research takes a person-centered approach to performance and living (Newburg et al., 2002). It is a process that empowers people to design their life based on how they want to feel (see Figure 1, Durand-Bush et al., 2004). In the resonance performance model, feel is a multidimensional, subjective experience that includes kinaesthetic sensations (i.e., feel strong, feel the rhythm) and cognitive impressions (i.e., feel confident, feel familiar with) (Arcand, Durand-Bush, & Jody Miall, in press). The resonance approach is influenced by the Rogerian approach, which is based on three necessary yet sufficient qualities to create a healing relationship: empathy, congruency, and unconditional positive regard (Corey, 2001). Additionally, the resonance approach is related to positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), a line of research focusing on the positive assets of humans. Empowering individuals to identify and build on positive assets is important as a facilitator in resonance-based research. Since creativity is an important part of dance and because the way we feel underlies the expression of creativity through dance, it appears that the RPM (Newburg et al., 2002), which summarizes the components of the resonance process, is a valuable framework from which to explore the role of feel in the creative process of dancers (See figure 1). For a detailed breakdown and thorough explanation of the RPM, readers are encouraged to read Newburg et al. (2002), Durand-Bush, Faubert, and Newburg (2004) as well as Doell, Durand-Bush, and Newburg (in press).

Beyond Newburg's initial research, ten extensive studies have been conducted using the RPM as a framework. In general, research using the RPM as a framework has demonstrated that a resonance-based intervention improved self-awareness and self-knowledge, which resulted in a heightened sense of resonance, performance, and well-being (Durand-Bush et al., 2004). More specifically, "participating in a resonance-based intervention has had a positive impact on the participants because it helped them to realize that how they feel matters" (Durand-Bush et al., 2004, p. 18). Though research using the RPM as a framework is both growing and exciting, there exist some serious gaps needing researchers' attention. As suggested by Newburg and colleagues (2002), resonance may be used in groups, yet to date, no empirical data existed to support this claim. Additionally, the RPM had yet to be used alone and empirically examined within the performing domain of dance.

Insert Figure 1 here

There is a lack of research on creativity in dancers, particularly from a process perspective. Furthermore, empirical research on resonance had yet to address the needs of dancers and the potentially facilitative power of the RPM to nurture creative processes and develop applied research based interventions. Rubin (2004) pointedly comments on the fact that we perhaps know more about creativity itself than how best to facilitate it. Furthermore, as suggested by Grey and Kunkel (2001), there have yet to be any psychological accounts of dancers' experiences, let alone the way they feel as creative artists within the culture of dance. Since creativity has most often been researched as a product instead of as an experiential process (Hennessey, 2003), using the RPM as a tool to bring to life the affective creative experiences of dancers will hopefully begin to fill this gap in the literature. As such, the purpose of this study was to explore how modern dancers feel when engaging in their creative process.

Methodology

In this study, the way dancers feel within the context of their creative process and experiences was studied. A qualitative research design grounded in the participatory paradigm and ethnographic methodologies were employed. As a theoretical framework, the RPM informed my approach and was used as a tool to collect and analyze the data. As such, both deductive and inductive content analyses (Côté et al., 1993), along with a narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) led me to create evocative text to best represent the lived experiences of the participants. As such, the text produced is a realist tale which foregrounds the voice of the participants (Sparkes, 2002).

Participants

Participants in this study were 2nd and 3rd year volunteer dancers from a 3 year pre-professional modern dance program in Ontario, Canada. Six dancers (1 man and 5 women) ranging in ages from 19 to 26 participated in 12 weekly focus group discussions aimed to explore the way they felt as creative individuals. Since a participatory paradigm and ethnographic method was used, I joined these six dancers and fully immersed myself in their culture. At the time of the study, I was a 33 year old Master's student. Prior to being a graduate student in Human Kinetics specializing in sport psychology, I completed an Honours bachelor's degree in psychology, with a major in Kinesiology and Sport Studies. Previous to my academic career, I trained professionally as a ballet dancer and enjoyed a 12 year performing and teaching career. In this study, both the dancers and I were co-participants. Due to my active participation, I acknowledge my role in this study as a co-participant, co-researcher, and in some regards a co-agent of change. I was as transparent as possible with the participating dancers about every decision taken along the way so as to be able to involve them whenever possible in the choices

and options before us. Yet, throughout the resulting text, I acknowledge my role as a facilitator, interpreter, and ultimately story teller sharing my own subjective understanding of their experiences.

Intervention

A 16 week ethnographic, participatory study using a resonance-based approach was conducted. As an ethnographer, I immersed myself for four months in the context of the dancers and collected data by: (a) engaging in extensive participant observation, (b) engaging in focus group discussions, (c) actively participating in modern dance technique classes, (d) taking field notes, (e) completing a research log and reflexive journal, (f) attending rehearsals and performances, (g) videotaping performances and rehearsals, (h) engaging in informal conversations with dancers and other informants on site, and (e) administering post study feedback forms.

The 12 weekly focus group discussions were carried out after two weeks of observation. A month after the last focus group discussion, feedback forms were completed by the dancers in order to provide anonymous feedback on their experience as participants in this study. Each focus group discussion lasted approximately 1.5 hours and was facilitated by myself. The participant-centered discussions pertained to themes relevant to the dancers' process of creativity and affective experiences brought forth and negotiated between the participants and myself. The participants were encouraged to bring to the discussion what had become meaningful to them in their reflections over the course of the previous week. I thus facilitated discussion yet the content was constantly negotiated among us based on themes generated by the group or myself.

As evident from some of the research questions, the main topic addressed was the role of feel in facilitating or inhibiting the dancers' creative process. It is important to note that though I

brought my own knowledge and experience to the discussions, all focus group discussions were participant led. As such, my role was to facilitate the discussions, probe through questions to deepen our understanding of emerging themes, and create a climate of respect, openness, and equality where all felt safe and empowered to disclose their thoughts, feelings, and creative experiences. By the 12th week of our weekly focus group discussions, all dancers chose to articulate for themselves their own personal resonance model in the journal handout previously given out. All discussions held during the focus group meetings were audio taped and later transcribed verbatim. In addition, dancers each engaged in a creative process during the course of this study by choreographing either a solo or a duo for an on-stage performance demonstration.

Data from my ethnographic field notes, research log, reflexive journal, and post intervention follow up forms, as well as the data gathered from the focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim. I used deductive and inductive content analysis (Côté et al., 1993) using the RPM as a framework along with narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) to create evocative text to best represent the lived experiences of the participants, including myself. The software program NVivo was used to help organize and categorize the extensive data that were collected. What follows then is a tale highlighting the role of *feel* in the creative experiences of modern dancers over a four month period. Though both my voice and that of the collective of dancers are integral parts of this study, this article predominantly focuses on the individual voices of the participants mainly through quotations of their affective and creative exploration as shared in our focus group discussions. A realist tale (Sparkes, 2002) shares the story of our creative exploration and the way in which *feel* was fundamental to these dancers' creative experiences.

Results

Results pertaining to the dancers' experiences are presented through both narration and citations in order to respect the various individual voices embedded within the collective. Though there are similarities in the way the dancers wanted to feel, the exact meaning for each person varied. What is perceived to be important for the dancers was the process of becoming aware, discovering, and reflecting on how they feel and how this was perceived to be irrevocably linked to their personal, and subjectively experienced, creative process. By exploring the role of feel in their creative experiences, the dancers in this study came to view themselves as creators, rather than merely canvases to be created upon by others. In other words, they came to see themselves as creative agents within their dance community. As one dancer commented at the end of the study:

Before these (focus group discussions), I don't believe I actually consciously thought about my own creative processes. That alone has spurred on a lot of exploration on many different levels... In one of our first sessions, I actually realized that I am a creator.

Dream Feeling

Most striking in the dancers' self exploration throughout this study were the desires to feel *joy, peace and well being*, the experience of *energy* and *magic of performance*, the enjoyment of *discovery*, the feelings one gets from living a creative life in a collective, *connected* manner, and "feel" in and of itself as an *embodied experience in presence*. Most dancers addressed in some form or another wanting to fully connect with the present moment, and to be able to live it with awareness, appreciation, and authenticity from a grounded place within their body, thus living the moment truly embodied:

That's when you feel great! I guess you kind of feel like you can go bigger. Your body knows its, I'm going to say "limits", but where it still is in control but I'm going to say also "effective"... it's that sort of feeling when you get to a point when it's great just to be on stage and letting your body go and just be dancing the piece... I feel like in every piece I am myself. (Amelia)

In the above citation, Amelia expresses how she experiences her dream feeling as having a kinesthetic, holistic component of feel. In the next citation, Simon's explanation of desired feelings also hints to notions of embodiment.

On, like on the spot. I want to feel myself at the moment... Now. Here. I don't know if that is an emotion. There. Present... To be really present, for me, is really important. (Simon)

Sarah May's description of why she chose dance as a profession speaks volumes to the importance of feel in the creative experiences of some modern dancers. We hear in the following words the way in which feel is the data Sarah consciously uses to inform her creative process.

I started to rent studios there and there's a feeling when you walk into an empty studio... I don't know if anybody else experiences it but it's just like seeing that space and then walking into it, you know, it's like, the possibilities... And that, it's my space and it's my time, and when I'm alone, it feels good. So that was it, that's when I was like 'I want to do this'... it's just for me, my world disappears around me except for just that moment. I'm not thinking about my technique ... when I'm dancing a piece, I'm not thinking about any of that. I don't go into the studio and be like I'm going to tell a story... that's not what it is for me, it just turns out to be an expression, because I can't see myself

dancing either. I don't even know what it looks like and what it's communicating. I only know how I feel. (Sarah May)

All dream feelings described in the focus group discussions were thus complex felt experiences that allude to the interconnectedness between affect, cognition, embodied living and their creative experiences. It is noteworthy that all six of the dancers expressed in the post study feedback form how beneficial working with the RPM was for them, particularly exploring how they wanted to feel (dream feelings) and discovering that they can in fact choose how they wish to feel and live their lives as creative artists. As one dancer shared, for her, the greatest lessons she took away from our focus group discussions was realizing that she better understood what she was working towards (dream feeling), how to respect her own day to day feelings, and how she can control how she wants and needs to feel so as to experience her creative life as she wants. Following the study, the dancers expressed how through the group resonance based focus group discussions, they were better able to (a) return to their truest self, (b) connect with how they want to feel and understand how this affects their creative process, and (c) identify what was most important to them in their lives.

Preparation

Preparation refers to what individuals do to set the stage for, and facilitate the occurrences of desired dream feelings. As Simon explains, preparation is key to feeling the way he wants to feel:

I think that how I feel affects me a great deal. If I perform when I feel well, I will perform well. But it is not all to know that when you feel good, you can give a good performance or when you feel poorly, you will give them a bad one... It is how do you do to get to,

let's say September 17th, to feel good? How do you do to control to that degree, so that on September 17th, you feel happy and well? (Simon)

What this quote demonstrates is the need to not only identify how one wants and needs to feel (Dream feelings) to perform at his/her optimal best, but also the need to prepare oneself along the way. Emerging from our focus group discussions were preparation strategies involving balancing *routines and flexibility*, consciously engaging in effective *time and energy management*, using our *focus group discussions* as opportunities to work towards desired feel, carrying out specific *pre-performance routines*, and paying attention to and *rehearsing for feel* in and of itself. All these strategies, when used consistently and consciously, facilitated the occurrence of desired feel in the participating dancers. Throughout the course of this study, the dancers were able to reflect on the preparation strategies they use and engage in more proactive preparation towards feeling the way they wanted to feel.

When talking about their preparation, the dancers often referred to habitual aspects of their training that could so often be overlooked yet played a significant role in allowing them to feel the way they wanted to feel on a day to day basis. Adherence to a particular routine provided the dancers some familiarity and consistency. This enabled them to continually re-immense themselves in their training context feeling the way they wanted, hence getting the best out of each training opportunity.

One has to always put themselves back in the mood and atmosphere to want to dance.

You come back every morning, after an evening of doing other things... I still have time to put myself into class... to have the right feeling... I think it is a good thing (routines) because it gets me back into it quicker. (Simon)

Automaticity is an important part of mastering skills and reaching optimal performance. What was interesting to hear from these dancers was how this notion of automaticity was expressed as a conscious desire and ability to feel a particular piece of choreography, a new movement, or phrase of movement. The dancers often alluded to struggling to 'feel' something or finally 'feeling' a piece, suggesting that an important part of their preparation to reach automaticity was repetition and rehearsal for the sake of feel itself, in other words feeling the way they wanted to within a particular movement. Furthermore, as Simon explains in the following citation, rehearsing for feel is not necessarily going to lead to liking a piece of choreography more than before. As such, it is important to understand that dream feelings do not necessarily generate positive emotions such as happiness, yet they may be desired nonetheless.

Speaking of feel, for me, if I am performing a piece that I don't like... Well for me personally, at one point, I will have rehearsed it so much that, maybe I still won't have grown to like it, except that I will still be able to feel it. I will find it in my body, and I will still feel good doing it. (Simon)

This distinction between *like* and *feel* that Simon offers suggests that just because he may not like a piece of choreography does not mean he can not work towards finding the right "feel." Simon's observation implies that finding that *feel* is actively sought after as a performer. One could thus say that finding the right "feel", whether one likes the movements or not, "feels" good. The dancers were found to actively prepare and rehearse for feel, in its own right. In sum, results indicate that how the dancers feel affects how they perform and experience their creative process. How they choose to prepare, or more specifically rehearse for feel, was found to be key in realizing their objectives and feeling the way they wished in the process.

Obstacles

As Sternberg (1988) said “creative people inevitably encounter obstacles. So does everyone else” (p. 143). Throughout discussions, our focus group was able to identify and articulate numerous obstacles that took the dancers away from their desired feel and powerfully impacted their capacity to engage effectively in their creative process. Among many, *emotions*, and *thinking versus feeling* were perceived as the most challenging obstacles these dancers faced throughout the course of this study.

One obstacle that frequently challenged these modern dancers was thinking at times when feeling things out in the moment and trusting themselves and how they feel might have served them and their creative process best. This occurred through negative dialogue with another, negative self talk, inappropriately timed self talk, or by placing their focus outside of themselves, Simon explained how thinking too much while performing in class got in the way of his ability to be in the moment to feel and hence perform to his optimal level:

Earlier today, I was really happy to be in class. I was really into it and was feeling fine. Then, I started thinking to myself that I was really into it, like “seems to me like class is going well.” But the more I was thinking, the more I was ruining my movements. I totally disconnected from the move by thinking “I’m into it.” (Simon)

In another instance, Sarah told Crystel prior to a performance that she was sure she would forget a particular section of choreography on stage. She ended up effectively convincing herself of that, resulting in the exact feared event occurring. Sarah explained to us how she is aware of her own self-defeating bad habit telling us how frequently she “psychs herself out.”

Aside from ineffective self talk, the mirrors, a staple in every dance studio, were found to be negative distractions rather than a helpful tool to the dancers’ creative process, blocking the

flow of ideas, as well as their capacity to feel their body in space. The ability to choose an internal focus over an external one such as mirrors seemed a vital mental skill for these dancers to learn. For example, Sarah May explained how difficult she found the process of choreographing a solo since she could not directly assess her own work visually. Her usual reliance on an external, visual focus proved to be an obstacle when trying to create a solo piece on herself. She explains: "I find it's been a real challenge between my brain and my body more so than anything else." However, through the focus group discussions, Sarah May learned how to focus on how she wanted to feel, which allowed her to make the necessary creative decisions she needed to make without directly seeing herself. In time, a feel approach could thus prove useful in instances when feeling it out serves one better than over thinking it.

One of the biggest obstacles the dancers expressed was coping with their emotions. The dancers described at great lengths the common cultural belief in dance that life and emotions should be kept outside the studio. This notion was both implicitly and explicitly expressed in a variety of ways in the dancers' lives. Teachers and parents were seen by the dancers as having a strong influence on how emotions were received, experienced, processed, or denied. The dancers shared their thoughts on this matter during one of our focus group discussions:

I think that the days where I don't have a good day, is because something happens in my life, and I go in and try to forget it. But it's really bothering me but I don't acknowledge the fact that it's bothering me... You know how they always say "leave life outside the door"? I don't think that's very good at all... Usually with me, if there's something wrong, I can't leave it at the door otherwise I end up half way through the class bursting into tears. (Amelia)

Related to this belief that emotions should be left at the door is the much referred to experience of “swallowing” whole their emotions as a way of trying to deny their affective existence, particularly when at the dance school. The idea of housing their emotions inside their bodies, as evident in much of the language used, suggests an inability to process or “digest” certain feelings. Following is an excerpt from a vital conversation held within the group addressing this important matter:

I accumulate my emotions, yes. Before, I wasn't so bad but since joining the program, you know, in the program we accumulate a lot. If (a teacher) does something, you swallow it. So I have learned how to swallow my feelings... It has now transferred in the rest of my life. (Martine)

In my upbringing, it was poorly seen to be sad, really taboo. At one point, you believe it too. Yes, I believe it. For example, if I was sad when I was young, my Dad would say “Ok, stop that now!” So you are incapable of dealing with that feeling and you never learn how to face it. You swallow it and try not to show it. (Simon)

What the dancers shared is their feeling of not knowing quite *how* to face their emotions and actually process them. In addition, as it is important for these dancers to be able to try and understand themselves and their affective experiences, they also expressed wanting to feel supported and understood by those around them, particularly those involved in their dance training. As such, ignoring affective states in the field of dance was seen as an obstacle:

We speak of emotional management... well for me the solution is to talk to people... in artistic domains. For example if you are working with a choreographer and you arrive in the morning, and you have accumulated emotions, he or she could say “Good morning everyone, how are you feeling today?” A few do that occasionally when teaching, “Had a

good weekend?” But no, typically we perform, perform, perform. If you are feeling sad, for example, you want to be understood. Sometimes, you want to be understood by the person who is training you. It could be five minutes you know... Maybe if we had that, we would be better able to turn emotions we are living negatively into positive. (Martine)

As such, emotions in general were often experienced as obstacles by this group of modern dancers. Instead of embracing emotions and working *towards* desired feelings, dancers were often *avoiding* all feelings, resulting from emotions being viewed as negative within the dance community. This avoidance approach was perceived by the dancers to drastically impact their capacity to learn, grow, and create, which is vital information that needs to be considered by dance educators and choreographers alike. On a positive note, the focus group discussions led the dancers to realize that how they feel matters and affects how they perform and engage in their creative process. They came to realize and accept that all feelings have a purpose and can be processed in time and space, regardless of the context. Of significance is that they discovered and articulated how they ideally want to feel in different situations, which provided powerful markers to which they could regularly refer and connect, particularly when they did not feel the way they wanted.

What became evident was that *thinking* versus *feeling*, and *emotions* were experienced by the dancers in this study as major obstacles. Crucial to note are the dancers' comments on their feedback forms pertaining to our focus group discussions, specifically in response to these obstacles. The dancers expressed how through this study's focus group discussions they (a) learned from other dancers' experiences, (b) realized that they are not alone in their experiences, particularly with obstacles, (c) learned from other dancers' strategies to overcome obstacles, (d) discovered ways to deal with obstacles specific to their creative process, and (e) felt supported as

they faced obstacles. The value of sharing collectively amongst peers can not be undermined, particularly when helping dancers move beyond their obstacles towards creative expression.

Revisiting the Dream Feeling

Obstacles are things most of us can identify and describe with relative ease. However, the way in which we overcome any particular obstacle is quite another matter. Revisiting how we want to feel is one way to help move from feeling the full “less than desired” impact of obstacles to reconnecting with how we would rather feel and experience life, despite these inevitable obstacles. One discussion with the dancers was particularly telling as to how we tend to initially respond to obstacles and not always subsequently evaluate whether or not our response worked for us, and effectively allowed us to feel the way we want again. As Amelia shared, “I find when I get really upset about something, I’m not very creative in how to help myself,” something to which many of us can relate. Through our focus group discussions, the dancers were able to learn new strategies from one another and identify which strategies worked best to allow them to reconnect with their dream feelings as efficiently as possible. They learned that after an obstacle, amongst several strategies, they were best able to reconnect with their chosen feelings when *tuning into feel*.

One of the dancers’ most effective strategies for revisiting their dream feelings was tuning into feel. Contrary to thinking instead of feeling, which was at times seen to be an obstacle, tuning into feel enabled them to reconnect with their inner self; that is with their bodies and how they feel holistically. Doing so seemed to allow the dancers to process their experiences more effectively, enabling them to return to feeling the way they wanted to feel:

I find myself more in my body, physically. I try and become conscious of all muscles as they move, and then I am like, “Ok, I love this!” Sometimes I don’t necessarily love

being in class, the environment around me, but at the end of the day, I realize every time that I love to move.... I find that old feeling again. It is as if this new time, is the first time that I am taking a class, and I go, "Ah! Wow! This is fun!" I rediscover that I love this. (Simon)

For Simon, reconnecting with himself at a very physical level allowed him to rediscover his love for dance and movement, allowing him to feel excited and engaged about dancing and feeling alive in the process. For Amelia, yoga was a strategy that seemed to allow her to tune into and release her innermost feelings, which she experienced in a positive way:

I went to take a yoga class last night.... It was really good and at the end of it, I cried! It was the part where they like turn off all the lights and you're just lying there and ... I knew I wasn't in a very good mood but I was like, "Ok, what makes you happy?" and then I started crying (Amelia)

In the end, connecting with herself at an emotional level through the embodied practice of yoga allowed her to reconnect with her dream feelings of joy and happiness.

In one instance, following weeks of performances during Dance on Tour, which takes the dancers across the province performing for elementary and high schools, many of the dancers expressed using their morning class to reconnect with themselves:

It's nice though to be back in technique class. Today I actually had a pretty decent class... (because of touring) you're not in your body anymore... so to be back in class and focus and reconnect with yourself feels very good. (Sarah May)

The connection between training the body and releasing emotions was also important to the dancers. Taking a class was often a strategy for purging the body of accumulated emotions through the act of moving. Thus, a focus on the body and on training enabled the dancers to more

quickly experience their desired feelings after losing sight of them. As Crystel described, she often feels a release of stress and emotions from her body following class, resulting in her feeling closer to the way she wants to feel afterwards. Similar to taking their morning technique class, some of the dancers expressed that training their body through a workout was also a way for them to reconnect with themselves and how they wish to feel on a daily basis. As Simon describes, a workout was found to be a way to both create energy and unburden the self of unwanted emotions:

I will swallow, swallow, but at one point, I have to find outlets to extract all that... I have to remove it at one point, whether it be quickly or more long term... I have strategies, like let's say when I go train that gives me endorphins. It removes some (negative emotions) of it. (Simon)

Valuing things other than dance was another way to revisit their love for dance and experience increased energy. This was often referred to as play time, a time to get outside of dance, to think about and do other things. This play time seemed to serve as a physical, mental, and emotional break, as well as a way to rediscover their art:

I started instructing snowboarding, and it made me appreciate dance so much more. I get outside, do something else and not think about dance. I come back on Monday, "Oh this is so different then gliding down the hill but I'm still using this muscle and that." It's related because I'm still using my body but it's important to me not to be surrounded by dance all the time... It doesn't make the situation better but you can feel better. (Amelia)

In the above citation, we see how important movement and engaging in activities other than dance is to Amelia, a feeling echoed by many of the dancers. Engaging in playful activities allowed them to recover from obstacles more effectively as well as to create and build positive

energy. As evidenced in the various strategies described in the focus group discussions, the dancers in this study were able to concretely identify how tuning into feel allowed them to reconnect with their desired dream feelings sooner rather than later, by choice rather than by chance, which concurrently facilitated their creative process every step of the way.

Discussion

Feeling the Process

As Freeman (2006) so eloquently articulates, listening to our inner self, uniting intuition and reflection, and creating a harmonious feel between us as artists and our art is important to realizing our creative self. Skills of negotiation refer to *how* one masters this inner dialogue. “Process is a nebulous thing... What matters are the reasons rather than the route” (Freeman, 2006, p. 99). As was shared in the results of this study, a resonance approach facilitated our capacity for accessing the meaning behind our process; that is how we feel and truly desire to feel as we create. These are the fundamental reasons dancers express themselves creatively through dance: to *feel*.

New ideas emerge from the individuals who make them, just as intuition is at its most pronounced when the artist is compelled to create something out of incomplete information. When no clear route is suggested by a project’s starting point, intuition is married to reflection and change takes place. And, as with such union, this one requires skills of negotiation. Crucially, the negotiation amounts to an inner listening, to the student engaging in a dialogue that harmonizes the subject of the maker and the object of the made. Approached this way, creative excellence lies neither in the artist nor the art so much as in what it is that flows between them. (Freeman, 2006, p. 99).

It is said that “mental and physical senses of self are inseparable and that optimum functioning of the person depends on integration of these aspects of one embodied self” (Buckroyd, cited in Dixon 2005, p.85). There is no way around it as Freeman (2006) points out, “emotional content is a characteristic of art. Furthermore, there can be no workable separation of understanding and feeling, of knowledge and experience. Art involves a negotiation of emotionally complex structures” (p. 96). As found in the course of this study, one of the dancers’ main obstacles was the overwhelming cultural belief in dance that forces dancers to leave parts of themselves outside the classroom, and hence, outside of themselves and their bodies, thus further disconnecting the artists from their art. Using resonance as a tool to increase the dancers’ awareness, reflection, and ability to feel allowed for the negotiation, inner dialogue, and gradual re-integration of their mental and physical selves. As this data showed, dancers want to feel present and embodied. They want to feel connected to themselves and their experience as well as to those around them. One of the best ways for them to experience this was to tune into feel.

Bannon and Sanderson (2000) explain how two polar opposite views of creativity exist in dance; one view suggests ‘skilling’ that can be shown and in a sense apprenticed while the other view suggests leaving all creative process to our innate sensitivity and feelings. Since our Western approach to dance education is fundamentally based on a skill / technique, curriculum based focus, finding a better balance between these two divergent approaches to creativity may be the ticket to consciously facilitating the process of creativity. As such, paying attention to “feel” and our internal, embodied emotional responses appears to be a much needed perspective that may potentially enhance our creative process in dance. This has important implications for dance teachers and curriculum designers dictating dance programs and largely influencing the experience of dancers in this country.

There already exist many approaches or techniques that promote and guide a variety of practitioners to integrate mind and body, in other words, thinking, doing, and important but often disregarded, feeling. The Eastern Zen approach to creativity, for example, embraces the creative process as intuitive and experiential (Daido Looi, 2004). Western culture tends to teach through explanations and instructions whereas in Eastern traditions, “space is created for the process of discovery to take place” (Daido Looi, 2004, p. 6). Problematic then in Western society is our traditionally directive educational approach to learning itself, let alone creative practice. Using a resonance approach, similar to Eastern philosophies of creativity, facilitated our ability to create both physical space and time as well as a space inside of us that valued, nurtured, and supported our exploration of “feel” and our intuition. Discussions in our focus groups allowed each of us to explore this inner space without concern for producing, connecting rather with this intuitive, embodied feel so central to our creative process and experience. As shared by the dancers, our sessions became a means for them to prepare and revisit how they felt and wanted to feel in various contexts. Results show that through group discussions and ongoing individual and group reflection, the dancers increased their awareness and ability to tune into their desired feel. This demonstrates that one’s ability to feel can be cultivated and developed over time with proper sensitive facilitation.

The Topf Technique (TT) is another approach embraced in some dancing circles. It is a method that uses ideokinesis as its base, incorporating release, developmental movement, as well as improvisation (Dixon, 2005). At the core of this method is the belief that it is important to help bring people to discover feeling through dance (Dixon, 2005). Dixon (2005) reminds us that “all movements initiate in the centre – not only in the ‘physical’ centre, but also in the ‘emotional’ centre. TT works to develop the kinaesthetic sense, and encourages students to

express their individual, creative voice” (p. 93-94). The use of the client-centered, feel-based resonance approach and the RPM as a tool, much like the TT is purported to do, allowed dancers in this study to connect with this ‘emotional centre’ and hence deepen their creative experience as movement oriented artists.

Aesthetics, yet another important area of study, is often explained as being the raw data we encounter, the sensuous aspects of our experiences (Fenner, 2003). Aesthetic experience is when we are present, in the here and now, subject to the experience in order to know how it feels (Arnold, 2005). Because dance artists perform their art using their bodies, being sensitive to and aware of their internal process including their five senses, feelings, and emotions is crucial to their creative dance process. This is why dance can be thought of as “objectively known and subjectively lived” (Fraleigh as cited in Arnold, 2005, p. 60). Somaesthetics, concerned with being a whole person, emphasizes the physical, the senses, and the felt aspect of living (Arnold, 2005). According to Arnold, much more should be done within the realms of dance to somaesthetically educate people by focusing on individuals as a whole and their felt experience within the creative process. As this study showed, a resonance-based approach facilitated the dancers’ ability to feel by accessing aesthetic and somaesthetic experiences within their creative process.

From an educational perspective, *how* dancers learn and hence also create should be as important, if not perhaps more so, than what is learnt and created. To date, an important question remains: How are most dance educators and dance communities facilitating the development of creativity in the people with whom they work? Research suggests that in most cases, little is being consciously done to facilitate the creative development of dancers thus leaving a great deal of room for improvement and collective learning within the community of dance at large. It is

said that there is a dire need to “research and validate new ways of contemplating teaching and learning in and from dance” (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000, p. 22). A lack can be seen in the common physical focus and curriculum-based approach to dance education that fails to embrace the holistic, emotional development of artists, which arguably impedes in many ways the creative development of dancers. What appears to ring true is that most dance educators rely on intuition and instinct to address this important aspect of a dancer’s training, if at all (Not Just any Body, 2001). As found in this study, knowledge of the RPM facilitated the dancers’ exploration, awareness, and reflection of how they want to feel within their creative experiences as dance artists. Knowledge of the RPM and general resonance approach may help dance educators incorporate the important “feel” component in developing dancers’ education.

Contemplative Mind and Creativity

As Hart (2004) suggests, how we know, as opposed to what we know, should be fundamental to teaching and learning. The same applies to teaching, learning, and creating in the context of dance: “Studies of creative individuals, from Mozart to Einstein, give us clues that although analytical practices are important, often necessary, they are insufficient to explain the depths of creativity and insight” (Hart, 2004, p. 33). This is where learning *how* to open ourselves up to the contemplative mind and sense of feel can unlock our creative process, revealing that which is felt and known to be true within. Hart (2004) explains that by inviting the contemplative mind, we include our “capacity for knowing through silence, looking inward, pondering deeply, beholding, witnessing the contents of our consciousness” (p. 30). He suggests that by doing so we move emotionally closer to that which we inquire about. If as artists and researchers we inquire about the creative process, finding ways to open ourselves to contemplative thought is arguably a necessity. As was demonstrated in this article, a resonance-

based approach for exploring the role of feel in creativity allowed this way of thinking to be stimulated and nurtured. As the contemplative mind is said to not be willed but rather welcomed (Hart, 2004), it is believed, based on the findings of this study, that a resonance-based approach allowed the dancers to welcome their contemplative self and give themselves the permission and freedom to consciously tune into their inner knowing, becoming aware of how they want to feel while expressing themselves creatively.

Bringing Ourselves to the Dance

It is said that psychoanalysis and the contemporary world of art suffered “a split between the psychological interpretation of art and its aesthetic qualities” (Maclagan, 1999, p. 306). Maclagan (1999) explains that the intrinsic aesthetics of art are more often than not presented as having little to no psychological significance. However, as was demonstrated in this study, dancers affective experiences, that is how dancers *feel* while dancing, exploring and expressing their creative selves, whether for an audience’s pleasure or not, is very important to them. It is meaningful and has therefore much psychological significance to them. We need to respect and value this, while striving to find practical and concrete ways of empowering the dancer to feel the dance. When finally released from compulsive thinking, emotions are most often experienced as bodily sensations (Robinson, 2004). Since dancers appreciate being able to embody their dance and experience emotions in their body, how dare we ask dancers to disconnect from how they feel? Resonance proved a useful approach that allowed the artists in this study to reconnect with themselves and their felt experiences. I invite us, dancers, teachers, and researchers, to continue exploring how to facilitate holistic educational approaches so that we can all continue learning how to bring ourselves to the dance.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this study provided the reader a window into the role of feel in the creative experiences of modern dancers. We attempted to explore the process underlying feel in the creative context of modern dance. A useful framework both from a research and applied perspective, the RPM was found to be an effective framework for discussion, reflection, and creative exploration with modern dancers. A limitation of this study, however, is that dance teachers were not involved, thus limiting the potential educational implications of this exploration. As Dixon (2005) suggests, teachers must be encouraged to explore, experiment, and incorporate alternative ideas into their dance classroom. As such, future studies should consider: (a) exploring teachers' and choreographers' creative process in addition to that of dancers, (b) incorporating teachers and choreographers in focus group discussions, and (c) developing a resonance-based curriculum for dance teachers and choreographers to facilitate the inclusion of a "feel" approach in the dance classroom, creative spaces, and the stage.

In closing, I would like to suggest that the time has come to open the dialogue across disciplines; between philosophers and artists, educators and researchers, psychologists and interdisciplinary practitioners such as counselors, performance psychologists, and mind/body technique specialists. Let us be creative enough in our inquiries to find the commonalities in our quest, and to refine our language so as to not limit our opportunities for learning, growth, and creative expression. We owe it to ourselves, both the artist and scientist in all of us. After all, it is about how we *feel* throughout this creative journey we call life. To quote one of the dancers in this study, "otherwise, what would be the point?"

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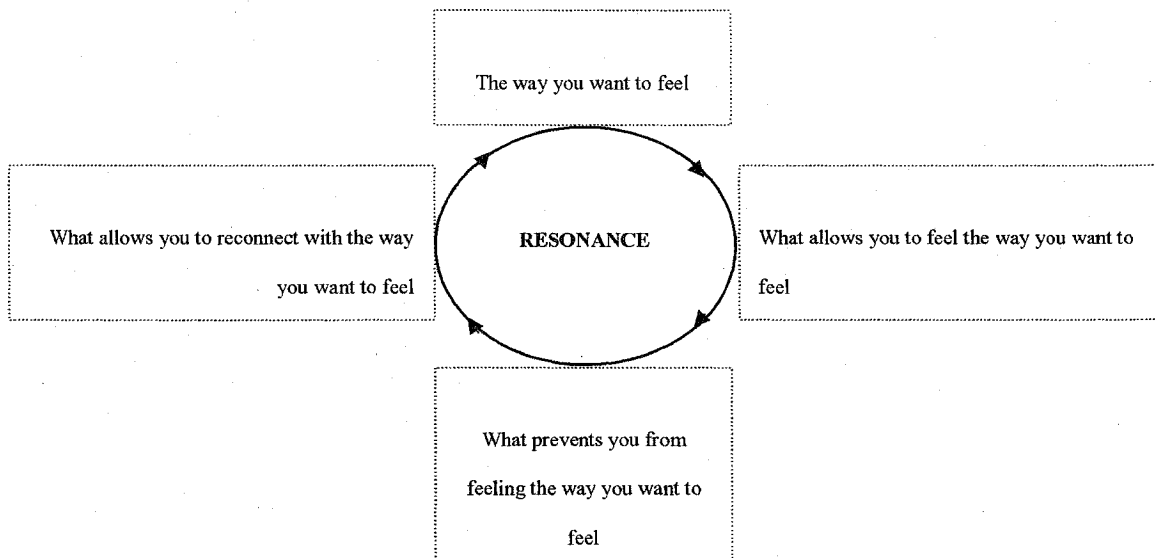
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Figure 1. The Resonance Performance Model (Newburg et al., 2002)



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EXPLORING COLLECTIVE FEEL IN MODERN DANCERS
THROUGH ETHNOGRAPHY

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TUNING INTO YOU:
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore modern dancers' lives to evocatively reveal the processes involved in creating dance using feel, and more precisely collective feel, as a guide. Through non-fictional vignettes (Sparkes, 2002; Denison & Markula, 2003), the text produced represents an experiential ethnographic tale (Sparkes, 2002). Narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) was performed, from which vignettes were developed to convey our collectively shared experiences throughout the study. Main lessons are: (a) How the dancers felt collectively was meaningful, (b) How the dancers felt collectively was an intricate part of their creative process, and (c) Educational, *feel* based focus group discussions have the potential to foster *collective feel* and enhance desired feel in creative experiences of modern dancers. This article concludes with a discussion on finding meaning through collective feel and the social creation of feel including its role in the culture of dance and the performing arts.

Introduction

In the performing arts, much like in team sports, being able to synchronize or mesh with other performers and feel as one is an integral element powerfully contributing to creative and performance excellence. However, how often do groups of performers tap into this phenomenon and try to explore it to their own advantage? One way to begin exploring this is to consider the concept of *collective feel*, which is the way a group of individuals feel as a collective, throughout a particular experience. Collective feel occurs when individuals are carefully attuned to one another and as such, live a uniquely shared affective-based experience. In this article, I, the first author, share the process of how *collective feel* emerged amongst a group of modern dancers with whom I worked as part of an experiential ethnographic study on the role of feel in the creative process of dancers. In total, six pre-professional modern dancers ranging in age from 19 to 26 years volunteered to meet with me once a week for 12 weeks. As such, this study shares the creative journey we, Amelia, Crystel, Martine, Simon, Sarah May, Sarah, and I (Chantale) collaboratively embarked on together.

Grounded in the participatory paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997), 12 weekly focus group discussions were held over a four month period to facilitate the exploration of these dancers' creative process and affective experiences as artists. I facilitated these discussions using a humanistic approach and the Resonance Performance Model framework (Newburg, Kimiecik, Durand-Bush, & Doell, 2002, see Figure 1). This approach encourages people to explore how they want to feel in their daily lives and can also be used to explore how they want to feel within specific performance contexts such as dance and creativity. Using experiential ethnographic methods involving participant observation, full participation (dancing), focus group discussions, researcher log, reflexive journaling, as well as videotaping, I immersed myself in these dancers'

artistic context for a period of four months; 2 weeks of initial observation at the start of their season, 12 weeks of full immersion including focus group discussions, and 2 weeks of observation during a performance phase. A post study feedback form with open ended questions was completed anonymously one month later by all six dancers.

Represented in the following text is an experiential ethnographic tale (Sparkes, 2002), a creative “bricolage” or narrative of lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995) chronicling our journey across time. This narrative includes (a) my voice as a participant-researcher documented throughout the research process in my reflexive journal (*italicized text*), and (b) the collective voice through excerpts from our focus group conversations. Using non-fictional vignettes (Sparkes, 2002; Denison & Markula, 2003), I set the stage, open the curtains, and explore the back stages of these dancers’ lives in hopes of evocatively revealing to the audience the processes involved in creating dance using feel, and more precisely collective feel, as a guide. I conclude with a discussion on finding meaning through collective feel and the social creation of feel including its role in the culture of dance and the performing arts.

Getting a Feel

Vignette 1: First impressions

It is 8:30am on a rainy Monday morning. Shadows of bodies stretch, twist, and curve on the floor like cats waking up after a long night. I discreetly sneak into the studio and make my way onto the stage. I find a spot and before I have even had the chance to sit, dancers greet me with warm smiles, asking me how I am doing. After a few short exchanges, I settle onto the floor and begin to watch. I am genuinely touched by their openness and generous spirit, something I did not experience as much in the discipline of ballet... I am immediately aware of how different the ‘feel’ of the room is to a ballet class, a place where I spent countless hours of my life, during

this preparation time prior to their morning technique class. Dancers are in one form or another, warming up their bodies while staying low and close to the floor at all times. No one makes use of the barres preferring it seems the ground. I notice how the dancers not only stretch their legs, feet, and torsos laterally but also with a great amount of torsions and spirals, contractions, and high releases. I begin to hear their breathing, hissing out of their bodies in short or long exhales, as the dancers seem to be mindfully walking 'into' their bodies. I notice that this seems to be one of the first warm-ups the dancers do. They incorporate these hisses with standing head rolls, hip rotations, and limb movements. They also breathe audibly, consciously, when lying flat on their backs, or during roll-downs to the floor...

Vignette 2: Tuning Into Them

Walking into the room, my spirit already begins to feel lighter. I can't quite explain it yet, however, there is a distinct feel to the air and it is very warm, accepting, supporting, and welcoming. I already feel appreciated as a member of the group. Something I thought would have taken much longer. Is it a reflection of the existing social climate in the group? Is it an openness that I am bringing to the group? Perhaps it is a unique blend of an existing social climate to which I am now contributing, even merely by watching. I will ponder this one some more... Words such as 'feel', 'energy', 'weight', and 'center' are often heard in the studio reminding the dancers to be grounded yet active in their embodiment of movement. I notice the control of the center working while noticing the incredible range of movement demanded and allowed by the upper body. The teacher reminds everyone to actively use their breath as they bend, stretch, pull, and contract their bodies in various shapes in space. I can't help but be really aware of how important it is that dancers bring themselves to the moment, and be willing to experience life through the body and feel...

As vignettes 1 and 2 portray, the environment in which I entered as a participant ethnographer was composed of an intimate, tight knit community of dancers who both knew and trusted each other. Thus, at the beginning of their new season, I was the newcomer who had to make contact with the community and the various individuals within it. Yet, it seemed that as soon as they knew a little about me, my background as a dancer and dance educator, along with my eventual journey into the fields of psychology, human kinetics, and performance psychology, they welcomed me into their world. As a researcher, it was important for me to notice and pay attention to these dancers, their reality as graduating members of this particular dance school, their surroundings, their learning and creative climates, and the general atmosphere of the studio.

Joining the Dance

Vignette 3: Awakening the Body

I am taking part in my first modern technique class in 14 years this morning. I am nervous about it but keep pushing these thoughts out of my mind. Can I keep up? Will I make a fool of myself? Will I feel awful and unable to enjoy my experience? Or will I be able to connect with the dancers, the movement, and my own experience in it? Feelings connected to the past come haunting me back. I notice them and try as best as I can to just let them be. Not focus on them, nor deny them, and just let them pass... One by one, dancers come into the room warmly greeting one another with hugs. A few even lie on the floor next to their friend, embracing for a few moments. Each dancer with whom I worked on Friday responds with excitement upon seeing me on the dance floor, ready to partake in class...I find myself still surprised at the openness these dancers have with one another, emotionally as well as physically. There seems not to be much discerning between the body and the human. By embracing the body, they seem to be truly connecting with the human inhabiting the body. One dancer is talking to another while standing

in front of me. They are talking quietly but with an intense presence. One of the dancers holds the other for a long time. When they release, I realize that one of them has been crying. They speak again and then hold again. By the end, the upset dancer seems comforted, at least for the time being and is able to get to work and dance...

I get through the standing and floor warm ups, and find myself sweating as we head towards the side of the room to execute combinations across the floor. I feel myself tensing up, breathing more shallowly, and losing my sense of groundedness. I am nervous and feel self-conscious again. "Don't choke" I catch myself thinking. "You always choke. Don't choke!" I remember always feeling afraid of being watched when I danced, afraid that my movements and my body somehow wouldn't be acceptable to the critical eye. I mark through the movements with every group before finally taking a turn across the floor. I am part of the last group coming across the floor, and though not feeling my centre or a steady foot, I get through it. The girls clap supportively which makes me smile... I complete a few more exercises and by the time the class moves diagonally across the floor, I retire for the day sitting at the front of the class on the stage. The dancers before me fly through the air, some of them appearing weightless as they defy gravity with every jump. I am humbled, exhausted, sweaty, but also very much alive. Having awakened my body from its slumber, I appreciate the experience of which I was a part. At the same time, I am very aware of the insider-outsider line I am carefully walking every day I step inside the dancers' studio. I am welcomed, but not one of 'them'. I am experiencing their environment but not fully yet walking into their wonderfully agile dancing feet.

Vignette 3 is important as it speaks to the 'stepping into' the dancers' world both physically and metaphorically. By actively participating in class, I was not only reminded how it used to feel to dance, but also how it feels to me right now, as a 33 year old woman, retired from

teaching dance for two years. Additionally, I was made aware of how it feels to dance in this class, with this teacher, surrounded by these particular people. I thus was beginning to get a 'taste' for the feel of the group, instead of merely 'seeing' or observing it.

It's all Relational

Vignette 4: Creativity and Bonding

I ask the choreographer who walks by if it would be alright for me to watch and am very warmly received. She explains however, that they will not be running the piece but instead working on 'inserts.' I observe the class wondering exactly what 'inserts' are, having never heard the term in the context of dance. The class begins very informally yet it is clear that a certain level of professionalism is expected from the dancers while working with this guest choreographer. A dancer has forgotten something in her car and has to run out to get it while another has forgotten her knee pads at home. The choreographer says "You guys fucking suck! You know, I had to be the lady that says this shit but... you would be fired!" A few moments later and on a lighter note, the choreographer begins talking about the following day's rehearsal and suggests that maybe they can go grab a coffee instead and go to the art gallery. She even jokes that "coffee and bonding are a part of the creative process." I can't help but perk up at these words wondering if she knows my research area or not...

Vignette 5: Relationship Cues

The very next day, using my experiences of in-rehearsal observation, I began a conversation with the dancers about their creative process in modern dance as they experience it.

I said:

I didn't even hear a verbal cue from (the choreographer), next thing I know, you started moving. How did you know that? Because from ballet training, I was waiting for a very specific cue, of what to do when, and all of a sudden there was this interesting movement and I was thinking "How did they know what to do?" (Chantale)

In modern, there aren't any counts. (Martine)

Most of the choreography doesn't have counts. (Sarah)

You feel it, you feel others, you try to feel others. (Crystel)

They have cues off each other, when so and so is doing this, you know you're at this place, and everything is sort of together. You're timing is off of everyone and not a cue in the music or a count. (Amelia)

Yes, that's it. (Crystel)

Like relationship cues... You have to be really aware of what's going on. (Amelia)

By this time in the research process, I had been attending morning technique class three times a week, and was offered the opportunity to watch rehearsals in which the dancers were involved, led by various renowned guest choreographers from across Canada. As such, I began to understand what it might feel like to participate in the creative process in which these dancers took part. Very quickly, it became apparent how different the creative process was for dancers depending on how each choreographer preferred to work. Yet certain constants emerged including the fact that tuning into one another, or 'bonding' as one choreographer suggested, and paying attention to relational cues was crucial. Thus, how you move, where you move, and how you feel while doing so, is of importance not only to you, but also to those around you in modern dance.

Creating Through Feel

Vignette 6: Meaning of Creativity

A little later in the same discussion, I inquired about what the meaning of creativity was for these dancers, curious what they might have to say. "What is creativity, what does it mean to you?" I asked them.

It's something that comes from your imagination. It could be anything... I'm talking more from the painter. (Sarah)

So when you paint and you create, what does that sort of look like to you, the process of creating, or... what does it feel like to you? (Chantale)

All options, you can do whatever you want. (Sarah)

No limits. (Crystel)

It's like a subconscious being, showing the effect of what has affected you... It's not like, "I am going to do this now" ... It's a reaction, I guess, in a way... Like if nothing happened to me it would be a white box.... You wouldn't know what to do with yourself... It's a way to get yourself outside of yourself and to look at "ok this is it, this is what it is," to have it in your hand instead of it all just swirling in your head all the time.

So you deal with it and that's in part what creates... (Amelia)

I know I read something from an author... who said "I write to figure out what I think." And basically I know that when I do poetry... all of a sudden I'll just write stuff, and it's probably in response to how I feel, to a situation, to what's going on in my head, in my heart... all of a sudden it's on this piece of paper. And then I'll keep reading it and reading it, and all of a sudden I'll figure out what it is that I'm thinking or feel. (Chantale)

I feel, for me, that creativity is in the manner of Freud a bit. It is like there is someone else inside of me, and sometimes he speaks, he speaks but I don't listen. It is like I am too preoccupied doing other things, attending to other things. Sometimes I let him speak. I let him say what he wants... Sometimes there is so much that it's like "ok, we'll let it pass and leave it there." But when you have the opportunity to let him express himself, to give him a voice, for me, it's my way of doing that. I let him express himself when I dance, when creating. (Simon)

Vignette 7: The Point is Feel

The dancers talk about the fact that in modern dance, teachers, choreographers or even themselves, never actively seek a particular feeling or emotion. Rather, the emotion arises from and lives in the body itself, as opposed to in their head. As one dancer puts it, "When a feeling comes out of a movement it's always 'correct', it can't be the 'wrong' feeling because it belongs to you. Someone else might bring about a different feeling from a similar movement but they would also be 'correct' because it is theirs." The vocabulary of our conversation about feel and feelings is interesting to me for it is very vividly surrounding the human body, with references to purging or swallowing, releasing, or holding. The experience of feelings, at least in dancers, seems grounded inside the body and as such, lived through the body.

Something might feel really good, but ultimately doesn't work, visually something just doesn't click and then you change maybe the way you go into it, or how it happens and then you're like "Ok, that feels right!" (Sarah May)

So is feel or visual more important or are they both? (Chantale)

For me, feel is more important. I think something has to be visually stimulating but if I'm dancing it, and it doesn't feel good, there's no point. (Sarah May)

It will end up not being interesting. (Crystel)

So feel comes through on a visual level you think? (Chantale)

Well you can tell when someone is being real, when someone actually feels like they are enjoying themselves or when someone is just doing the movement because they have to.

And it's totally boring. So to me, it's more important. (Amelia)

You know, Simon and I are trying to create a duo, and it's going alright. But you know, sometimes I do something, he does something, you feel it, and the other goes "Yes, this is good"... We had talked about what is better; feel or what it looks like... What is more important, how we feel or how others perceive it. (Crystel)

You are asking me or sending out the question? (Chantale)

Sending out the question. (Crystel)

I think feel... Because then what would be the point? (Sarah)

Vignette 8: I Only Know how I Feel

One interesting point in particular that emerges is the distinction between feel and feelings during performance. The dancers talk about the fact that feelings belong more to the experience of the audience, responding to the performance, reacting to something, whereas the dancers' experience is much more about feel in the moment, living the performance itself embodied.

I think performance is the last bit of creation because you're still creating feel, you're still creating... (Amelia)

I don't go into the studio and be like I'm going to tell a story... that's not what it is for me, it just turns out to be an expression, because I can't see myself dancing either. I don't

even know what it looks like and what it's communicating. I only know how I feel and perhaps, what my intentions are. (Sarah May)

Vignettes 6 through 8 exemplify the way in which these particular dancers viewed creativity, and interestingly the predominant role of feel in their decision-making process while creating. It was clear that how the dancers feel individually and collectively matters to them for it is the defining component over any other that influenced their every decision within the creative process of dance making. This highlights the important role of feel for creativity in dance.

Negotiating Feel

Vignette 9: Social Responsibility of Feel

Generally, most of the dancers seem to feel that there is a delicate balance between the fact that one is individually responsible to him or herself for how they feel but also that they each have a responsibility to others and how they make others feel. Examples are being sick or in a certain emotional state that may be detrimental to the 'group feel' and as such, bring down the entire group. The role of the teacher in this group feel is often brought up. It strikes me as important that none of the dancers appear to delegate their sense of feel and their responsibility or ownership of it. Rather, they acknowledge a greater responsibility to others that goes beyond themselves.

I find it interesting that sometimes (teacher) walks in and says "What's wrong with you guys?" but really, she brought the negative energy but overall, it was the class' reaction to her negative energy that you could feel around her the moment she walked through that door... I find it interesting that all of a sudden it becomes our energy and then it becomes our fault. But it was her energy that changed the whole class! (Sarah May)

So what can you do about that? (Chantale)

I think if we all so strongly absorb it is because we look up to her, she's our teacher, we respect her opinion. And all of a sudden to be made out to be like bad children, it's hard to bounce back from that. (Sarah May)

On this particular day, the dancers needed to express some of their frustrations pertaining to their teacher's influence on how they typically feel in class, as a collective. It became evident that feel is something that is constructed collaboratively and must as such, be negotiated. As the next vignette shows, how we collectively approach stressful situations like performing has the power to influence how we feel, the ingredients of which are part of the social negotiation.

Vignette 10: A Recipe for Feel

Like the show is going to come, and we are going to be so stressed, and we only have one show. One showing... (Sarah)

The way you say "We're going to be stressed" you've predicted it, so I can guarantee it, you will ... let's make another recipe because it is what it is right now, so let's throw some chocolate chips in there or (Chantale)

We want 2 weeks. (Sarah)

It doesn't work that way! Sorry! (*All laugh*) Blender only goes this way not that way... I know, it's messy, it feels awful. How would you rather feel in the middle of the chaos? The chaos is not going to go away. I can't do that, and each one of you individually, probably can't do too much about that either. So how would you rather feel in the midst of it, because I'm guessing stressed is probably not number one on your list. (Chantale)

Calm, and taking it as it comes, (*said in a calm, soft, voice. I notice the room has settled, her speech has slowed*) trusting myself to know... (Amelia)

I'd like to just be having fun. (Sarah May)

Yeah we're not having fun. (Sarah)

I feel like the fun has sort of been extracted because the pressures are so overwhelming.

(Sarah May)

What other ingredients? (Chantale)

Relaxed. Complimented. Confident. (*I hear various dancers say*)

That day, only a few days prior to an important performance, I needed to gently and humorously challenge the dancers to take ownership of how they wanted to feel despite their stress, and employed the image of baking as a tool. The idea of creating a recipe for how they wanted to feel immediately shifted the way the dancers felt about having to perform sooner than they felt prepared. From using a recipe to identify the ingredients they wanted as part of their performing experience, the dancers proceeded to create how they wanted to feel right there and then, through discussion, by revisiting why they engage in dance in the first place. I remember that the energy and excitement of the stage could be felt at that moment in the studio. They were *creating feel* before my very eyes and even more so, were fully conscious of it too.

Vignette 11: Creating Feel

When you're performing, there's a certain magic to it. (Sarah May)

And there are certain things that you're just like, "Whoa! I just pulled that off!" (Sarah)

You'll just never do it again and you have the lights, and you have the audience, and it smells different, and it just tastes different, everything. That's why I do what I do...

Absolutely! The adrenaline, the energy... Me performing, I don't give nearly what I can, in the studio, as to when I'm on stage. Not even close! (Sarah May)

Why not? (Chantale)

It's just something about the ambiance. I couldn't do it in the studio. I can push myself but I can't do it... It's about being in a costume, having makeup on, and your hair, and the stage (*speaking very excitedly*) ... it just feels different... (Sarah May)

It's like that extra 15% that is a big difference. (Sarah)

My world disappears around me except for just that moment. (Sarah May)

In this discussion, the dancers were trying to articulate how they wanted to feel on stage and explained how it is almost like good team work with everyone involved and helping, such as during a quick change: "That is my favorite part. I love it! A quick change, I love that." (Crystel)

Others agree while laughing obviously excited to share in this conversation. I remember feeling the energy change in the room and I feel this even now as I listen to the recordings.

As soon as you walk out on stage, when the blue lights are on, you're standing there and you're like, you're prepared. (Sarah) (*I hear her breathing deeply and catch myself doing the same as I am transcribing...*)

Totally! (Sarah May)

It's just the two seconds right before you go on stage... the "eeeeee" (*others join in*).

(Crystel)

Every show is so different, like even right now, the energy has shifted. See what I mean?

(Sarah May)

I remember the excitement in the air as if it was yesterday. The dancers talking about how it feels to them to perform and describing it with such detail, it even made me vividly remember how it feels though it had been a few years since I had last been on stage. All of us contributed to the conversation and as such, to the energy and *collective feel* in the room at that moment. The same group of dancers who barely, an hour prior, were tired and stressed about

their upcoming show now remembered why they dance by *creating feel* together. It was so exciting to be able to turn this moment around and *feel* exactly as we wanted to in that moment, *together*. Now, we would just have to remember and revisit this feeling.

Vignette 12: Tuning Into Each Other

Watching some of their rehearsals where they would create and choreograph these solos and duos filled me with a sense of inspiration and awe. The way in which these dancers engaged in their process was thoughtful, deliberate, open, and involved a great deal of awareness and tuning into the self and others. I remember watching Simon and Crystel working on their duet using mostly, it seemed to me, *feel* as a guide. They barely spoke and yet communicated more clearly than most of us ever do verbally. It was a sight to see and an impressive experience to witness with all my senses.

They are standing side by side or staggered and feed off of each other's movement. One starts and the other responds, like and action-reaction sequencing. A glance or a word or two is only occasionally required to communicate to one another what is liked, potentially good, or discarded as material. They often imitate simultaneously or delayed, mirror, or modify a movement executed by the other dancer. At other times one suggests and watches while the other trusts and tries the movements being suggested. It is a fascinating process to watch especially as most of this process occurs through the language of the body through feel as opposed to the use of words. I find that time is used in an interesting way, most often, dancing and moving non-stop, until a movement "sticks" instead of intellectually thinking about what to do next. It seems to be a process occurring at once in the brain and in the body.

Whether experiencing the impact of another person's affective state or collectively bringing the group down or up, the dancers and I realized together how *feel* is something a group

of persons must delicately negotiate. Having a platform to address this exploration and negotiation of feel, thus making the implicit explicit seemed beneficial to the dancers.

Throughout this study, it was clear that individual wants and needs existed, yet as dance is a predominantly socially experienced art form, the wants and needs of the group were often viewed and valued as taking precedent over individual ones. What emerged, as can be seen in vignettes 13 through 16, is that the dancers actually wanted to feel at a collective level and they sought connection by collectively sharing affective experiences.

Feeling as One

Vignette 13: I Feel Good When you Feel Good

The notion of group or shared feel is emerging on occasions as dancers discuss how they can read or feel each other and respond based on that information. They describe experiences where they empathized with other's felt experiences such as when Amelia cried onstage at the end of one piece while watching Martine whom she could feel was right 'in it' and was moved by that.

At the end of the piece, she was doing this thing with (dancer), and we're all just sort of sitting there, and the last time you did it, I was crying (*on stage*) ... you just looked so in! (Amelia)

I had really worked on it. (Martine)

What do you mean she was really 'in'? (Chantale)

She had her eyes closed and ... it really touched me, I felt like I was part of the audience... it was the end of the piece, and it went well, and I was so happy, and then Martine looked so good and I was like "Oh my God I'm going to cry." (Amelia)

Not only could you be in your own performance but you could enjoy her performance?
(Chantale)

Oh yes, absolutely.... It happens a lot, if it's a part of the piece where you're just sitting back, I mean, you see them practicing it all the time, and when they get it really good you're just like "Yeah!" and you're so happy. And it makes you dance better. I never really realized that before... (Amelia)

This was a meaningful moment in our focus group discussion as through Amelia's comment, we were able to gain awareness that we not only feel better when another is truly feeling their performance, but we are also better able to feel our own, hence we perform better as a result of this. As such, we realized that a positive interdependence existed within the emerging notion of collective feel.

Vignette 14: We're one Part of it

One day, the dancers talked about how they experience *collective feel* while the audience gets credit for experiencing feelings or emotions pertaining to the performance. According to the dancers, the audience has feelings or emotions as a response to the lived performance before them while the dancers experience the moment of performance as it feels to them, being a part of something larger than their personal performance.

I think the audience is the emotion. They're in charge of it. They feel it because they're watching you and are affected by the piece, whereas we're just trying to interpret the movement, along with the music, along with the lights. We don't know what it looks like.
(Amelia)

So the audience has emotions, and you have? (Chantale)

Ourselves. (Amelia)

What's your experience like? (Chantale)

It's that sort of feeling when you get to a point when it's great just to be on stage and letting your body go and just be dancing the piece and, in however manner it's been... I feel like in every piece I am myself. But just because of the way the choreography is, and the person who set it, the choreographer, and the music, and everything, because it's not one person, it's not the way that I look, it's just the feelings generated by all these things put together. We're one part of it. (Amelia)

Vignette 15: I Still Feel you

It eventually became evident to me that the dancers were trying to articulate not only how they wanted to feel as individuals but that something larger was at stake for them. I decided to finally ask them directly if there was a particular feeling they were after as a collective. So I asked them: "Is there something as a group that you want to feel?" What they answered enchanted me further into their world and showed me metaphorically and physically, how collective feel, at least to them, is a multidimensional embodied experience that far exceeds traditionally conceptualized affective experiences.

You know those slow grounded walks? I'm waiting for that because that always calms me down, and if I do it alone, it doesn't feel the same. (Amelia)

No, no, I agree... (Sarah May)

And as soon as someone starts doing it, every body starts doing it. (Amelia)

But we can also go on the other end, which we have, and just laugh, and be so hyper...

(Sarah)

Yes and that usually starts with you! (*All laugh*)... I just want to feel together with you guys back stage, so that I can still *feel* you when I'm on stage. (Amelia)

This moment in our discussion, I remember, felt like a turning point for the group, having finally articulated that being able to *feel* each other backstage and on stage was at the core of what they sought together for performance. From this point, the dancers knew what to do to be able to create this *collective feel* for their upcoming performance and I recall them telling me later how they prepared for their performance that night using those grounded walks they had shown me just a few days before. Now, after months of being on the “inside,” I would rejoin the “outside” world and attend their performance from the point of view of the audience. I looked forward to the experience.

Vignette 16: Making us Feel

The lights dim and the feel in the air changes, the audience now tunes into the feeling of anticipation, previously felt only by the performers. Sarah begins her piece, opening the show, with a most intense, slow, building movement. I am hooked into the experience of the evening. It feels very intimate, these performances. As an audience member sitting so close to the performers, I am truly brought into the feel of it. It feels like a very organic, close encounter with strangers in the audience sharing this moment in time.

I feel really moved during the course of each performance, particularly during each set of applause. I was privileged enough to tag along on these dancers' creative journey and have been able to get a glimpse into their lives, their process, and their experiences as creative people. They have shared so much of themselves on that stage tonight. I cannot help but think that this is why artists move us and make us feel. It is because they courageously bring themselves fully to the dance.

It was nice because I could hear people laughing, and at one point I could hear my mom and my dad. I could hear laughter that I new, that I could recognize. (Amelia)

I felt there was something very personal and intimate about that stage. You almost feel as an audience member that you're part of it but then, at the same time, it's very much yours... Were you aware of the hesitation of the audience at the end? Because the audience was not ready to leave, you could tell the audience just wanted more and more... I felt like that too. The audience clapped as if it was the end of that piece, clapping for that piece, then there was a long pause... after a long awkward pause by the audience, no lights, no music, (teacher) said something to the effect of "Well... that's it!" and then the audience clapped as in a final thank you to you guys... the audience was wondering "Is there more?" It was nice! (Chantale)

The dancers and I shared how we all experienced the show. After months of preparation, exploring and working through their first solo and duo creations, they had finally done it. The process had not been easy and many tears and frustrations had been expressed, many obstacles faced along the way. However, each dancer was able to glimpse a little further inside of themselves and learn something new. In the process, they explored a great deal how they wanted to feel as dancers and persons, engaged in creative living. Connecting to how they *feel collectively* proved to be key for these dancers, with each other, as well as with their audience, thus sensing a common experience.

Finding Meaning in Collective Feel

Most of us experience feelings and emotions at just about every moment of everyday whether or not we invite them into our life and experience them fully and willfully. As richly described in the previous 16 vignettes, collective feel emerged amongst this particular group of dancers who had been working quite closely with one another for numerous years. Whether this collective feel was positively or negatively experienced was, however, an entirely different

matter. For these dancers, there was a distinct feel they collectively sought that emerged to be an important source of meaning for them, and this revolved around feeling connected, united, and trusting one another. Nevertheless, as it was not the original main objective of our focus group discussions, they did not initially actively seek this collective feel. As a result, the dancers found themselves haphazardly responding to their environment, often feeling it seemed like ping pong balls being emotionally tossed around by other people's various energies and affective states. Throughout the course of this study though, the group seemed to gradually increase their awareness of not only how they each *individually* wanted to feel, but also how they *collectively* wanted to feel. Emerging in the dialogue were strategies that facilitated and prepared the group to experience their desired collective feel and strategies that allowed the group to reconnect with this when faced with obstacles, which included behaviors and attitudes from teachers, choreographers, and dancers outside of their own group, and conflicting priorities between the self and the collective. Therefore, awareness of individual and collective desired feel appeared to increase their capacity to tune into one another in a variety of settings whether during classes, rehearsals, and performances. Whether it be tuning into a fellow dancer's performance and experience while on stage, wanting to be able to feel one another as part of a whole, or tuning into the audience's reaction to one's performance, collective feel was viewed and experienced frequently in positive and desired ways by the modern dancers in this study, myself included. Therefore emerging from this study are the following findings:

1. Collective feel is a social phenomenon that can be experienced either negatively or positively.
2. When a specific collective dream feel (Newburg et al., 2002) was identified, articulated, and negotiated, the dancers generally experienced it positively.

3. Actively working towards a desired collective feel seemed both important and meaningful to the modern dancers in this study.
4. The creative climate of this particular dance school, as socially created by the dancers, teachers, and choreographers, appeared to be an important mediator of collective feel amongst the modern dancers in this study.

Fundamentally, the data in this study reveal that while individual feel and affective experiences surrounding the creative process were actively explored, this group of modern dancers found meaning in socially and collectively sharing affective experiences and connecting with how they wanted to feel within their creative experiences in dance.

Reflections on the Social Creation of Feel

From Me to We

As Radford (2004) explains, emotions provide people with a 'reflexive guidance system' towards creative acts, while intuition allows them to sense the harmony or dissonance implicit in the whole of the information being processed. Radford also suggests that creativity involves the reconciliation of tensions resulting in a sense of how things should fit together, or said in another way, what feels right. Furthermore, it is said that "creative outcomes have a resonance with our feelings, which is based upon a common degree of cultural attunement" (Radford, 2004, p. 63). In other words, how we feel influences the way we process information and greatly impacts the choices we make within the creative process and conversely, the outcome of this creative process affects how we feel and make subsequent decisions. Furthermore, based on this study, how we feel is grounded in our capacity to tune into a particular culture, at a particular moment in time. Powerfully articulated is Radford's argument that there exists "an emotional dimension to knowing and that the creative individual has to feel the sense of quest, the desire to reconcile

unknown elements within this information system” (p. 64). However, unlike Radford’s view that reflexivity cannot be cultivated, the findings in this study demonstrate that it is possible to consciously cultivate this very type of emotional reflexivity, not only at the individual but also at the collective level. In other words, just like the ethnographer engages in reflexivity so can we, dancers, reflect on “*what I know and how I know it*” (Sparkes, 2002, p. 17), or collectively what we know and how we know it.

As Montuori and Purser (1995) demonstrated, being creative involves communication and therefore it requires a social medium to even exist. Barron (cited in Montuori & Purser, 1995) highlighted the fact that creative persons are engaged in creative relationships with their environment, which in turn, is a source of information to the creative person: “The creative person moves towards the environment, actively seeking to understand it. This creative relationship is dialogical in nature... and as such provides the context for creativity” (Montuori & Purser, 1995, p. 84). These authors strongly articulate the need to shift the locus of creativity from an individual to an ecological context. From such a structure, they suggest that “creativity must not be viewed as purely self-assertive or self-expressive, but it must, in fact, also fertilize the soil of creation for others... it must do this by opening up possibilities, empowering others, and making them aware of their own creativity” (Montuori & Purser, 1995, p. 104). The group dancer-centered approach based on *feel* used in this study allowed the dancers to be aware of and nurture their creativity and that of others. It made the often implicit, explicit at times.

It is evident from this study that when involved in the creative process of art making, such as in dance, artists experience complex emotional responses. MacLagan (1999) suggests that our response to aesthetic qualities is an embodied response that involves the body but also holds “multiple psychological resonances that could be called unconscious, but not necessarily in a

psychoanalytical sense” (p. 307). These multidimensionally felt responses could in fact be to one’s own work or in response to the works of others for as Radford (2004) commented “the creative act of one person speaks to the emotional informational representation of others” (p. 62). Creative experiences make us and others *feel* and this was quite transparent with the group of modern dancers in this study.

According to Winnicott cited in Rubin (2004), human beings have the tendency to divide their world into two: the world within and the world outside themselves. Winnicott argued the existence of a third space, or zone of being, where creativity is said to take place. Being neither an internal or external space, this space is linked to both and is transitional in nature. According to Rubin (2004), what this teaches us is that creativity is not the possession of solitary persons but is born out of a “creative relation between a person who is internally receptive and an outer world” (p. 20). One could argue that this is where *collective feel* may also be born. People often speak of works of art, literature, poetry, film, theatre, music, and dance performances as creating a certain “feel.” As MacLagan (1999) explains, understanding what is seen or experienced is in and of itself an act of creation through interpretation. It is thus subjective and a shared collective experience between a variety of potential participants including but not limited to the “performers,” “creators,” and “witnesses.” Though this study is grounded within the context of dance and the performing arts, collective feel may very well be a phenomenon that can occur in any domain given the right conditions. However, more research using the resonance approach with various groups is warranted. Domingues (1997) states that reflexivity and creativity relate to the unconscious and conscious, and are mediated by interactions between the subjectivities of both the individual and the collective. As Kielburger and Kielburger (2004) explain, “by adopting a *Me to We* philosophy, we immediately enter an environment of mutual support and

collaboration – we immediately build a community” (p. 92). Within such a spirit of community is where consciousness, creativity and collective feel flourished amongst the dancers in this study.

Discovering Me Through We

St-John (2006) writes that “community is at the heart of creative collaboration” (p. 238) and that it is through such efforts that people find a sense of belonging, have opportunities to participate in one another’s growth, and feel empowered to co-construct knowledge. In fact, developmental theorists have proposed that to develop into a conscious integrated self, one must experience a social interaction and a striving to belong (St-John, 2006). In other words, to become ‘self’, one must belong to ‘others’ or as the African concept of *ubuntu* communicates “I become me through you and you become you through me” (O’Hara, 2003, p. 73). Implications of this on collective feel and creativity is important to note for it means that “people may take part in collective action [such as creativity] not only to promote the welfare of their group, but also because it makes them feel good about themselves as individuals” (Tropp & Brown, 2004, p. 268). Therein lays reciprocity, a positive vicious cycle of sorts. Particular to the creative process, however, groups expected to generate creative ideas should be encouraged to nurture and develop cohesiveness in order to improve the performance of the group as a whole (Craig & Kelly, 1999). Yet the question remains: How does one nurture this sense of community and cohesiveness in creative groups of artists? Results of this study suggest that this can be done by empowering members to articulate and connect to how they individually and collectively feel and by creating a climate that will allow and support them to experience this.

Many researchers have discovered that creativity requires a supportive climate. Isaksen and Lauer (2002) found that climate is a variable that can influence both the organizational and

psychological processes of groups of persons. It is said to influence both productivity and well being by impacting “problem solving, decision making, communicating and coordinating, individual processes of learning and creating, and levels of motivation and commitment” (Isaksen & Lauer, 2002, p. 79). Teachers said to be successful at nurturing creativity foster a creative climate (Farquhar, 2004) and according to Isaksen and Lauer (2002), it is possible to identify, define, and elaborate clear and meaningful creative climates. Thus what begins to emerge as important in our understanding of creativity and *collective feel* are the important roles of the community, climate, and teachers in these processes. Dance offers an opportunity to explore these elements.

Collective Feel in Dance

Three characteristics have been identified in group creativity; improvisation, collaboration, and emergence (Sawyer, 2006), the last of which most pertains to the collective feel experience of the dancers in this study. Sawyer (2006) defines emergence as a “collective phenomenon in which, as it is said ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts’. Recent studies of emergence by complexity scholars suggest that emergent phenomena are unpredictable, contingent, and hard to explain in terms of the group’s components” (p. 148). Related to this notion is Sawyer’s conceptualization of group flow which he defines as a group peak experience, not unlike Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) flow theory for individual performers but applied to collectives. Sawyer uses numerous metaphors to describe ensemble of performers who are ‘in synch’, experiencing ‘good chemistry’, ‘group spirit’, ‘team spirit’, ‘esprit de corps’, or who are said to have ‘gelled’ as a means to illustrate his conceptualization of group flow. It is problematic, however, that emergent phenomena such as group flow are next to impossible to predict in advance (Sawyer, 2006).

Complementary to the notion of group flow is that of *collective feel*. As the emerging exploratory data from this study suggest, collective feel is something that may be intentionally actively sought and created using a humanistic resonance based approach with collaborative creative groups. Contrary to the uncontrollable and sporadic occurrence of group flow, it may be possible to set the stage to allow groups of performers to regularly experience collective desired feel, which has important applied implications. The notion of collective feel can also be linked to O'Hara's (2003) notion of integral groups, which was influenced by Rogerian philosophies of person-centered groups. Four distinct yet interconnected psychological states have been found to be simultaneously necessary for a group to experience "an extraordinary level of alignment and attunement" (O'Hara, 2003, p. 73). These include: (a) heightened individual awareness, (b) high level of interpersonal acceptance, (c) conscious recognition of the presence of the group as a higher order identity, and (d) group renouncement of its exclusivity and transcendence of its own boundaries (O'Hara, 2003). As O'Hara (2003) explains, members of integral groups have repeatedly confirmed how when "their own personal and authentic expression provides some unique and vital element in the life of the group, and where there is coherence between their inner world and the community in which they live, they experience a deep sense of fulfillment and joy" (p. 74). As such, it could be said that integral groups are primed for experiencing collective feel, which is a harmony or alignment between how people individually seek to feel and how the collective seeks to feel within their environment.

Macdonald and Wilson (2005), for example, demonstrated that jazz music was perceived to be "a collaborative, real time music dependent on the establishment of 'swing feel', with a tension between individual and collective creativity" (p. 413). Swing feel was found to pertain to the importance of creating a particular rhythmic pulse, groove, or *feel* to the music (Macdonald

& Wilson, 2005). In other words, not unlike the modern dancers in this study who valued feeling connected, united, and trusting of one another, jazz musicians were found to seek a particular desired collective feel as part of their creative and performing experience. Interestingly, *collective feel* was seen as an integral negotiation of the senses in 'swing' (Macdonald & Wilson, 2005) thus further demonstrating the potential application of the notion of collective feel across artistic domains beyond dance. The concept of collective feel appears to have value and meaning both for artists and researchers alike interested in the process of creativity. The language of *feel* and *collected feel* appears to 'speak' to several people's experiences particularly relevant to collaborative creative groups.

How We Feel Matters: A New Wisdom in Creativity Research

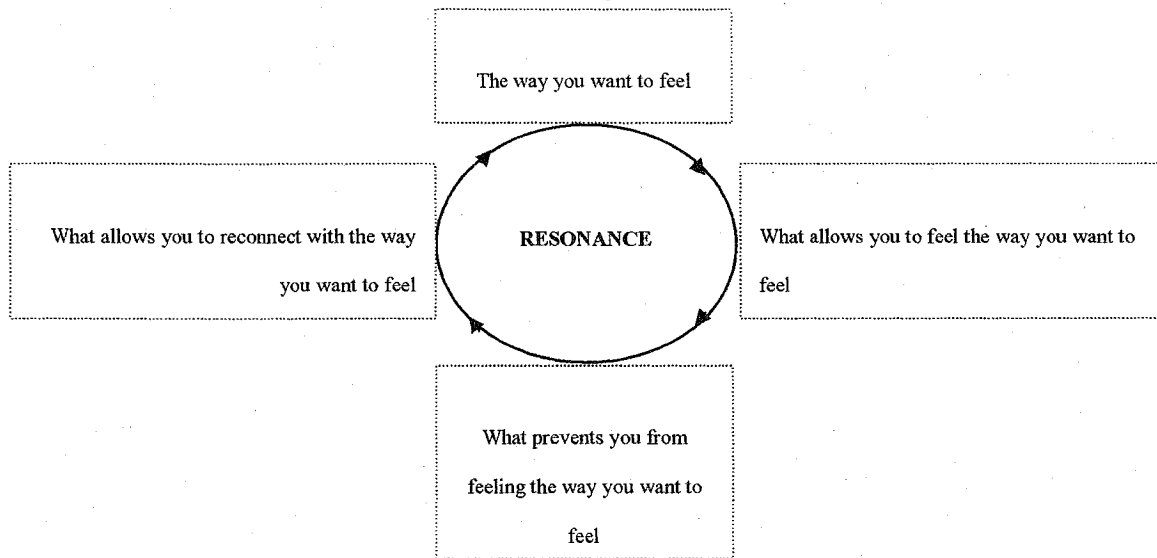
As Juslin (2003) suggested, there is perhaps no way any model can fully capture and do justice to the "rich, personal, and piece-specific ways in which [dancers] tend to approach their work artistically" (p. 296). However, by embracing a participatory ethnographic methodology combined with the RPM framework, new experiential data emerged that helped us better understand the nature and role of collective feel in the lives of dancers and its impact on their creative process. Main lessons from this study include: (a) How the dancers felt collectively was meaningful, (b) How the dancers felt collectively was an intricate part of their creative process, and (c) Educational, feel based focus group discussions have the potential to foster collective feel and enhance positive affective experiences amongst dancers. In closing, I encourage us to continue the dialogue amongst artistic communities, exploring the ways in which our human creativity can be experienced and felt, and thus fully expressed.

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Figure 1. The Resonance Performance Model (Newburg et al., 2002)



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CHAPTER V

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Being creative is often said to be a powerful force that can at once be cathartic, transformative, and revelatory (Jeffs & Pepper, 2005). Thus, the process of creating is thought to involve a great deal of emotions. As such, the present study aimed to explore the role of feel in the creative process of a group of modern dancers through the use of a resonance-based approach. In order to fully understand and capture the role of feel in a creative context, an ethnographic approach grounded in the participatory paradigm was used. As this study was able to demonstrate, how dancers feel individually and collectively is intricately woven into the way they create.

Through the use of focus group discussions in particular, the dancers and I were able to find a space to explore how we felt in our lives as well as within our chosen creative disciplines, mainly dance. During the course of this journey, we explored the following themes surrounding our experiences as creative persons: how we feel, how we want to feel given a particular context, what we can do to prepare and engage in our lives so as to feel the way we want, what gets in the way of our desired feeling(s), and finally how we can reconnect with our desired feeling(s) when we are not experiencing them. Such an exploration was no easy task. As Nachmanovitch explains:

“The most frustrating, agonizing part of creative work, and the one we grapple with everyday in practice, is our encounter with the gap between what we feel and what we express... Often we look at ourselves and feel that everything is lacking! It is in this gap, this zone of unknown, where

we feel most deeply – but are most inarticulate” (Nachmanovitch, as cited in Camilleri, 2001, p. 80)

Yet, in this particular study, using a resonance-based approach proved to be useful both as a way of conceptualizing the findings from a research perspective, and as a means to find a common shared ‘language’ from which to begin to try articulating and *find meaning* to what is so often difficult to do verbally. As discussed by Doell, Durand-Bush, and Newburg (in press), people tend to vary in “the vividness of their description of how they want to feel” (p. 15) yet with reflection and facilitative questions from myself and other participants, the dancers in this study were gradually better able to articulate the feeling(s) they sought. It is important to note, however, that labels per se have very limited significance since personal meanings are constructed by the performer, for the performer. As Doell et al. (in press) remind us, labels are only classifications that serve research, and I further suggest that they may in fact do disservice to those trying to acquire an in depth understanding of how each artist, performer, or athlete wants to feel. Certainly, trends may be observable suggesting one particular label over another, yet may unfortunately in the process lose the very raw meaning and vividness (Doell et al., in press). Thus caution and great care is warranted when discussing other people’s experience of their creative process and how they wish to feel within it.

At the same time, as this study clearly demonstrated, dancers predominantly train, create, and perform in groups. As such, finding common ‘language,’ or at least common meanings in language, becomes a necessary skill in order for dancers to be able to work, create, and feel as they want, harmoniously within a collective. This highlights the importance of the findings in this study, mainly that how dancers *feel* individually and collectively, is meaningful to them and has important implications to their creative process and quality of experience. As one of the

dancers in this study put it “it has been good to take a step back and look at myself... I feel like I have more of an idea of what I am working towards (dream feeling) and in sharing with others we have an idea of how we want to *feel* together in performance also.”

Creativity Through Feel

As Jeffs and Pepper (2005) suggests, creativity can be at once transformative and revelatory for artists. Furthermore, as research on various art therapies demonstrate, the creative process in and of itself can be a “tool for deepening insight and promoting growth” (Meekums, as cited in Brignola, 2003, p.55). Yet, most artistic educational approaches, regardless of the domain, appear to have lost the important element of teaching and treating artists as whole persons. As this study found, emotions can often be obstacles for dancers who have so often been encouraged to ignore, repress, and disassociate from how they *feel* throughout their training. The result is that the mere experience of emotions, can distraught them, rather than provide a source of rich data thus informing their creativity. Consequently, many artists protect themselves from fully *feeling* their experiences. As one musician described, a lack of connection between one’s self and feelings is often experienced as detrimental to the self and art form:

“I questioned my ability to use the music to express feelings, because often my feelings were the very things that I was ignoring and repressing... I was protecting myself and controlling myself by not letting myself feel... I began to reframe what it was that was lacking in my work and in me: a connection to, and an awareness of feeling... I began to actively bring together thinking and feeling in my playing. This focus on music and feeling has brought me to the realization that my music has always been a reflection of who I am. When I felt empty, my music

sounded empty. I didn't know myself, therefore, I couldn't play myself"

(Camilleri, 2001, p. 80)

The dancers in this study had the unique opportunity to explore together the role of *feel* in their individual and collective lives and in their creative process in dance. Emerging from this experience is a greater awareness that artists, and particularly dancers, feel a great need to be accepted, non-judgmentally as whole persons, as opposed to merely moving bodies, within their particular dance community. In fact, all six dancers in this study shared that the experience of our weekly focus group discussions provided them a supportive, safe haven for sharing ideas and feelings, and a chance to feel valued as people rather than 'just dancers.' Interestingly, these dancers also expressed that by having the opportunity to explore feel and express themselves, they were able to make 'space for creation.' It follows then that the role of feel, and as such, the potential application of resonance-based approaches in increasing awareness of, and connection to the way artists want to feel is promising and only now beginning to be explored.

Creating Feel

As this study demonstrated, dancers wish to feel amongst other desired feelings, connected; to themselves, to the present moment and *felt* experience, and to others. As Stromsted (2001) communicates, "our present challenge is how to reintegrate mind, body, and spirit, healing the split that many women and men suffer from... both women and men need ways to reinhabit themselves, individually and collectively" (p. 53). Noteworthy then, is how the use of a resonance-based approach seemed to facilitate this reintegration of mind, body, and spirit in the dancers participating in this study. By exploring and opening one's self to *feel*, dancers were able to consciously decide how they wished to feel and begin to proactively work at *creating feel* in

their lives. The fact that this was collectively shared proved to enrich the experience by facilitating and perhaps deepening this feeling of connection at a collective level as well.

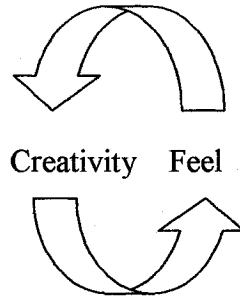


Figure 2. *Creativity and Feel*

This point highlights an important lesson that can be drawn from the work in this study which is that while *feel* is an integral element of how dancers *create*, *creativity* is also an integral part of how we design *feel* into our lives (see Figure 2). As Newburg et al. (2002) explain, the core of resonance-based research has been “to understand why people perform and why some of them are able and willing to create and express their own ideas in the face of many life obstacles” (p. 251). This could not be more pertinent to the quest involved in leading a creative life. If performance is based on the creation and expression of an idea, and that such an idea thus becomes associated with a particular feeling as suggested by Newburg et al. (2002), then it goes without saying that nurturing and facilitating a connection with feel should be at the forefront of creative development in dancers, and I would suggest, all artists. It therefore appears that *feel* and creativity are intricately involved in ways we still consciously know and understand very little about. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that this study has begun shedding light on this interesting link with important ramifications for researchers, educators, and artists alike.

The Participatory Paradigm for Resonance-Based Research

It is said that “dance lacks a methodology for evaluating the first person kinaesthetic experience, and within academic scholarship” that knowledge is usually mediated through the third person (Alexandre, as cited in Jackson, 2005, p. 26). Even in my own experiences in dance education workshops and at various arts related conferences, I have frequently heard dancers express how they do not like to be ‘intellectualized’ or ‘analyzed’ by researchers. Having been a dancer and dance educator, I found myself wanting to be truthful to the experiences of other dancers as well as my own in the midst of the process of inquiry. However, coming from a psychology background, I first had to realize that not all paradigms value the distant researcher stance prominent in positivist research.

As Higgins (2001) explains “we are not tied down to the positivist paradigm or experimental research methods. We do have a choice and consequently a responsibility to select a paradigm that provides the most accurate description of the phenomenon we are researching” (p. 193). As such, I felt it important to bring myself to the research as one of several participants, alongside a community of dancers. As dancers are often in positions of, what could be argued, little authority and subject to socially oppressive conditions, I felt it important to consider issues of power, voice, and the potential for social change within this inquiry and to try and bring a sense of ownership, as well as personal and social responsibility, to our experience as creative dancers-collaborators. The participatory paradigm, with its “emphasis on the person as an embodied experiencing subject among other subjects; its assertion of the living creative cosmos we co-habit; and its emphasis on the integration of action with knowing” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 286) provided the basis from which to move forth. From this perspective, I now had to learn how to move in collaboration with others in the process of this creative collective

exploration: “At the heart becoming a qualitative researcher is an ontological commitment to a way of sensing who and what we are that acknowledges the complexity and ambiguity of social life as an interactional process” (Denison as cited in Denison and Markula, 2003, p. 202). This statement speaks to the findings of this study, mainly that *feel* within creative environments is experienced in complex ways *between* people, and not only at the individual level. It thus seemed logical, and now most fruitful, to have embraced a worldview that valued such an interaction.

This now brings us to the second important lesson to be gathered from this field study. Being one of the first resonance-based studies to be carried out in a group setting, results demonstrated that *feel* appears to be negotiated at a social level. That is to say that in most cases, people interacting with others will need to develop and nurture climates in which collaboration, communication, and social perspectives will be embraced so as to *create feel* that is mutually satisfying and positively experienced by all parties involved. This is not to say that the individual’s experiences ceases to have importance, but simply acknowledges that one’s individual experiences are always mediated by one’s engagement in a social environment. One only needs to think of family and/or couples dynamics to understand this reality or from a performance perspective, the dynamics found between athlete and coach, or amongst teammates. In other words, how I *feel* affects how you *feel* and vice versa, hence we both contribute to a social interaction. From this light, the participatory paradigm seems ideal to further explore the role of *feel* in complex, social, and particularly creative environments, such as the one investigated in this study.

Ethnographic Methodologies for Resonance-Based Research

If we are to speak and write about *feel*, I believe we must also be willing *to feel*. That is to not only empathically walk a mile in someone else's shoes, but to put on our own (in this case dancing!) shoes and see how it feels to us. This engages us in a three dimensional way in the context of our research participants allowing us to experience, though in our own subjective way, what this experience, sport, art form, or social context feels like. As Stromsted explains "in this way, I engaged my own body in processing information, an essential component in any research to do with embodied transformation" (Stromsted, 2001, p. 45), or as I would argue, any research pertaining to *feel*. As such, I felt it important to experience this study as closely as possible alongside my fellow participants.

As Suzuki, Mattis, Ahluwalia, Quizon (2005) describe, ethnography can be viewed as a form of social research that focuses on the following elements: "(a) exploring the nature of particular social experience, (b) gathering and using unstructured data, (c) using relatively small number of participants, and (d) interpreting the meanings of human behavior" (p. 206). Since creativity was explored as a social process, and since *feel* is at the core of the meaning people construct for their engagement in particular activities, exploring these phenomenons using an ethnographic methodology proved to be a sound fit. By immersing myself physically, emotionally, and intellectually, I was able to experience for myself the social and cultural context in which these dancers participated thereby gaining a greater and more sensitive understanding of their felt experiences individually and collectively. I do not believe such a rich lived account would have emerged had I been exposed to their experiences only through interviews far removed from the day to day interactions and dynamics of their particular dance community, at this unique point in time.

At the same time, however, “I also needed to include myself in the study because of the significant effect of researcher subjectivity... This factor influenced every aspect of the research, and needed to be engaged in consciously” (Stromsted, 2001, p. 40). As such, being reflexive became an important aspect of this ethnographic work that was facilitated through field notes and a reflexive journal, and by engaging in my own resonance process throughout the course of this study. As Suzuki et al. (2005) warn us, it is critical to engage in self-reflection and to question our interpretations in order to truly maximize the benefits while outweighing the limitations of being an insider-outsider, as is the case in ethnographic studies.

This now leads us to reflect on the third lesson to be drawn from this study, which is the fact that research in and of itself is a reflective and creative process. As Markula counsels “you’ve been living and breathing these stories inside you, you just need some strategies to begin accessing them” (as cited in Denison & Markula, 2003, p. 17). An ethnographic methodology provided me with such strategies to access my stories as well as the rich stories of others in an effective and powerful way so as to begin painting multi layered portraits of the phenomena at play: “Like dance-making, research is a purposeful, creative, interpretive and intuitive process that is often circuitous and improvisational” (Hanstein, as cited in Higgens, 2001, p. 191). In resonance-based research, personal interpretation of both the researcher’s and the participants’ experiences provide rich information about how we want to feel in performance and in life, often peeled in layers as the research evolves through time. Using ethnographic methodologies encourages two important aspects of research so far overlooked in resonance-based studies; the role of the researcher not only as facilitator but participant, and the power of the social context. Ethnographic methodologies thus allow researchers to address numerous facets of complex social interactions that are pertinent when researching *feel* and creativity in groups.

Lessons from the Field

On a personal level, by immersing myself in this study, I have come to realize to what degree I still carried within me all my 'stories,' everywhere I go. I realized how my story with my self and my relationship with my own body, the vehicle of my spirit and the way in which I move about the world and *feel*, had to be addressed and ultimately re-written. As Stromsted (2001) reminds us, "our bodies may be our closest link to the unconscious, expressing the soul's longing through breath, gesture, the rhythm of our step and the music of our speech... unresolved physical and emotional trauma is often held in the body, in stasis, until it can be brought to consciousness" (p. 39). Through the experience of exploring alongside the participating dancers how we want to feel in life and how we wish to express this feeling creatively, I had to be willing to connect with my own felt experience, as it is today, yet be aware that my felt experience is often colored by stories from the past. As such, this experience has provided me with an opportunity for healing far beyond anything I could have anticipated.

Though in-depth elaboration is beyond the scope of this discussion, my personal experience in exploring my life and creative self through *feel* throughout the course of this ethnographic study has shown me the potential resonance-based interventions can have on healing the self by reuniting one's self to one's experience and body through *feel*. I can only speculate on the immense contribution such findings could eventually lead to in areas concerning mind/body disconnections such as is so often the case with eating disorders, obesity, body image issues, as well as cases where the mind and body have experienced trauma. Personally, through this experience, I have come to view myself, my body, and my life as subject rather than object, in great part thanks to tuning into *feel* as valuable data. I have as such begun reuniting with myself, and trusting not only my creative process but also fundamentally how I *feel*. As such, I

am in a better position of “responding to the call to live the love and wisdom I know in my body” (Stromsted, 2001, p. 55) and to be able, as such, to embrace this creatively whether through my dancing body, a moving pen across the page, or a captured image in time. As one of the dancers in this study so nicely put it after all “I only know what I feel.”

Strengths and Limitations of this Study

As elaborated in my two articles and throughout this discussion, this study offers numerous meaningful contributions in the areas of creativity research and the resonance approach. For one, this was the first study to explore the role of feel in the creative process of modern dancers through a resonance-based approach. Secondly, this was one of the first studies to explore the use of a resonance approach in a *group setting*, thus exploring its application beyond individual purposes. This study was also one of the only two resonance-based studies to embrace an *ethnographic methodology*, thereby shedding more light on the way in which social interactions and distinct cultural communities influence how we feel. Finally, this study was able to unearth the emerging phenomenon of *collective feel*, while demonstrating the complex *social interaction* between individual and collective feel.

Limitations of this study, however, involve the length of time of immersion, as well as the lack of involvement of dance educators as participants. Firstly, this study was conducted over a 16 week period with two weeks of observations before and after 12 weeks of weekly focus groups and participation in classes. This time frame reflects only half of the dancers’ regular dance season, from September to Christmas. As qualitative studies go, this was a formidable task to undertake for the purpose of a masters’ study and a first attempt at such a sizeable qualitative project. However, from an ethnographic perspective, “good ethnography requires a commitment from the ethnographer to spend an extended period in the field” (Sands, 2002, p. 43). As such, a

recommendation for future studies involving the role of *feel* and the creative process would be a longer immersion period, for example, the dancers' entire season, to get the full story rather than merely a few chapters of it. Secondly, though I was immersed in the dancing context of the participants in this study, and as such interacted through classes, rehearsals, e-mail, phone calls, and informal conversations with various teachers at the school, dance educators were not participants per se in this study. As such, they did not participate in the weekly focus group discussions held between the dancers and myself. This was done consciously and decided collectively between the dancers, teachers, and myself, so as to give the dancers a forum for them to speak without worrying about how their teachers might respond or what consequences may derive from them voicing their feelings in front of their teachers. Future studies, however, would do well to involve the teachers in some of the discussions because they do play a role in the social creation of *feel* and the creative processes within such unique and varied dance communities.

Implications for Future Research

As suggested by Jackson (2005), "much is unexplored – in particular, the role of emotion, feeling and creativity in practice" (p. 36) thus leaving much space for creative inquiries to take place in the near future. In particular, I believe it is our responsibility to explore the ways in which we can support the holistic development of artists, especially dancers, and nurture their creativity alongside of physical performance and expertise. Therefore, studies now need to concentrate their efforts on developing curriculums that include creative spaces and exploring new educational paradigms in dance that would allow us to move from creating bodies in dance to developing "the person who dances – a moving being" (Jackson, 2005, p. 32). As current results have demonstrated, resonance-based approaches emphasizing *feel* have the potential to

further contribute a great deal in areas of research pertaining to mind/body techniques and creativity in dance. Open dialogue and information exchanges between dance researchers, educators, and artists must thus become part of our mandate if we are to continue bridging the gaps between the science of movement, the study of style and technique, and the art of dance. As Caldwell (2004) reminds us, "the power of movement is our sacred domain" (p. 9). I believe we should thus treat it as such both in research and in practice. It has been said that "there are two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance. Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish" (Warren G. Bennis). By embracing the way we feel as an integral element of dance and the creative process, we begin to accept our humanity and as such, can truly bring ourselves to the dance and collectively begin creating a climate that *feels* just right to both you and I.

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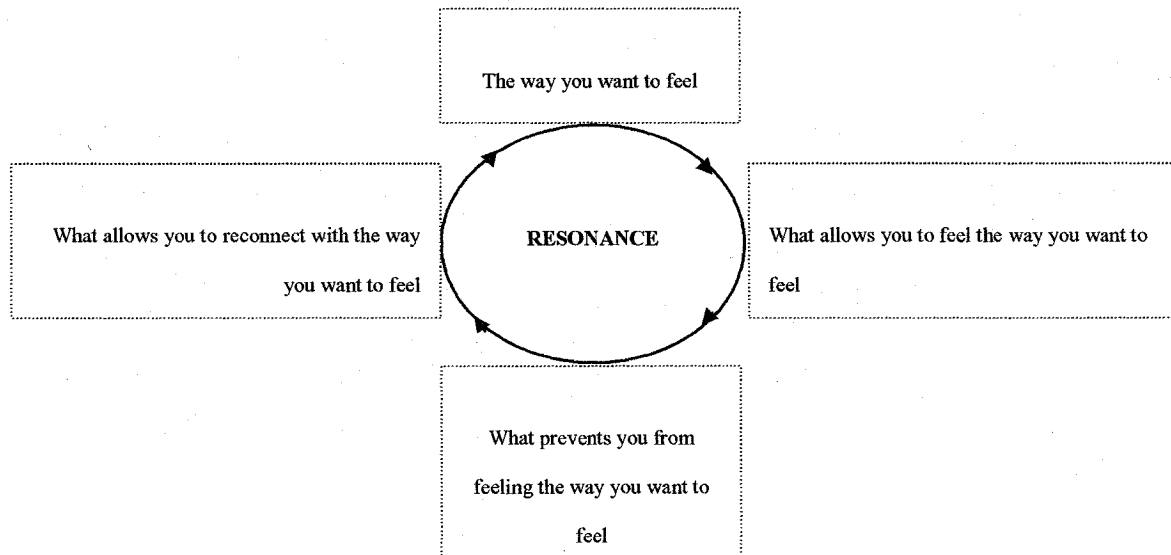
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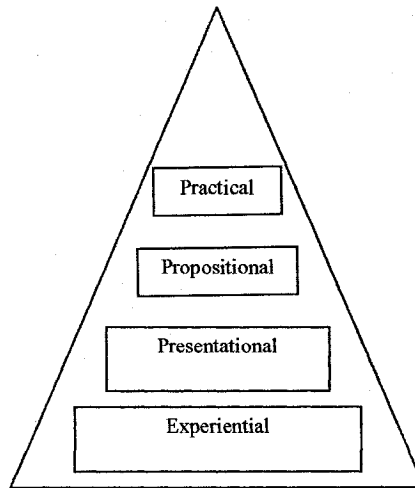
APPENDIX A

The Resonance Performance Model (Newburg et al., 2002)



APPENDIX B

The Participatory Inquiry Paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997)



APPENDIX C

Letter of Information and Consent Form

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Recruitment of dancers for a 12-week study aimed at understanding the creative processes of dancers using a resonance-based approach

Dear performer,

As part of my M.A. thesis, I will be conducting a study under the supervision of Dr. Natalie Durand-Bush, a professor at the University of Ottawa who also works as a sport psychology consultant. The purpose of my study is to examine the underlying processes of creativity in dancers and how this may be facilitated using a resonance-based group consulting approach. In this research, "resonance" occurs when there is a connection between you and your environment; it is a process that allows you to fully engage in your activities and experience enjoyment, satisfaction, and an overall sense of well-being.

If you are interested, you, as part of a group, will be asked to participate for a total period of 12 weeks. Your involvement will consist of:

- Attending 12 interviews conducted every week throughout the 12-week intervention period:
 - a. One initial group interview (approximately 1-2 hours)
 - b. Ten follow-up group interviews (approximately 1 hour)
 - c. One final group interview (approximately 1 hour)
- Take part in one individual, semi-structured interview at a convenient time for you and the researcher within the 12-week intervention period.
- Completing a journal on a daily basis for a period of 12 weeks; this should take between 5-10 minutes for each daily entry. You will be asked to submit your journal entries at the end of each week. I will pick them up at a pre-arranged time and location convenient to you.
- Reading your interview transcripts to verify the information you provided and changing any information that you do not want included in the final report.
- Agreeing to being observed during your program's classes, rehearsals, and performances

The interviews will be audio taped and scheduled at a time convenient to you, your group, and myself. The information you will share throughout the study will remain strictly confidential. Audiotapes and transcripts of the interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the resonance laboratory at the University of Ottawa for a period of five years. Only the research team will have access to the codes and data. While anonymity in the study will be assured by assigning a number to your file so that your name will not appear on or identify any transcript, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed among the members of your team as you will be engaged in group interviews. If you choose to participate, the information that you share may be used for the purposes of publication in scientific journals. You may be quoted in presentations or publications provided you have given your permission below but your anonymity is guaranteed. You will receive, by providing a mailing address below, a copy your interview transcripts for verification. As a participant, you must be able to read and speak English as each interview will be conducted in English only.

CONSENT (PERFORMER)

By agreeing to participate in this study, I, _____, understand that my involvement will consist of sharing personal information about my performing experience and that the research will not pose any serious risk. The purpose of this study is not to evaluate my abilities but to gain information on how a group of performers experiences resonance. I also understand that a long-term goal of this research is to use the information from many individuals participating in sport, physical activity, and the performing arts to develop and validate an educational program that practitioners could use while working with performers from different levels and sports. I am also aware that the results of this study, including some direct citations, will be presented at conferences and/or published in professional journals but that my name will not be mentioned at any time.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, including before or during the interviews and journaling period. I can also refuse to participate in certain aspects of the study, decide to withdraw shared information from the interviews and journals, and refuse to answer verbal or written questions without any consequences or prejudice.

Please check one of the following options:

1. If I choose to withdraw, I want all the data gathered from me until the time of withdrawal to be destroyed ____
2. Even if I withdraw from the study, I accept that the data gathered from me until the time of withdrawal be used for the study ____

Please check one of the following options:

1. I agree to be quoted but all personally identifying information shall be removed or altered and contents of the quote shall not be revelatory of my identity ____
2. I do not wish to be quoted at all ____

CONSENT (PARENT)

By agreeing to participate in this study, I, _____, understand that my involvement will consist of sharing personal information about my performing experience and that the research will not pose any serious risk. The purpose of this study is not to evaluate my abilities but to gain information on how a group of performers experiences resonance. I also understand that a long-term goal of this research is to use the information from many individuals participating in sport, physical activity, and the performing arts to develop and validate an educational program that practitioners could use while working with performers from different levels and sports. I am also aware that the results of this study, including some direct citations, will be presented at conferences and/or published in professional journals but that my name will not be mentioned at any time.

Any information requests or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project may be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, tel.: 613-562-5841, e-mail:

. There are two copies of the consent form: one for the athlete and one for the researcher.

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Performer's signature: _____ Date: _____

Should you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact

Dr. Natalie Durand-Bush at:
Tel. number: (613) 562-5800 ext. 4281
Fax number: (613) 562-5149
E-mail address:
School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

OR

Chantale Lussier-Ley at:
Tel. number: (613) 562-5800 ext. 4950
Fax number: (613) 562-5149
E-mail address:
School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

APPENDIX D

Additional consent form

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

**Re: 12-week study aimed at understanding the creative processes of dancers using
a resonance-based approach**

Dear performer,

Due to the participative nature of this research, and in light of your willingness to volunteer as a participant, we, at this point of the study, have collectively negotiated and agreed to explore certain research questions pertaining to resonance and creativity using certain research tools/methods that were not included on the original consent form you signed. The purpose of this additional consent form is to obtain your written permission to use the research tool(s)/method(s) outlined below that we, as a group, have verbally negotiated and accepted to use. In the following table, please place a check mark and sign your name in the appropriate column to give your consent to use the tool(s)/method(s) that we have verbally agreed to use:

	Check if consent	Signature
Researcher observation:		
Photography:		
Videography:		
Visual Art:		

CONSENT (PERFORMER)

I, _____ consent that the researcher use the tool(s)/method(s) beside which I put a check mark and signed my name because as a group, we have discussed how this/these tool(s)/method(s) will be used and we all agree that it would be beneficial to include them in the research. This/these tool(s)/method(s) will be used during the creative components of our training, namely during rehearsal and choreography classes. They will be used as a way of capturing, in real time, the creative process and as a reflective and discussion tool during subsequent workshops. Because of the nature of videography and photography, I understand that if I agree to have this type of information included in the project, full anonymity can no longer be guaranteed. However, I understand that just like I am free to withdraw from the project or certain aspects of the project at any time, I can withdraw any type of data I have shared at any time throughout the research process. Finally, I understand that the data I agreed could be collected and included in the final project may be presented at conferences and/or in peer-reviewed journal articles but that none of the data will be used for commercial reasons.

Any information requests or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project may be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, tel.: 613-562-5841, e-mail:

. There are two copies of the consent form: one for the athlete and one for the researcher.

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Performer's signature: _____ Date: _____

Should you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact

Dr. Natalie Durand-Bush at:
Tel. number: (613) 562-5800 ext. 4281
Fax number: (613) 562-5149
E-mail address:
School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

OR

Chantale Lussier-Ley at:
Tel. number: (613) 562-5800 ext. 4950
Fax number: (613) 562-5149
E-mail address:
School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

APPENDIX E

*Post study follow up form***Post Intervention Follow up**

1. How effective and/or useful do you feel these *discussion groups* have been **in general**? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

2. How effective and/or useful do you feel these *discussion groups* have been towards exploring your **creative process**? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

3. How effective and/or useful do you feel the *Resonance Performance Model* was in exploring your **creative process**? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

4. How effective and/or useful do you feel the *Resonance Performance model* was in exploring your **emotions and affective experiences**? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

5. How effective and/or useful do you feel these *discussions groups* have been by taking place **in groups** as opposed to on a one-on-one basis? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

6. How effective and/or useful do you feel **the format** of these *discussions groups* have been? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

7. How effective and/or useful do you feel *the facilitator's character and personality* was in conducting these group discussions? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

8. How effective and/or useful do you feel *the facilitator's capacity to provide support* was while conducting these group discussions? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

9. How effective and/or useful do you feel *the facilitator* was in developing **rappor**t with you, and the group? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

10. How effective and/or useful do you feel *the facilitator* was in **facilitating** the group discussions themselves? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

11. How effective and/or useful do you feel *the facilitator's presence* was inside and outside of the group discussions? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

12. How effective and/or useful do you feel these *discussion groups* have been towards nurturing your **creative process**? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

13. How effective and/or useful do you feel these *discussion groups* have been towards nurturing your **Dream Feelings**? Please circle number that best represents your experience.

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

Explain: _____

14. What aspects of this experience did you **enjoy most, least, and why**?

Explain: _____

15. What are some of the **lessons** that you take from this shared experience?

Explain: _____

16. What are some of the **challenges** that you faced during this shared experience?

Explain: _____

17. What are some areas of **improvements** you would like to suggest?

Explain: _____

18. Given the choice, would you want to **participate** in these kinds of group discussions again and why?

Explain: _____

19. Given that support groups exist for all kinds of people and fields, how do you feel about the idea of **support groups for dancers and/or sport psychology training** as part of dancers' training and curriculum?

Explain: _____

20. Any **final comments** you wish to share?

Explain: _____

APPENDIX F

RPM journal handout

Definitions

Resonance

A process or way of living that allows you to feel the way you want to feel, prepare to experience desired feelings, recognize obstacles that prevent you from feeling the way you want to feel, and reconnect with desired feelings when you are not experiencing them. This process allows you to live in harmony with your environment or experience a seamless fit between you and your environment.

Dream feeling

It represents the way you want to feel when you engage in a particular activity.

Preparation

Activities in which you engage to experience your dream feeling.

Obstacles

Obstacles or setbacks that prevent you from experiencing your dream feeling.

Revisit the dream feeling

Activities in which you engage to reconnect with your dream feeling.

Subjective well-being

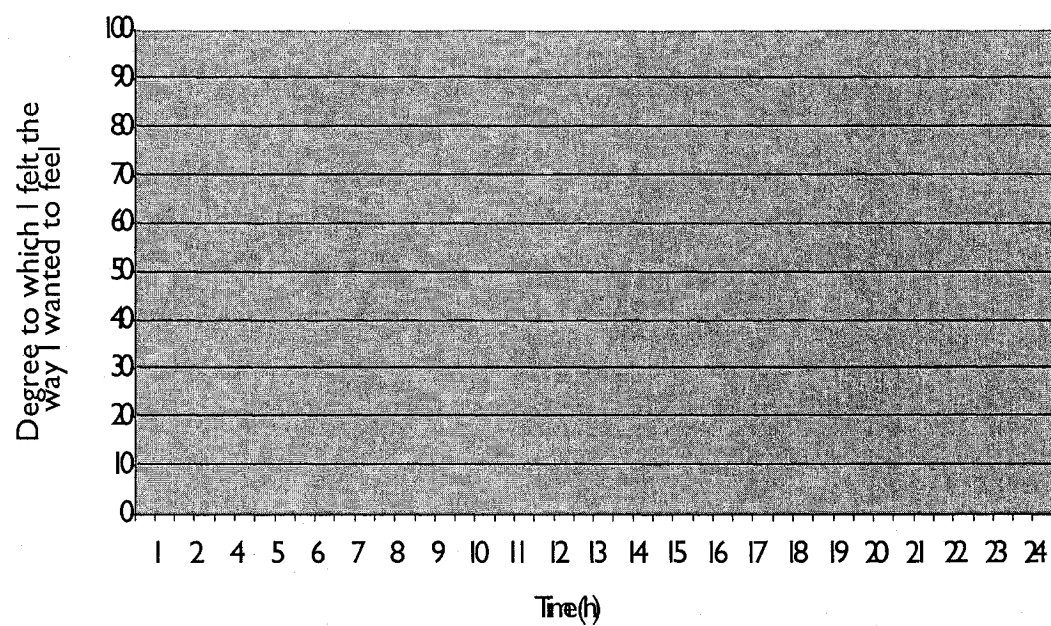
What you think or feel about your own life.

For more info, contact:

Natalie Durand-Bush, Ph.D.
School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa
125 University St., Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Telephone: (613) 562-5800 ext. 4281
E-mail: ndbush@uottawa.ca

Nine _____ Date _____

My Daily Profile



Reflections/ Lessons Learned

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My Personal Resonance Performance Model

