

# Male Ballet Dancers' Gender Identity Construction: Sexuality and Body

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## **Declaration Page**

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology (by coursework and research report) in the Department of Psychology, School of Human and Community Development, at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other institution.

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Date

## **Abstract**

Male ballet dancers are often constructed as being feminine or homosexual (Bailey & Obershneider, 1997; Phillips, 2008), attributes that do not conform to the broader social ideas of what it means to be a masculine male in South Africa. Therefore, the space occupied by male ballet dancers in South Africa is one that contradicts the patriarchal ideas of masculinity and provides further insights into constructions of masculinity that do not conform to essentialist understandings. Therefore, the aim of this research report was to investigate the ways in which male ballet dancers construct their gender identities, sexualities and bodies within this contradictory space. A purposeful sample of four classically trained male ballet dancers over the age of 18 from Johannesburg, South Africa, was invited to participate in the study by means of snowball sampling. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and were examined using narrative analysis. It was found that male ballet dancers construct their gender identities through their bodies by virtue of their performances. They believe that by linking ballet to other masculine activities, such as sport, they can better negotiate their gender identities in a context where their profession is viewed as inferior, feminine and homosexual. The findings of this research have contributed to a better understanding of gender in an alternative domain, where the ways in which male ballet dancers construct their gender identities are challenged.

**Key words:** Ballet, body, gender, identity, masculinity, sexuality, social constructionism and stereotypes

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## **Chapter 1: Overview and background**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Purpose is the key component of any research project because it determines the research design, analysis and reporting style (Patton, 2002), as well as the basis against which the outcomes of a report are assessed. In order to understand the purpose of a study, it is necessary to understand its aims and rationale. Therefore, this chapter gives an overview and a background to the objectives and reasoning behind this research. Namely, the aim of this research was to examine how male ballet dancers construct their gender identities in relation to their physical bodies and their sexualities, within a specific context. The rationale behind this research was to draw attention to the importance of individual constructions of gender identity to challenging social constructions of gender, as well as, and to highlight the significant role played by the body and sexuality in the construction of gender identity.

### **1.2. Aim**

This study proposed to investigate local constructions of masculinity that differ from the “ethnocentric” understanding of masculinity, as argued by Connell (1993) (as presented below), so that richer and more diverse constructions of gender could be tied into our current knowledge. Therefore, following the belief that the ways in which gender is constructed are dependent on social context, this research aimed to add to existing literature on masculinity by investigating the constructions of gender identity amongst male ballet dancers in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is hoped that exposing the alternative, subjective constructions of gender identity among this specific group of male ballet dancers that these “ethnocentric” ideas of masculinity can be challenged.

### **1.3. Rationale**

Although there exists a substantial amount of literature about gender, and especially masculinity, much of the research on this topic is what Connell (1993, p. 600) would deem to be “ethnocentric”. He argued that the term masculinity has been applied as a blanket concept despite the fact that it really only captures the experiences of white, middle-class, Western, heterosexual men in one era. Since masculinity is in fact transformative and unstable, Connell (1993) proposed that it be understood in terms of particular contexts in order for a greater understanding of the complexities and contradictions of lived experience to be achieved.

South Africa is largely a context where an “ethnocentric” idea of hegemonic masculinity still prevails, namely heteronormative masculinity. Indeed, as has been acknowledged by Connell (1993), given that this present time is one of globalisation it cannot be expected that dominant ideologies from the West would not influence other contexts, and South Africa is no exception. Within these broader social structures, however, there exist alternative forms of masculinity such as the one embodied by male ballet dancers. As Phillips (2008) argued, although the genders of male dancers have been shaped by the dominant European ideals of masculinity, they are also divergent from them because ballet is currently thought of as a female profession in which feminine traits such as grace and elegance are seen as important attributes for dancers.

Therefore, an investigation into the ways that male ballet dancers construct their gender identities (within the broader South African context and their professional capacity) presented a unique opportunity to investigate how men negotiate their masculine identities when they are challenged, thus contributing to a better understanding of gender in alternative domains. As stated by Risner (2009, p.1), “the experiences of dancing males provide an important vehicle for challenging dominant notions about gender, privilege, masculinity, sexual orientation, and the male body”.

The fact that ballet is largely a feminine profession, which is dominated by women, could be contributing to a current stereotype that constructs male ballet dancers as homosexual (Bailey & Obershneider, 1997; Risner, 2009). In a hegemonic society like South Africa, the stereotyping of male ballet dancers as homosexual and feminine serves to devalue ballet as a profession for men. Following the ideas of Foucault (1976), this would limit the power that they have to assert alternative ways of being a man in South African society. Despite its popularity, however, there has been very little investigation into the legitimacy of this categorization (Bailey & Obershneider, 1997). Fisher (2007) also asserts that there has been relatively little investigation into homosexuality in ballet. Further, although Bailey and Obershneider (1997) attempted to fill this gap in the literature, by investigating the sexual development of dancers, their relationships with dancers of different sexual orientations and dancers’ perceptions of the prevalence of homosexual dancers, they neglected to examine the dancers’ actual constructions of gender and how they construct their gender in relation to their bodies. Therefore, this study will build on Bailey and Obershneider’s (1997) research by examining other aspects of the relationship between gender and ballet, namely through sexuality and the body.

Male ballet dancers occupy a unique space in South African society where they are simultaneously valued, because they are men, and, devalued because they are constructed as homosexual and feminine. As men, they are expected to behave in certain ways and yet their profession requires them to behave differently. Outside of their profession, male ballet dancers are expected to behave, to act, to perform in a certain way (Butler, 2002), to display an interest in sport, be aggressive and strong. On the other hand, when they are dancing they are expected to be soft and supple (Bailey & Obershneider, 1997). Thus, male ballet dancers occupy a site of contestation where the ways that men are socially constructed are challenged, which can arguably open up new possibilities for the ways in which their gender identities can be constructed.

In fact, many studies examining gender identity ignore the influence of the body and sexuality on constructions of gender identity (Petersen, 2003). It is important to note that the ways in which the body, sexuality and gender identity are constructed are interdependent and so these terms are, by their very nature, conflated. One cannot conceptualise gender identity without considering the body and sexuality (Grosz, 1994). Thus, by examining gender identity constructions amongst male ballet dancers, this study must also implicitly investigate their constructions of their sexualities and bodies. Therefore, this research aims to fill a gap in the literature on masculinity by acknowledging the role of the body and sexuality in gender identity construction, and exposing the ways in which gender is constructed in alternative contexts.

#### **1.4. Conclusion**

Investigating the interplay between the ways that male ballet dancers construct their gender identities, sexualities and bodies, with an understanding that each influences the other and is not mutually exclusive, will lead to a better understanding of how these men navigate their positions in society; where they both perpetuate and challenge dominant ideas of masculinity. This study will expose the ways in which gender is constructed in a specific context, allowing for further possibilities for masculinity to emerge which do not necessarily conform to the ethnocentric construction, and in such a way empowering those who do not conform. In the following chapters, these ideas will be explored further and the theoretical foundations for this study's research questions will be outlined.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Conceptualisation and Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

There are many different forms of masculinity that encompass alternative ways of being a man and yet there exists a more prevailing type of masculinity: hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2002). Connell (2002, p. 60) defines hegemony as “a social ascendancy achieved in a play into the organization of private life and cultural processes”. South Africa (SA) is a patriarchal society in which the dominant ideal of masculinity is heterosexual (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Thus since the current hegemonic masculinity in South Africa has been constructed as heterosexual (Connell, 2002), alternative forms of masculinity, such as homosexuality, have been subverted. Consequently, SA presents a context of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity where men (as defined by sex) have historically had an advantage in society, especially in professional arenas. On the other hand, ballet is a unique context where women are at an advantage since ballet requires a feminine body and feminine attributes, which might explain the stereotype of the homosexual ballet dancer (Bailey & Obershneider, 1997). Therefore, male ballet dancers in SA occupy two worlds with seemingly contradictory requirements. Perhaps this contradiction is only present if one considers masculinity as a unitary concept and it might be better understood as embodying many alternative forms so male ballet dancers are in a unique position to challenge dominant notions of masculinity (Fisher, 2007). Therefore, how male ballet dancers construct their identities in terms of their gender, sexuality and body in a context where general social constructions are turned on their heads has been explored.

### 2.2. Ballet

*When ballet was established a few centuries ago, it was derived from court spectacles that were used as entertainment between courses at lavish dinner parties. As time went by, ballet as a form of performance was moulded on women so it largely became a female art form and men would merely enhance the female's beauty. So, by nature of ballet, I mean it was always seen as a female thing to do (P4, Appendix J, line 13).*

P4's account of the “nature of ballet” summarises the long history of the dance form, how it has come to be constructed in the South African context and hints at how P4 views his role as a male ballet dancer. There has been comparatively less work conducted on the experiences of male ballet dancers than ballerinas, this may be due to the fact that ballet is generally viewed as a women's activity (Gard, 2006; Helena, 2001). This view of ballet as a female

profession places men who choose to dance in a position that conflicts with ideas about men's work and normative ideas about masculinity in South Africa. Therefore, "for males, to dance is not simply to choose one form of physical activity over another", "it is also to position oneself in relation to a set of social meanings in which bodies never simply 'are' " (Gard, 2006, p. 3). Due to the perceived femininity of ballet, there exists an assumption that most male ballet dancers are gay (Bailey & Obershneider, 1997) and so by choosing a 'homosexual profession' many male ballet dancers are often placed into this category even if they are in fact heterosexual.

The view that male ballet dancers are homosexual is rooted in the history of ballet, including how ballet has come to be viewed as a feminine occupation even though it began as a masculine past-time. Ballet as we know it today is essentially a creative form of dance that is choreographed "using set steps and gestures" (Soanes, 2002, p. 59) that "[tells] a story" against a backdrop of music (Hawkins, 1990, p. 30). It first took shape in the Italian and French courts where (predominantly) male nobles danced as a means of entertainment (Gard, 2006). These aristocrats are not considered to have been very skilful dancers but they did have an elegance and refinement, which was the focus of their presentations. Following these 'noble' beginnings ballet continued to grow as a form of entertainment and became a dance spectacle.

In the nineteenth century, the male ballet dancer seemed to disappear from the stage as ballet became romanticised (Gard, 2006). The ballerina became the focus on stage with the male ballet dancer only offering her support. Ballet, therefore, became viewed as a female activity during this time, with the ballerina on stage producing an embodiment of the ideal femininity of the time. It is arguable that the ballerina's presence was so overpowering that male ballet dancers became enmeshed with the ballerina's femininity. Middle class audiences came to view male ballet dancers as homosexuals because their presence on stage and their embodied emotional displays seemed contradictory to the bourgeois conception of a masculine body as emotionally disciplined and concealed (Gard, 2006). Furthermore, the male ballet dancer was viewed as an ancillary on stage, merely there to hold up the ballerina. Helena (2001, p. 111) argues that the male dancers themselves often view their position on stage as being secondary to that of the ballerina, one male ballet dancer in her study even expressed that he would title his autobiography "My Life Under a Tutu". Therefore, the popularity of the male ballet dancer declined during this time (the nineteenth century), only to be somewhat rescued in the

early twentieth century by the Russian ballets where dancers, such as Nijinsky, Nureyev and Baryshnikov, performed leading roles and solos (Fisher, 2007; Helena, 2001).

Yet the re-emergence of the male ballet dancer occurred after a time when the male ballet dancer had been constructed as a particular kind of dancer: an athlete who is out of the ordinary, who is able to embody emotion through his art and who was, ultimately viewed as homosexual and effeminate (Fisher, 2007; Gard, 2006). This view of the male ballet dancer has arguably persisted well into the present day in most Westernized countries, like South Africa. Male ballet dancers are nonetheless attempting to resist such assumptions of homosexuality by constructing ballet as a medium for heterosexual men to get close to women in short skirts (Fisher, 2007) or as an athletic endeavour that can be associated with events that are largely deemed masculine activities such as contact sports (Fisher, 2007; Gard, 2006). Moreover, through particular styles of dance that have been choreographed to include militaristic displays as well as through the very shape, tone, strength and musculature of their bodies, male ballet dancers challenge feminine constructions of themselves (Gard, 2006).

These attempts to construct ballet as a sport are complicated, however, by the fact that ballet is not officially regarded as an athletic sport, because there is no World Cup or Olympic event that recognises it as an athletic undertaking. Also since stereotypes tend to be developed in exact opposites, the linking of ballet with sports is also a linking of ballet with heterosexuality in the minds of society, this is difficult because it may exclude the experiences of homosexual male dancers. Fisher (2007) argues that ballet will always be feminine and instead of drawing on closed categories, she believes that it may be more appropriate to challenge stereotypes by making male ballet dancers the champions of independent thinking. Nonetheless, Fisher's (2007, p.64) argument is only an idea and her construction of them as "mavericks" is not an identity that ballet dancers have taken up.

Further, ballet is often regarded as an inappropriate career for men, given its feminine nature whereby the profession is largely populated by women (Fisher, 2007). This construction of ballet as an inferior profession is reflected in the fact that ballet dancers receive comparatively less pay than other professionals, especially other sports professionals (Fisher, 2007; Sichel, 2010). While men in the broader patriarchal South African society receive the benefits of privilege in that they are often paid more than their female counterparts are, male ballet dancers do not fall into a high-income bracket (Kahn, 2009). Male ballet dancers are

marginalised in that they are perceived as being on an equal footing with women because of the perceived femininity of their profession and their level of pay. Despite being marginalised in the broader society, however, male ballet dancers do enjoy privileges within their profession, given that there are so few of them (Fisher, 2007). Male dancers also often occupy high-level positions within ballet companies. They occupy a volatile space where they are ostracised due to their profession and constructed as feminine, but are nonetheless still men. Therefore, male ballet dancers have to negotiate their gender identities in a context where, as men they are privileged but as professionals they are marginalised (Risner, 2009).

### **2.3. Masculinity**

Sex is the “biological differences between males and females” while gender is the “socially produced differences between being feminine and being masculine” (Holmes, 2007, p. 2). Further according to Kahn (2009, p. 2) masculinity, being a gender identity, can be defined as “the complex, cognitive, behavioural, emotional, expressive, psychosocial, and socio cultural experience of identifying with being male”. Given that masculinity is psychosocial, it can be said to be constructed differently not only by different individuals but also in different socio-historical contexts. Consequently, there are many alternative ways of understanding masculinity and it is not surprising to find that not all social scientists have the same opinion about what it means to be masculine (Kahn, 2009).

#### **2.3.1. Essentialism and the Body**

Since not all social scientists agree on what it means to be ‘masculine’, there are a number of ways to study masculinity. One of the first ways of looking at masculinity was based on an essentialist understanding of gender, which is one that it is inextricably linked to sex (Holmes, 2007). Consequently, an essentialist masculinity differentiates between men and women depending on the bodily characteristics that societies deem to belong to men (Gard, 2006), that is people who possess X and Y chromosomes, certain hormones, a penis and testes or a vagina and ovaries.

Indeed, the body (being one’s physical limbs and organs, including one’s reproductive organs) has long been linked to the concept of gender and therefore it cannot be ignored when considering gender identity (Laquer, 1990). Holmes (2007) argues that the role the body plays in gender development cannot be disregarded simply because it is now widely accepted in the social sciences that gender is not solely based on sex differences. Hence, since gender is an idea that encompasses differences between the sexes, it can be understood that social

norms of gender are transcribed onto the body (Holmes, 2007). Morgan (2002) argues that the bodily differences between men and women often form the very basis from which the differences between masculine and feminine are constructed.

Although gender identity is not solely dependent on sex, it is still influenced by it. Social constructions of gender are dependent on perceptions of the body (Grosz, 1994). Certain bodies are expected to behave in certain ways (Connell, 2002). For example, men are expected to conform to socially prescribed masculine ways of being. The way that people interact with each other is based on a socially constructed notion of gender, as linked to specific bodies. Furthermore, gender is enacted through the body because one is constructed as a man or a woman depending on the way one behaves (Connell, 2002). Since individuals necessarily exist within particular social contexts, these social interactions influence the way gender identities are constructed by individuals. To separate constructions of the body from constructions of gender identity would be to assume that the body is a fixed entity onto which gender is inscribed (Fortado, 2003). Ultimately, this would be to revert to another form of essentialism, an assumed distinction between a natural body and a gender identity, where the body is assumed to exist outside of social influence and where gender is considered separate from the body. Needless to say, as has been argued by Laquer (1990) the body itself has been constructed in different ways. Men and women were historically considered to be of the same sex (merely harbouring their reproductive organs either externally or internally, respectively). At present, however, they are constructed as two separate sexes, with men and women falling at extreme ends of a continuum with intersexed persons falling somewhere in-between them (Fortado, 2003). Therefore, gender identity needs to be understood as being influenced by the body and the body by gender.

Morgan (2002) purports that men are not often asked to reflect upon their existence as gendered persons and that this may be due to the fact that it is usually those who are in power who do not consider their position in society. Often, representations of male bodies are essentialist in nature and attempt to hide the very body itself, since the body is constructed as a natural element and men have been more closely associated with the mind in modern discourses (Morgan, 2002). Arguably, it is only in times of personal or social crisis that those who have power reflect upon their own identities. Morgan (2002) argues that the present is such a time of crisis since the male body is increasingly becoming the subject of popular discourse (in magazines for example), forcing men to examine the ways in which their bodies oppress women, are refrained from emotional expression, form part of their personal and

social identities and have become sites for medical concerns. Indeed, male bodies are even becoming the sites for research in terms of eating disorders, which were previously deemed female conditions (Garner, 1997). The position of men as powerful subjects is being challenged as a consequence of this reflection on the male body since the male body forms the site upon which masculine power is built (Morgan, 2002). This position is, however, limited because there are differences amongst men themselves (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

### **2.3.2. Sex Roles**

West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that the categorization of people into the groups of male and female is a highly interactional and social process, whereby people who are perceived by others to occupy a certain group (male or female) will be deemed to belong to that group based upon their observable behaviour and their appearance. Following this, certain behaviours and traits are categorised as being more or less masculine and more or less feminine. Masculine characteristics are culturally more desirable for a man to possess because of social expectations (Bem, 1975). Some of the traits men are expected to possess are assertiveness, athleticism, dominance and independence while women are expected to be gentle, affectionate and naive (Bem, 1974). Ultimately, however, these roles into which people are socialised often result in the hindrance of them reaching their potentials. In this way, by reinforcing social stereotypes society restricts the ability of people to assert their individuality and develop their identities (Bem, 1975). It is through limiting the possibilities from which individuals are able to develop their identities that society plays a role in constructing their gender.

### **2.2.3. Stereotypes**

Although Holmes (2007) agrees that men have historically exerted control over women's bodies, for example by physically restricting them to certain spaces such as the home, she argues that men's bodies are also subjected to discipline and power. Across many different cultures, it is believed that a man needs to show control over his body in order to embody a masculine identity that appears to be rational and disciplined. Male ballet dancers are required to exemplify this notion of control, to conform to a lean body ideal and yet have enough strength to lift their partners and perform acrobatic movements (Ravaldi *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, when considering the way that the male body is gendered it is important to also consider the ways in which gender is embodied through stereotyped behaviours.

## 2.4. Sexuality

Sexuality is inextricably linked to gender and sex, especially given the ways in which we construct the different types of sexualities. Heterosexuality can be defined as being sexually attracted to a person of the opposite sex, while homosexuality is defined as being sexually attracted to a person of the same sex as oneself. Therefore, one's sexuality is governed by one's sexual object choice (Freud, 1977). There are however, other possible sexualities such as bisexuality (attraction to persons of both the same and opposite sex) or even asexuality (where one is not sexually attracted to either men or women).

Foucault (1976) argued that sexuality is a social construct (that is, it is not a fixed or natural entity) which has been used historically to maintain the power of the dominant classes over those who were viewed as subordinate. This power is exerted through discourse rather than force, by constructing one group of society as inferior to another and then 'normalising' this hierarchy through "social surveillance" a dominant group of society can exert their power over that other group (Foucault, 1977). In other words, people are socialised into behaving in certain ways and expect others to conform to these ways of being, when someone deviates from socially accepted ways of behaving they are 'punished' in the sense that they are ostracised, ridiculed and bullied. Modern societies hold a "heteronormative gender order" (Holmes, 2007, p. 20), one in which men and women, as distinct groups, should be attracted to one another. Therefore homosexuality, where members of the same sex are attracted to one another, would be viewed as inferior to heterosexuality in heteronormative societies (Connell, 2002) like South Africa. Other heteronormative countries include Australia and the United States, these countries are also patriarchal and those who deviate from expected social norms in these countries are exposed to ridicule and devaluation (Johnson, 1997; Connell, 2002). Male ballet dancers are often teased and insulted for being effeminate or homosexual, whether or not that is how they identify themselves (Gard, 2006). They are constructed in a way that sets them apart from the heteronormative view of what it means to be a man, in an attempt to devalue them and diminish their power to expose alternative ways of being a man.

The emergence of the term homosexuality allowed for those who fell into its definition to be categorized and made into a subordinate category (Foucault, 1976). Homosexuality was conceptualised as a perversion of the natural order of things and a deviation that needed to be controlled in order for procreation to continue (Foucault, 1976). However, it is important to note that the construction of this category also served to empower those it encompassed by affording them an identity that could be used to challenge the normality of heterosexuality

(Foucault, 1976). Because male ballet dancers choose to participate in a feminised profession and behave in soft and delicate ways, where they are constructed as feminine and homosexual, they challenge the idea of heteronormative masculinity.

## **2.5. Gender Identity Development**

Gender identity development, and the development of one's sexuality, is also linked to physical maturation, as people grow older and their bodies develop, they become integrated into society. When considering the process of identity formation it is important to speak to sexual and social development since they form an integral part of identity construction. There are many theories that attempt to account for the development of gender. Freud (1977) and Erikson's (1963) view development as influenced by social forces, their theories have been influential to the development of feminist and social constructionist perspectives because they consider the influence of social forces on gender identity formation (Kahn, 2009). Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of sexuality in determining one's gender identity. Freud and Erikson's theories were, however developed in response to a deterministic and biological perspective (Kahn, 2009). Therefore, before considering which theory would be most appropriate to developing a better understanding of gender identity development in the context of this study, it is important to understand from where each theory emerged and how each one impacted on the development of the other.

### **2.5.1. Biological Perspectives**

Before theorists began debating over the influence of social and psychological factors, it was widely believed that gender was determined by sex. Gender identity was thought to be solely determined by genetic composition and hormonal influences. These biological understandings of gender stem from essentialism (Holmes, 2007). Although most scholars now agree that biology is not the sole proprietor of gender, it must be acknowledged that it does have some influence in determining our understanding and constructions of gender identity. Prenatal hormones have been found to make men more aggressive, male and female brains are structured differently and some sex characteristics are pervasive across different contexts (Maccoby, 2000).

The influence of prenatal hormones over the development of one's sexual identity is evident in the link between the lengths of one's fingers and one's sexuality, whereby homosexual individuals' ring fingers were significantly longer than their index fingers as compared to heterosexuals (Rahman & Wilson, 2003). It is important to note, however, that the study

conducted by Rahman and Wilson (2003) must be considered critically because the effects of prenatal hormones have not been found to causally result in different sexual identities for individuals and so social influences on identity development cannot be ignored (Brown, Finn, Cooke & Breedlove, 2002).

Men who identify as homosexual stand in opposition to the hegemonic social construction of heteronormative masculinity, demonstrating that there are alternative ways of being a man. Moreover, men differ from one another, not only in terms of sexual preference but also their gendered behaviour (Brown, Finn, Cooke & Breedlove, 2002; Petersen, 2003), and these differences cannot be accounted for by biological factors alone. Thus, it is important to consider the role of social practices and desires in shaping individual behaviour.

### **2.5.2. Psychoanalysis**

Following Freud's (1977) theory of psychosexual development, most of the participants in this study would be in the genital phase of their development, having already negotiated and resolved the phallic and latency stages. The genital stage occurs during adolescence and is a time when a person develops adult sexual urges focused on their genital organs which are directed at a specific love object (generally a person of the opposite sex), however, should the person have been unable to fully negotiate previous stages of development then those conflicts may recur during this stage (Freud, 1977). It is important to note that the conflicts individuals might face are also impacted upon by the individual's culture.

The most likely stage of Freud's (1977) psychosexual development where conflict, that will greatly affect sexuality, is likely to occur is the phallic stage. During the phallic stage, young men would encounter the Oedipus complex. Following Freud's (1977) theory, in order for the Oedipus complex to be resolved, a young boy would need to identify with his father and let go of his mother as an object of desire, substituting another woman for her. However, should this process be incomplete, it may result in homosexuality.

It is important to note that Freud was writing during a time when sex and sexuality was not an open topic of conversation and that any orientation which deviated from the heterosexual was deemed to be pathological. Therefore, by writing so openly about sex, Freud (1977) challenged the thinking of his peers and in fact argued for homosexuality to be treated as a normal developmental outcome. In fact, Freud (1977) argued that anyone was capable of making a homosexual object-choice and that many people may have homosexual urges

residing in their unconscious. He further believed that it was only harmful for a person to be homosexual if they experience their object choice as conflicting with their moral beliefs.

### **2.5.3. Erikson**

Erikson's (1963) stages of development focus on how personal and social conflicts lead to identity development. Following Erikson's stages of development the majority of participants in this study should either be negotiating or have just negotiated his fifth stage: identity versus role confusion. This is the stage where young adults settle on an identity for themselves and are integrated into their cultures (Erikson, 1963). Identity formation involves the choosing of a profession and love partner, both central concerns of this study, as well as the degree to which they would be influenced by their peers and the dominant social views in their culture (Erikson, 1963). There are a number of possible outcomes to this stage of development: role confusion (inability to choose a career or sexual partner type), over identification (taking on a peer group identity) (Erikson, 1963), or negative identity formation (selecting an identity frowned upon by society) (Erikson, 1980).

Marcia (1966, p. 551) argues that in forming their identity, individuals need to consolidate "childhood identifications in such a way that [they] can both establish a reciprocal relationship with [their] society and maintain a feeling of continuity within [themselves]". Therefore in a society, where being a man is equated with being heterosexual, homosexual men will find it difficult to negotiate their gender identities. Further, male ballet dancers who are widely constructed as being homosexual because of feminized perceptions of their careers, will face similar challenges in defining their gender identities.

Thus, Freud and Erikson's theories of gender identity development provide a useful platform for recognising the role that one's sexuality and one's body play in shaping one's gender identity, and the tensions between conforming to social expectations and following one's own desires. Nonetheless, their theories are limited in the sense that they restrict the possible identities that one can develop and they are based on assumptions that are rooted in a particular cultural and historical context where a heterosexual male identity is normative and other male identities are viewed as less valued states (Kahn, 2009).

### **2.5.4. Feminism**

Feminist theories are often used to examine masculinity (Kahn, 2009). The aim of the feminist movement was to examine marginalised and less valued groups and to give them a voice. Feminist thinking brought about the idea that the ways we make sense of gender can

help us to understand people and society at large. These theories challenged the idea that heterosexual relationships between men and women were normative and that any divergence from this was deviant (Kahn, 2009).

Feminist theories challenged the essentialist belief that heterosexuality was somehow more natural, by virtue of its biological reproductive capacity, and that any behaviour which deviated from it was pathological (Crawley & Broad, 2008). They argued that since alternative sexualities were present in society that sexuality was not merely governed by biological drives but rather was influenced by social expectations. Therefore, feminism laid the groundwork for the thinking that gender is socially constructed. Although it may appear odd to have women examining the ways that men construct their gender, “one of the ‘advantages’ of being outside of something is that it can give you unique ways of looking at it” (Kahn, 2009, p.7). In this way, radical feminism is widely considered to have contributed to the development of social constructionism (Kahn, 2009) and the development of Queer Theory (Crawley & Broad, 2008). This way of thinking has lead researchers to question the ways that they view the world and to consider alternative ways of being.

#### **2.5.5. Social Constructionism**

Since biological and psychoanalytical theories ignore the specific sociohistorical circumstances in which gender identity is developed, a perspective that allows for a view of gender as an identity that develops within a specific social context, is arguably most appropriate to the present study. That is, a theory that views gender not as a fixed object linked to the body, but rather as a social construction holds a powerful explanation for how gender identity is developed because it does not restrict an individual to conform to specific ways of being a man or woman. Social constructionism is founded on the premise that people’s views of the world are based on their social and cultural beliefs (Patton, 2002). Thus, there is no one objective reality that exists outside of human experience and there are as many different realities as there are people because there will never be two people whose collections of experiences are exactly the same.

Constructionists aim to capture the different experiences of individuals and investigate the impact that social constructions have on their lives and relationships (Patton, 2002). Social constructions are “social processes from which emerge commonly shared presumptions about the nature of the real, the rational, and the good” but social constructionism acknowledges ways of being which fall outside of socially prescribed norms as being equally possible and

valid ways of living (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p.173). Therefore, this research embraced a social constructionist stance in order to examine the ways that male ballet dancers construct their gender identities within the South African context. Further, in light of the perspective taken in this study the terms ‘male’ and ‘masculinity’ were used to denote all the possible gender constructions for men, including those that differ from socially normative constructions. Following this line of thinking, queer theory emerged and offered alternative ways of conceptualising the different ways of being a man.

### **2.5.6. Queer Theory**

Queer theories stand against categories and socially imposed constructions (Crawley & Broad, 2008). Queer theories are informed by social constructionist and feminist theories. They also argue against the imposition of a gender identity onto an individual based on social constructions of their sex, instead they suggest that people can determine their own gender identities (Crawley & Broad, 2008). According to queer theories, identity is not fixed in biology but it is performed by individuals. Therefore, people have agency in that they determine how to perform their identity. Nonetheless, individuals need to contest with heteronormative ideas about fixed gender identities (that is that one’s gender is determined by one’s physical body) and the impact of these beliefs on the ways in which they can shape their own identities. “Male-bodied” people are held accountable to be “men” in social interactions and are expected to behave in certain ways that conform to socially constructed ideas about masculinity (Crawley & Broad, 2008, p.560). Therefore, men are limited in the ways in which they can challenge social constructions of masculinity. Although men cannot overthrow dominant cultural ideas of what it means to be a man, they can determine their own ways of performing their masculinity (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

Social interactions are, however, mediated through the body (Connell, 2002). Social expectations for behaviour emerge from the perceived sexed appearance of the body whereby men are expected to behave in stereotypically masculine ways. When a man performs a behaviour that is typically constructed as feminine, he challenges what it means to be a man and opens up the possibilities for the ways in which masculinity is constructed to change (Connell, 2002). Men can be feminine or homosexual because they have agency in acting out their genders, and embodying alternative ways of being men. Thus, if one considers the many ways in which men can perform their genders, the term masculinity does not have to be understood in the sense that it does not incorporate femininity or homosexuality because there are many ways to be a man. That is, one can perform one’s gender by behaving in

ways that are constructed as masculine or feminine which exposes gender as being constructed through social interactions and not born out of a natural essence (Connell, 2002).

Thus, queer theories serve to further challenge the essentialist dual classification of gender (Holmes, 2007). Queer theories argue for the possibility of multiple identities and sexualities, assuming that people can challenge norms that place heterosexuality in a privileged position (Holmes, 2007). Indeed Butler (2002), who is often credited with founding queer theory, argues that there is no essential source of gender and that the differences between the masculine and feminine can be challenged through performances that move beyond essentialist limits.

One such example can be found in ballet where men are called upon to perform the roles of women, as in the “Adventures in Motion Picture’s” “Swan Lake” analysed by Disbergen (1998). Disbergen (1998) argues that the reversal of roles leads one to reconsider popular understandings of masculinity and sexuality, thereby undermining the normative position of heterosexual masculinity. However, it is important to bear in mind that the presence of male ballet dancers in performances where behaviours that are broadly deemed to be feminine are placed on display often leads audiences to question their sexuality rather than the “institutional arrangements” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p.146). Therefore, ballet forms a context in which essentialist ideas of gender are challenged but it may also confront the gender constructions held by the individual male ballet dancers.

## **2.6. Narrative Constructionism**

Following queer theory, it is possible to conceive of the construction of identity through a particular kind of social constructionism, narrative constructionism. In this sense, men can develop stories about themselves and who they are (using socially, culturally and historically specific ideas). Thus they are able to construct a narrative of who they are, that is their identity (Sparkes & Smith, 2008). In this way people have agency in constructing their identities but since they do not exist in isolation, the ways in which they determine who they are will always be dependent on their social context. Nonetheless, it is still possible to construct oneself in a way that challenges social expectations because people are active in shaping and performing who they are (Sparkes & Smith, 2008). Men are able to write their own stories about who they are and enact them in their daily lives according to their own internal script. Therefore, the ways in which men narrate their gender identities and perform

their stories can enable them to challenge the ways in which they are constructed because since meaning is conveyed through narrative so too can it be altered through narrative.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

As has been argued above, the concepts of gender identity, sexuality and body are linked. Society has constructed these concepts in such a way that the one cannot exist without the other and so it would be ignorant to investigate these constructs independently. In order to gain a better understanding of the different ways that masculinity can be constructed it was necessary to consider a particular context where dominant “ethnocentric”, heteronormative, views of masculinity are challenged. Therefore, the South African male ballet dancers occupy such a position where they are constructed as being homosexual in a female discipline within a broader heteronormative culture. Hence, by researching the ways in which male ballet dancers construct their gender identities, sexualities and bodies, in a heteronormative context a better understanding of gender in alternative domains can be gained.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This research study, in keeping with the social constructionist line of enquiry introduced above, has chosen to examine the proposed topic, through the qualitative method of narrative analysis. Therefore, this chapter will outline the specific research questions that will be examined as well as the procedures that were used in answering these questions.

### **3.2. Research Design**

The research questions were generated organically from the literature discussed in the previous chapters and have been addressed using a qualitative methodology that falls within a social constructionist epistemology (Willig, 2001), since the main focus of this research was concerned with examining the ways in which male ballet dancers construct their gender identities, their sexualities and their bodies within their professional and broader societal contexts in Johannesburg.

### **3.3. Research Questions**

1. How do male ballet dancers construct their gender identity?
2. How do male ballet dancers construct their sexuality?
3. How do male ballet dancers construct their bodies?

4. How do male ballet dancers construct their gender identity in seemingly contradictory social environments?

### **3.4. Sample and Sampling**

The participants in this study consisted of a purposeful sample of four classically trained male ballet dancers over the age of 18, who had danced professionally, that is having been paid for their work and danced for a company, for at least one year. All of the participants both reside and have danced in Johannesburg, South Africa. Participant 1 (P1) and participant 2 (P2) were no longer involved in the ballet industry, providing a slightly different perspective of their life events from participants 3 (P3) and 4 (P4), who were both currently still involved in the industry. Furthermore, P1 had branched out into other forms of dance, although he had trained as a classical ballet dancer. P4 was the only participant of African ethnicity and self-identified as being Southern Sotho, but his ethnicity did not emerge as being of primary importance to him in his responses and therefore, it did not form the focus of any analyses. P2 was the only participant who identified himself as heterosexual, P1, P3 and P4 all self-identified as homosexual. The participants' ages were: 24 (P4), 27 (P3) and 30 (P1 and P2). P3 and P4 are still currently employed as professional ballet dancers while P1 and P2 have largely retired from professional ballet performances.

The sample is relatively small but, based on the accounts given by the participants; it appears to be reflective of the size of the broader population of male ballet dancers in Johannesburg in that there are very few of them. Nonetheless, a small sample size is appropriate for qualitative research as it is the unique experiences of these participants who belong to a particular context that are of interest. The aim of this research is not generalisability but rather transferability, in that the constructions used by these research participants may point to dominant social constructs that could be further explored. A smaller sample size also afforded a depth of understanding that a larger sample size would have made difficult to achieve. Repeat interviews were also conducted until data saturation was reached and no new information that was pertinent to this study was brought to light. When the researcher was content that the data was detailed enough and further sampling became redundant, sampling procedures were terminated (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

All participants in the study were volunteers and they were invited to participate in the study by means of snowball sampling (Neuman, 1997). The researcher gained access to the respondents through social networking sites and through colleagues who put her into contact

with potential participants. Those who were invited to participate in the research study were asked if they were willing to recommend other male ballet dancers whom they believed would be interested in participating. A snowball sampling strategy was deemed to be the most effective way of gaining access to the desired population since it was believed that male ballet dancers were well connected within their social networks (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). By inviting male ballet dancers to participate in the study through a social connection, it made them more receptive to the idea of taking part in the research. Using this sampling strategy developed a sense of rapport with the ballet dancers, as they felt that since their friend had already taken part in the study and had felt comfortable sharing their stories with the researcher, that she could be trusted to treat their personal narratives with respect. Furthermore, it would have been difficult for the researcher to approach male ballet dancers directly because she was not personally involved in the ballet industry and therefore was unaware of where to approach male ballet dancers or how to contact them.

### **3.5. Measures**

Data was gathered using a semi-structured, narratively oriented interview that was either conducted verbally or electronically via e-mail. These two different forms of communication were used because some of the participants (namely P3 and P4, and P2 for his second interview) indicated that due to their work commitments it would be more convenient for them to communicate with the researcher through an electronic medium. Although using two mediums for the interview process meant that some of the responses given via e-mail were shorter than those given orally, the opportunity to ask for further elaboration on some points meant that the depth of the participants narratives was not lost. Further, in some instances using the electronic medium was advantageous as it allowed participants to focus their responses and meant that the time needed for data capturing was reduced. Also, written responses restricted the impact of interviewer bias in that participants were less influenced by the interviewer's interjections, facial expressions and presence. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that since participants had the ability to take their time with responding to interview questions and could edit their responses, their answers in no way reflect a more authentic response than those of interviewed participants. Indeed, they were still responding to the researcher as an imagined audience, which could have influenced the ways that the answered questions. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and all data was captured and analysed by the researcher.

“Narratively oriented interviews elicit stories where the respondent takes responsibility for interpreting their experiences through contextualising them in a story” (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p.129). A semi-structured interview provided a means for the researcher to hear the interviewee’s life experiences and allowed the researcher the flexibility to follow the interviewee’s stories (Willig, 2001). However, it is important to acknowledge that the researcher was guided by her research agenda and so the data that the participants were encouraged to reveal was limited to the scope of the research questions.

Following the suggestions forwarded by Bertaux and Kohli (1985) for a narratively oriented interview, the verbal interview process consisted of minimal involvement by the researcher who only engaged with the comments of participants in order to seek clarification or to introduce a new focus. Therefore, the participants were able to speak with little interruption, allowing for extensive narratives to be obtained. The interview schedule itself can be found in Appendix D.

The specific method for eliciting the personal narratives of the participants was loosely guided by the autobiographical protocol suggested by McAdams (as cited in Crossley, 2007). McAdams (as cited in Crossley, 2007) suggested that the interviewee initially be invited to imagine their life as a book that is made up of various chapters or parts and then to describe these sections of their life in order for the interviewer to obtain a sense of their broad life story. Next the participants were encouraged to consider some key events that were critical in shaping their gender identity, sexuality and their perceptions of their body in relation to their choice of profession; and to describe the impact that these events had on their lives and how it may have changed them. The interviewer asked the participants about any people in their lives whom they have felt have had a major impact on their lives, for example heroes or heroines. The interviewee was also encouraged to share any of the conflicts or tensions they have experienced or are currently experiencing in their lives in relation to their gender, sexuality, perceptions of their body, profession or social life. Participants were further asked to consider whether they have a personal ideology, that is their beliefs and values, and to possibly identify a life theme that has guided them throughout their lives. Lastly, the participants were encouraged to share their ideas and hopes for their future.

The written interviews were open-ended and participants were encouraged to answer the questions with as much detail as they felt was necessary, still allowing for a narrative structure with virtually no interference given by the researcher. The participants who took

part in the written interviews were given the same instructions and questions as those who were verbally interviewed. Furthermore, the participants who responded to the questions via e-mail were asked follow-up questions in a second e-mail to clarify any points that they mentioned, just as those who took part in the oral interviews were asked to clarify responses both during the initial and a second interview. Therefore, although the mediums of communication used to interview participants differed, these did not interfere with the chosen method of analysis.

### **3.6. Procedure**

Once ethics permission was granted by the University of the Witwatersrand non-medical ethics board the study began (please see ethics clearance certificate in Appendix K). Access to participants was gained through the researcher's colleagues. Participants were invited to take part in the study and further volunteers were approached through these initial participants. In accordance with snowball sampling, any further volunteers were asked to refer the researcher onto two or three other male ballet dancers who were potentially interested in taking part in the present research. Potential volunteers were either contacted via e-mail or telephonically. Sampling ceased after four participants were interviewed and any new data would have been redundant.

The interviews with participants took two forms: written (P3 and P4) and verbal (P1 and P2). It was necessary to interview the participants in these varying ways given that two of the participants, P3 and P4, were unable to meet with the researcher due to their travel commitments. As stated by Patton (2002), qualitative research embraces flexibility in its research design and recognises that at times the practical constraints of the research process outweigh the desire for achieving methodological perfection. Furthermore, given that qualitative research recognises participants as individuals and is respectful of their needs, the interviews occurred at a time and place, as well as in a manner that was convenient to the participants. Nonetheless, a private room at the University of the Witwatersrand was also offered as a quiet and private space for interviews. Ultimately, however, only the initial interviews for P1 and P2 were conducted in the private room.

All research participants were made aware of the topic and goals of the study and were given a participant information sheet (Appendix A) to keep, prior engaging in an interview. The information sheet outlined the nature of the study and participant's rights to confidentiality (as well as explaining the mechanisms for maintaining confidentiality) and their right to

withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any questions without repercussions. Further, participants were informed of the expected duration of the interview (approximately two hours) and that they may potentially be asked to participate in a follow-up interview. The information sheet also included contact details for free counselling should any participants have experienced any negative consequences after participating in the interview. Further, participants were given a consent form to sign indicating that they understood the content of the information sheet and consented to being part of the study (Appendix B). Participants were also given a form asking for their consent for their interviews to be recorded and used in data analysis (Appendix C).

Once consent was obtained the interviews began. The interviews were either written or audio recorded. In the case of the verbal interview, a voice recorder was placed in a position where it could most clearly record the participant's responses (Willig, 2001). The interviews followed a semi-structured schedule (Appendix D) and concluded with the researcher thanking the participants for their time and reminding them that they could have access to either the full report or a one page summary of the results of the study should they request that it be e-mailed to them.

The verbal interviews were transcribed and written interviews were copied into an interview format. Any of the participants' responses, from either of the interview formats that needed elaboration or clarification were addressed in a second interview. The transcriptions of the written and verbal interviews were recorded in different formats. Each verbal interview was transcribed separately; while the written interviews were combined so as to make the applicability of the follow-up questions more evident (see Appendix E-J for more clarity on the formatting). All interviews underwent a narrative analysis (details to follow below) before being presented in the research report. No identifying information was attached to the interview transcripts or recordings and they were stored in a secure locked cupboard in the supervisor's office, where only the supervisor and researcher have access to them. The recordings and transcripts of the interviews will further be kept in a secure locked cupboard for as long as long as they exist as they may become useful again at some future point. Moreover, neither the participants' names nor their affiliated organisations were mentioned in the research report or transcripts, nor will they be mentioned in further publications.

### **3.7. Data Analysis**

The data was analysed using narrative analysis. There are many different forms of narrative analysis and there is no procedural blueprint for analysts to follow. In acknowledgement of the fact that qualitative research involves a balance between artistry and critical interpretation narrative theorists have shied away from creating firm rules about how narrative analysis should be conducted (Patton, 2002). Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p.1) state that narrative analysis “has been criticised as being more art than research” and so researchers need to make the reasons underlying their choice of analysis and exact methodology very clear. In this research report both the thematic (Crossley, 2007) and structural elements (Gergen & Gergen, 1986) of narrative analysis have been used to interpret the experiences of the participants and the ways that they construct their gender identities. Before outlining the exact methods used to analyse the participants’ interviews, the assumptions of narrative analysis will be examined.

#### **3.7.1. Theoretical Assumptions**

When people seek to understand the events of their lives they usually do this by creating their own life stories (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). McAdams (2001) argues that people naturally use narrative to make sense of who they are. It is a way for individuals to construct their identities, to weave together their own perspectives and those that society has of them into one cohesive sense of self. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p.7) hold the same perspective as McAdams (2001) and go so far as to say that “the story is one’s identity, a story created, told, revised, and retold throughout life”. However, a person’s life consists of a past, present and a future, or rather a beginning, middle and an end, (McLeod, 2003) and therefore in order to make sense of a person’s life these stories different time spans need to be joined together to form a complete story, a narrative (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

Although, people often create their identities through narrative (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005), it is important to understand that identities are not constructed in isolation and that narratives are influenced by cultural and societal context (McLeod, 2003). Therefore a personal narrative can be understood as conforming to or as deconstructing a dominant cultural narrative (McLeod, 2003). Narrative analysis allows for the examination of cultural and social meanings through the experiences of individuals (Patton, 2002). It holds that there is no one truth and that there is no particular way of understanding a person’s experience (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). In this way, narrative analysis compliments social constructionism as a world view because narrative analysis “advocates pluralism,

relativism and subjectivity” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998, p. 2). Each person has their own life story that they construct to make sense of their past, present and future (McAdams, 2001).

Despite the fact that narrative analysis can be a useful analytical tool for understanding the way that individuals construct their identities within their social contexts, it does not take for granted that the stories participants tell are wholly accurate records of reality (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). Individuals may change the ways that they tell their stories depending on who they are talking to and their stories may change over time as they choose to include or exclude events, or focus on different occurrences. Nonetheless, people’s stories are believed to be embedded in their actual experiences and thus, still provide a means for researchers to access constructions of identity and the participant’s view of their external reality (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998).

In essence, narrative can be seen as a link between individual experience and their cultural environment (McLeod, 2003). The personal experiences and meanings created by participants were therefore seen as embedded in a South African culture and viewed as either conforming to dominant understandings of gender, sexuality and male body or as deconstructing such dominant views. Therefore, since narrative is “consistent with the way that people make sense of their own lives” (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p.128) narrative analysis was deemed an appropriate means of interpreting the way that male ballet dancers construct their gender identities, sexualities and perceive their bodies.

### **3.7.2. Narrative Analysis**

Narrative analysis usually entails both an examination of content as well as structure (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Therefore the analysis used in this report will be broken up into two parts which will ultimately be combined to form a coherent account of the participant’s experiences and how they have come to construct their gender identities, as male ballet dancers.

#### ***Structural Analysis***

Gergen and Gergen (1986) argue that the most important aspect of narrative is its ability to structure events so that they flow on from one another and progress, or regress, over time. Therefore, any narrative account must consider the ways in which constructs are used and developed across a person’s life. Therefore, before examining the constructs that participants

use to account for their gender identity development, it is important to outline how they fit into a broader narrative.

According to Gergen and Gergen (1986) there are three typical narrative forms: progressive, regressive and stable. A narrative is progressive if “one steadily progresses toward a goal,” a narrative is regressive if “one is continuously moving away from the valued state” and a stable narrative is one that “links incidents images or concepts in such a way that the protagonist remains essentially unchanged with respect to evaluative position” (Gergen & Gergen, 1986, p. 27) A goal, valued state or evaluative position would, in this instance, becoming a recognised and well-paid professional ballet dancer.

More complex narratives may be built, however, out of various combinations of these three basic narrative structures. These would be the tragedy (“a progressive narrative followed by a rapid regressive narrative”), the happy-ending (“a progressive narrative followed by a stability narrative”) and the comedy (“a regressive narrative followed by a progressive narrative”) (Gergen & Gergen, 1986, p. 28). The narratives of the participants will be described according to these structures.

### ***Thematic analysis***

The ways in which the participants construct their gender identities within the context of their narratives can be understood through the analysis of themes. The specific form of narrative analysis used to examine the themes evident in the participants’ narratives loosely conformed to the six analytic steps set out by Crossley (2007), with the exception of the analysis of narrative tone. Therefore, following Crossley (2007, p.129-132) the final analytical steps followed were:

1. The whole recording and transcript of each interview was listened to and read repeatedly so that the researcher could gain a broad understanding of the themes present in the narratives.
2. The central elements of each narrative were noted (including overarching tone, imagery and themes)
3. Imagery and themes were also recorded, based on specific lines in the transcript. Imagery consists of “personally meaningful images, symbols and metaphors” and themes are “patterns of motivation” within the narratives (Crossley, 2007, p. 130).
4. A rough outline of the narratives was drawn up that linked events, tones, imagery and themes into a coherent story.

5. Finally the findings of the analysis were presented.

By following Crossley's (2007) methods, which take account of so many different elements of the data, rich and deep interpretations of the participants' constructions could be made.

### **3.8. Reflexivity**

Reflexivity was introduced to the qualitative paradigm as a way of acknowledging the role of the researcher in the research process. By being reflexive, a qualitative researcher can ensure that they are "conscious of the cultural, political, social, linguistic and ideological origins of [their] own perspective and voice as well as the perspective and voices of those [they interview] and those to whom [they] report" (Patton, 2002, p. 65). Since the researcher is a part of the same broad context as the participants in this study and was in fact be the "instrument of her research" (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p.43), she needed to be reflexive. In order to remain reflexive, the researcher kept a research diary. This diary included information such as the researcher's reasons for engaging with the present topic and any other information that could influence her interpretations of the interview data, such as her theoretical perspectives as stipulated in the literature review. Further, her interpretations were subjected to the same rigorous scrutiny as her research material in order to maintain reflexivity. Therefore, keeping true to the qualitative paradigm, the researcher wishes to acknowledge her role as a research instrument through a personal narrative of her thinking as it developed throughout the course of this study below.

The use of the third-person in academic writing, although useful in allowing the data to speak for itself, seemingly attempts to hide the person behind the interpretations and analyses (Patton, 2002). Using a passive voice in report writing can be deceptive because no interpretations can exist without the input of the researcher. The use of the first person, on the other hand, allows the voice of the researcher to come through and it reminds the reader of their human qualities. In this way, the use of the pronoun 'I' demonstrates an acknowledgement by the researcher that they are not an objective surveyor of data (Patton, 2002). Therefore, by reflecting on my analyses in the first person I hope to make my position as a researcher clear and acknowledge the possible influence that my own experiences have had on my interpretations.

I began this research with a personal interest in dance. I used to be a modern dancer and took part in an international Show Dance competition in 2005. I have not, however, been involved in dance since then. During my time at the international showcase, I was surprised to find that

the South African Dance Team had very few males whilst the groups from other countries such as Canada, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Slovenia had many male members. I began to wonder what social values were at play in South Africa that meant there were fewer male dancers involved in dance at these professional levels.

I started to look inwardly to examine how I viewed male ballet dancers as a collective and the personal and social difficulties that they might face in following such a career path. I thought that they might be teased by their friends and family members for taking part in a largely female profession and that they might worry about being viewed as homosexual. Further, since there are far more ballerinas than there are male ballet dancers, males would be at a disadvantage within their profession. Therefore, I approached this topic with the view that male ballet dancers face oppression in their general lives and struggle to find professional work.

I began my interviews with the participants expecting to hear stories of a lack of support from their friends and families for their involvement in ballet and to hear that they struggled within the ballet profession to gain work. As it turned out, however, the participants in this research tell narratives of gaining employment more easily than their female counterparts due to the demand for male ballet dancers for *par les duex* work. Although some of the participants indicated that they had initially been unsupported, they all felt as though their profession had been accepted by their families in the end.

I was interested to find that much of the literature I found supported my own personal views and that this study would further contribute to the growing fields of masculinity and sexuality studies. I began my research by reading Michael Gard's (2006) interpretation of a children's story book entitled *Jump*, which was written by Magorian and Ormerod in 1992. Gard (2006, p. 1) describes *Jump* as the story of a young boy who wants to dance because he wants to be able to jump as high as the other children he has seen in his sister's ballet class but whose parents are reluctant to let him, since "real boys don't dance" and encourage him to rather play basket ball. Gard's (2006) analysis of this story highlights the complexities of social constructions of what it means to be male whereby to jump in the context of basket ball is acceptable but not in a ballet class. In the end, however, the family comes to celebrate the little boy's involvement in dance because his participation is linked with a masculine trait, namely athleticism. Ultimately, it was my participants who brought up the idea that sport is

valued more in South Africa in general, and especially as a male pastime. I only added a question regarding this aspect after my interview with Participant 1.

Over and above the influence that I have on my interpretations as a researcher, I must also acknowledge the possible influence that my interactions with the participants may have had on their responses. As stated earlier, the way that participants construct their narratives can also depend on their storeys' audiences (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). There are three ways that I could have influenced the participants' answers to my questions: through my gender, through my perspectives as the researcher and by virtue of the fact that I am not a ballet dancer. Since, I have already examined my own perspectives; I shall speak to the fact that I am a woman with female qualities who is not a ballet dancer.

It is possible that the participants in this study have told their stories to me in selective ways; given that I am not familiar with their profession and that I am not a man. It is also possible that my sex and differing occupation may have made them believe that I would not be empathetic to their experiences as men within the ballet profession. Nonetheless, it is equally possible that they may have been more comfortable sharing their stories with me since I am not a man and am not involved in the same career. These possible influences are beyond my control. I do believe, however, that even though I have not had the same experiences as my participants, I am familiar with the social constructions with which they have to contend given that we share a common broader social environment. In this way, I believe that I have enough in common with my participants to understand the meanings which they have shared with me and that I still have a sufficient distance from their experiences which enables me to recognise some of the social influences on the ways that they create their gender identities. Indeed, it is often the case that we are too busy living our lives and thus we are not able to see how different social constructions impact on the way we live (Fay, 1996), or in this case on identity-making processes.

Therefore, although many of my interpretations have been influenced by my own personal views and experiences, I have tried to stay as close to the constructions that the participants have shared with me through their own personal stories. I believe that the qualitative methods I have used allowed me to return to participants for elaboration and clarification of certain issues and a narrative interviewing style and analysis have allowed the participant's voices to come through.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

Participants received an information sheet (Appendix A) that summarized the goals and general nature of the study and what was required of them as participants, if they consented to take part in the present research. The sheet informed them that they had the right to withdraw from the study or decline from answering any questions that they were not comfortable with at any time without repercussions. Participants were informed that although the recordings of their interviews and transcripts would not be destroyed, as they may be useful to future research, their recordings and transcripts were stored in a secure locked cupboard. The participant information sheet also informed participants that although their names were known by the researcher, no identifying information was linked to their transcripts or would be mentioned in the research report, future publications or presentations. The names of the organisations with which participants were affiliated were left out of the transcripts and research report and pseudonyms were used in place of participants' real names in order to ensure confidentiality. Participants were also informed that they may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview in order to clarify any information that they present in the initial interview. A participant consent form was provided in order to ensure that participants understood their rights and what was required of them if they consented to participate in the research study (Appendix B). Further, since the interviews were audio recorded, participants were presented with a consent form to audio record the interviews (Appendix C).

The content of the interviews was kept confidential and only the researcher and her supervisor had access to the audio recordings or interview transcripts. Once the study had been completed participants had access to the results of the study in the form of a one page summary or the full report that was sent to them via e-mail if they requested it.

Finally, it is important to note that the most likely ethical concern for the present study was the personal and potentially sensitive nature of the research questions. However, it was not the intention of this research to investigate a clinical and therefore vulnerable population, nor was it the intention of the researcher to examine issues that the participants had not considered prior to their interviews. Instead, the aim of this investigation was to analyse the gender identity constructions of a non-clinical sample of male ballet dancers. Therefore, it was assumed that the majority of the sample were not anorexic and did not have a negative response to interview questions asked in relation to their sexuality. Further, the interview questions were been purposefully formulated so that participants could choose to address only the aspects of stereotypes relating to being a male ballet dancer that they were

comfortable speaking about. Yet should a participant have required free counselling services due to any discomfort experienced as a consequence of participating in this study, contact details for such services were provided for them on the information sheet.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to explain the procedures used for obtaining and analysing the data used in this study. It has shown that the researcher was aware of the potentially sensitive nature of the content of this study and the participants' experiences. The ways in which the researcher practiced reflexivity have been outlined and the reasons why the researcher believed that narrative analysis was an appropriate method for examining the data within the study's social constructionist framework have been explained.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present the researcher's findings together with a discussion of her interpretations. Since the process of narrative analysis relies so heavily on the participants' testimonials (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998), it would have been illogical to separate the researcher's interpretations from the presentation of participants' constructs. Furthermore, in whilst analysing the participants' interviews, the researcher needed to reflect on the influence that she was exerting over the data and ensure that all of her interpretations were firmly grounded in the participants' statements, and this was done through constant reflexivity.

### 4.2. Structural Analysis

The structural analysis of the participants' narratives consisted of graphs of plot structures that were relevant to understanding the ways in which the constructs relating to gender identity development, sexuality and body that were used by participants were developed in their stories. Based on the descriptions offered by Gergen and Gergen (1986) the narratives of both P3 (white, homosexual, still involved in the ballet industry, age 27) and P4 (Southern Sotho, homosexual, still involved in the ballet industry, age 24) could be conceptualised as comedies (see Figure 1 for a grammatical representation of the structure of their narratives). They both began their ballet careers with some difficulty, especially surrounding the ways that people in their lives perceive their choice of career but as their narratives progress they started to move closer to their goal of being recognised professional male ballet dancers and in fact could be seen as currently reaching this aim.

P3 began his ballet career with the support of his family and, in response to a question about when he decided to become a dancer and what influenced his decision, he describes them as being an "artistic family" (Appendix I, line 1) and stated that dancing was considered a "normal" pastime (Appendix I, line 2) to them. Nonetheless when answering a question about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to him he describes a time during primary school when he hid the fact that he did ballet because he was "constantly ridiculed, made fun of and treated like an outcast" because he was doing a "girls thing" (Appendix I, line 5). P3 was called names such as "tight-pants moffie" and "faggot" (Appendix I, line 5) by his peers while he was growing up. "Moffie" and "faggot" are South African colloquial terms used to describe a homosexual male and they are often used in a derogatory sense (Soanes, 2002). As

an adult, however, P3 expressed that he feels that he now has the support of his friends and fiancé, in response to a question about what the other men in his life have said about him choosing to be a ballet dancer. Further he is currently in his valued state, dancing professionally and he really enjoys his profession. When answering a question about what advice he would give to a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet, he stated that “stepping on to that stage and hearing the roaring applause and you know that that applause is for you, the unadulterated joy that you have brought to those people, it is one of the greatest feelings that a person has the honour of ever feeling” (Appendix I, line 23).

P4’s participation in the arts was largely supported by his mother, teachers, lecturers and friends, who provided both the inspiration and the encouragement for him to become a professional ballet dancer. However, apart from his mother, P4’s family appears to not have been as encouraging of his choice of career as his friends and teachers were. P4 seems to have felt as though he had to constantly prove himself to his father. P4’s father was “skeptical [sic]” (Appendix J, line 17) of his preferred vocation because he did not believe that P4 would earn much money from dancing professionally but that changed when his family “started being able to loan money from [P4]” (Appendix J, line 17). P4 and his brother also have a strained relationship as P4’s brother has never seen P4 perform because he is uncomfortable with the “idea of men prancing around in tights” (Appendix J, line 25). Therefore, P4 has had some difficulties with his relationships with his male family members because of the ways in which they construct ballet but P4 has the support of his friends and mother and is focused on his career as a professional ballet dancer.

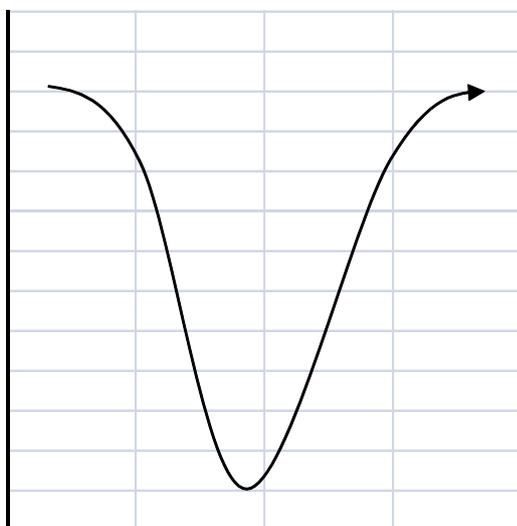
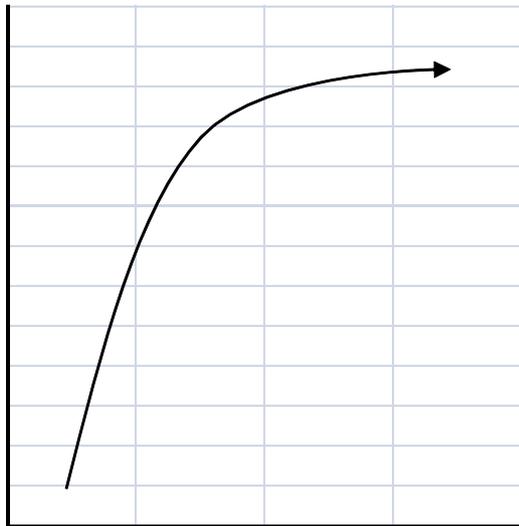


Figure 1: Comic narrative

Unlike P3 and P4, P1 and P2 have completed their ballet careers. P1 (white, homosexual, no longer engaged in a professional career as a ballet dancer, age 30) and P2 (white, heterosexual, no longer involved in ballet, 30 years old) are somewhat older than P3 and P4 and are thus at somewhat different stages in their life narratives. Further the experiences of P1 and P2 are rather different, despite them being involved in ballet at similar times in their past. P1's story could be described as having a happy-ending narrative structure (see Figure 2 below) while P2's account has a tragic structure (note Figure 3).

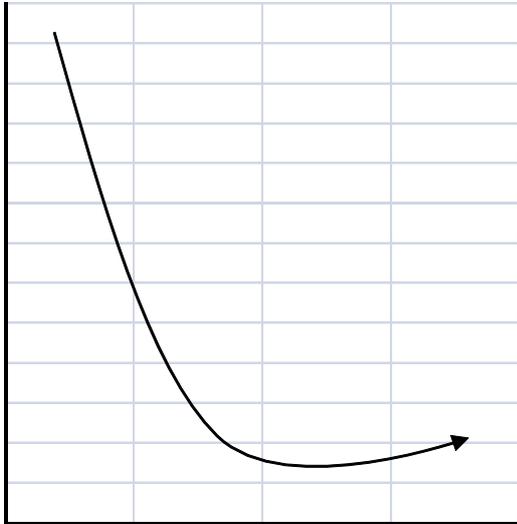
P1 began his dancing career with the strong support of his family. His mother taught him how to dance and so did his sister. His father was always there to watch his shows and although his brothers were not enthusiastic about watching "White Knights" (Appendix E, Interview 1, line 169) with him, P1 stated that they "have also been a big support" and "they've been very proud of [him]" (Appendix E, Interview 1, line 198). Ultimately, P1 did branched out into other forms of dance, and is now enjoying a teaching career.



**Figure 2: Happy-ending narrative**

P2's story begins with some doubt from his mother about his interest in ballet but his parents grow to support him in his choice to become a professional ballet dancer. P2's career in Johannesburg is a very challenging one where he struggled to provide for himself because there was very little support and funding for the arts. Eventually, however, he suffers a severe injury to his back and leaves the ballet profession to start a family and "settle down"

(Appendix G, Interview1, line 221). It is important to note, however, that although P2's life as a dancer conforms to a tragic structure he is a multidimensional person, like the other participants, whose life has continued on since the end of his ballet career and gone on in different directions.



**Figure 3: Tragic narrative**

The experiences of the male ballet dancers, who participated in this research, although unique to them, do mirror those of others. Other studies have also found that young male ballet dancers are marginalised through teasing and bullying. Male ballet dancers often experience being stereotyped as feminine, homosexual or even as “not [being] real men” (Risner, 2009, p.3). Thus, the support of the dancers’ families is important to them in their preparation for a professional career and their continuing involvement in dance in their adult lives.

Placing the narratives of P1, P2, P3 and P4 into context allows for the analyses of the stories they have told to be understood in the contexts of their lived experiences. Taking the time to examine each participant’s life story as a whole, means the voices of the participants are taken into account and not lost in the interpretations made by the researcher (who was focused on answering specific research questions).

### **4.3. Thematic Analysis**

Three prominent themes emerged from the participants’ narratives: gender, sexuality and power. Although each theme is discussed below in isolation, it is important to note that these themes overlap. For example, the participants’ constructions of gender and sexuality both

draw upon the image of sport. Power, while drawing on the ideas of heteronormative behaviour for men in South Africa, is linked with the image of money. A common construction across all themes is that gender is something that one does, it is a performance and it draws on society's ideas of normative masculine behaviours for men.

#### **4.3.1. Gender**

All of the participants appear to hold the view that gender is achieved through behaviour. This is concurrent with sex role typing (Bem, 1974; Bem, 1975; West & Zimmerman, 1987). According to the participants in this study, masculinity can be achieved through the action of watching or playing sport or even through particular styles of dance. The imagery that the participants draw upon to develop their constructions of gender are dualistic in that sport is seen as masculine, while art is viewed as feminine. Also, the participants constructed their understandings of gender through the representations of the strong, hard masculine dancer and the weak, soft feminine dancer.

P4 strongly believes that being masculine is a performance. In response to the question "how would you describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet?" P4 stated that:

*Masculinity is simply the manner in which one behaves (like a man). Certain personality, vocal and habitual traits make up your pool of masculinity. I would just let them know I am different to the characters I portray on stage. I may be homosexual but it does not affect my dancing (Appendix J, line 14).*

When asked to elaborate on what kind of personality, vocal and habitual traits he meant, P4 answered that:

*I'm generally loud, expressive and my confidence is easily noticeable. Vocally, I do have a nasal quality about my voice that makes it a bit higher-pitched for a man (I sang Baritone in the choir though!). I also tend to speak "proper" English, sometimes with a British accent and often avoid making use of incorrect grammar. Other habitual traits include having both hands on your waist (a pose we jokingly refer to as "The Hungry Look" and generally being expressive with my hand gestures... (Appendix J, line 15).*

Therefore, P4 appears to construct masculinity as something one can perform. P4's list of characteristics and behaviours do not conform to widely held beliefs surrounding masculine behaviours. P4's understanding of masculinity would therefore conform to the position taken by the researcher, which is that there are many ways to be a man, some of which are currently constructed as feminine.

P3 also links masculinity with behaviour. P3 answered the question "in your experience, what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the Arts, especially ballet? Further, can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?" with a very strong stance that men, despite their sexuality, should behave in masculine ways (Appendix I, line 13-14):

*As explained in point number 5. I encountered it with regards to myself personally up until the age of about 15. I however, still encounter it as I see it in our own company. No mockery is made of being gay, but if you act "Like a fairy", there is a certain amount of ridicule towards that person. I must admit, even by me. It makes me angry to see a fellow dancer feeding the stereotype that I despise and in my opinion, gay guys are men who like other men, so act like a man or get a sex change.*

When asked to further elaborate on his answer in a follow-up interview P3 continued to expand on what he meant by "it", what the term "act like a fairy" meant to him, why he despised this stereotype and what he meant by "act like a man":

*By "it" I mean the mockery and stereotypes. To act like a fairy would be to act in a stereotypical way that reflects gay men in a overly feminine way. What is nowadays referred to as a "Queen". I despise the stereotype because I believe that if you were born a male, you should not try to be something you are not, ie, a female. And not just a female, but the stereotypical "Sandton coo girl [sic]"<sup>1</sup> behaviour. By this I also mean to act like a man.*

As is evident from the above quotes, P3 further constructs masculinity as separate from sexuality in that he believes men do not need to behave like women, no matter their sexual

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<sup>1</sup> A kugel is a derogatory South African term for "a young, spoilt, wealthy, often Jewish woman who is materialistic and frivolous, and who speaks in a nasal, drawling manner" (Soanes, 2002, p. 502).

identity. This perspective fits well with both Butler's (2002) and West and Zimmerman's (1987) belief that gender is performed. Similarly P4 set the idea of masculinity apart from sexuality. P4 expressed his belief that one could perform masculinity by recounting an event from his life where he needed to portray a masculine, yet possibly homosexual man in a dance:

*Our dance company has a show entitled "Somebody To Love" and one of the pieces in the show is 'Bohemian Rhapsody' which is mainly a duet for two men. When my colleague and I first performed it, a lot of people praised us not only for the interpretation but the cohesive thread we created with movement, music and emotion (Appendix J, line 5).*

The researcher asked P4 to elaborate on "what about being a man performing this dance earned [him] praise" and if he could "remember what a few people said to [him]"

*The idea behind the piece is for it to show off the softer side to men with portraying them as soft. The duet hints at a potential relation between the two men but it is in no way meant to suggest an obvious "male" and "female" role as we observe in most relationships.*

*The choreographer was happy with our work and she said something along the lines of "it was beautifully executed with a great sense of strength". Our rehearsal mistress was equally impressed and let us know that we did an "amazing job". She dislikes it when male dancers appear whimsical and fairy-like on stage, unless it's intended to look so. She appreciated the masculine manner in which we performed the duet (Appendix J, line 6).*

P1 shared the beliefs of P3 and P4 in that he saw masculinity as being about behaviour, as different ways of performing. :

*(Okay, umm when you, when you say that you still feel like a man on stage do you want to describe this to me?) Um you get guys that dance and you actually have to sometimes, ah because we wear for ballet, you wear tights and that you have to actually second guess if they actually are guys or not, coz they dance very feminine,*

*very soft, and they, they if they not built properly as well if they, we get a few male dancers that I've seen they, they get trained like girls and their bodies actually start develop, they very skinny, they don't have um ah, ah muscle tone in their arms so they look, they could look like a girl on stage as opposed to boys dancing strong arms not soft, very masculine. (Okay, so are there different techniques in training, some more feminine and more masculine and could you describe those to me?) There's not really different techniques it just depends on your teacher and how the, the a girl can do an arm and it can be soft and a boy must do it more harder it mustn't have, it mustn't be too um what's the word I'm looking for it mustn't flow too much it must have more um resistance behind it (Appendix F, Interview 2, line 44-46).*

P1 then developed the construction of masculinity as a performance when he elaborated on whom had impacted on him, as a dancer:

*(And I wanted to ask you, coz you said here um, 'I just loved seeing them dance and perform on stage', and I wanted to just confirm with you, if you could describe their performances to me a little bit and what um about them performing on stage made you look up to them so much.) Um, especially Baryshnikov, when he danced, he's just, he was a very strong dancer, um, when his one performance he does in white night, it's an old ah movie it's just the, the way he dances, how many pirouettes, turns, he does, he pulls off eleven pirouettes where the average person on a good day can maybe pull off four or five, and you just think will I ever be able to do that and it just makes you wanna try and wanna work harder towards it, and his body as well how, how you can have defined he was and how strong he was as a dancer, that inspired me as a young, as a young performer. (Okay, and um that was Nureyev right?) Baryshnikov. (And, and Nureyev?) Nureyev was, I would, Baryshnikov was more of an influence in my life than Nureyev was, Nureyev was a good, very good dancer, but it was like I said earlier he was a more feminine than Baryshnikov wa-, ah um was, I think, I don't know if it's also got to do with also sexuality coz Baryshnikov is a straight male dancer and Nureyev is also, um he's, he's gay. (In what ways was Nureyev more feminine than Baryshnikov?) Hmmhmm, his body, his build and when he danced he was a lot softer, (Hmmhmm.) he wasn't um as strong and masculine his*

*movements were more, um they flowed more and that, Baryshnikov was a very hard dancer (Appendix F, Interview 2, line 62-70).*

As can be seen in the above statements, P2 (unlike P3 and P4) did link masculinity and sexuality. P2 expands on this point below:

*(Um, what are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?) Ss-, hmm, there's different perceptions, ah, when I was growing up there were a couple of different male dancers that were teaching guys, and ah one particular person was teaching these guys to dance like a female, thin and you know, must eat at certain times and, and ah supple, supple was it you know and very feminine lines and very, and then I was on the other side of the spectrum where they wanted the, strength, you know, um, so strong I, I would say being from the other side I would say a strong dancer, hhh um, you need to, to lift the women and all the rest of it, ah, great in par les deux work and you know what supple ja, eat right and, and lots of work and, and supple, supple was, was, I think was key. (Okay. In par les deux work, what is that?) Ah male and female working, ah they normally do a little dance together (Appendix G, Interview 1, line 38-40).*

Therefore, although all of the participants view masculinity as behaviour some believe it exists free of sexuality, while others think they are linked.

Thus far, masculinity has been conceptualised through the image of a strong, hard dance style. P3, however, goes on to suggest that this style is more than that, that it is also athletic. In response to the question “what are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?” P3 said that:

*A male dancer has to be strong, both in mind and body. A man needs to be able to partner a woman, lift and support her. A man needs to be able to jump incredibly high in the air while performing various sequences in the air with his feet and legs. A man needs to be, in general, athletically fit... (Appendix I, line 7.)*

By linking being a masculine dancer with being strong and athletic, P3 draws on the image of sport as a masculine activity and also links ballet with sport. P3 further stated, in response to a follow-up question to “what advice would you give to a young man who wants to follow a

career in ballet”, “can you give some examples of what they would go through physically, mentally and emotionally?”:

*Ballet is an athletic sport, so they will need to go through pretty much the same things an athlete would but with (possible) added rejection and mockery from people who don't know any better. Ballet dancers suffer injuries but will also have the added stress of money problems compared to most as well as the fact that dancers have a shelf life and cannot dance forever (Appendix J, line 23).*

Further, P2 began to draw links between the experiences of athletes and his experiences as a dancer. He argued that all sports professionals experience injuries and need therapy, thus making ballet more like a sport, given that he too had experienced injuries from his chosen profession.

*(When you say like something that your body's not supposed to be doing what do you mean by that?) S-, well look at any sports person suffers from injuries ah any, any major sports person suffers from injuries, it, it's with the territory, and I just don't believe the body's meant to be, drilled like that every day (Appendix G, Interview 1, line 50).*

In order to build the association between sports and ballet P2 drew on his experience of training a rugby team in ballet:

*Um...I've trained the, the [rugby team name] ah, ah wr-, rugby team for a warm-up. They wanted to do ballet so they pulled me in there [laughs] I did a class with the guys that was quite ah, it was fun. Ah but I've done you know, and then training with them but they again different trainings (Appendix G, Interview 1, line 52).*

When asked how he would describe his personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet, P1 suggested that it would be difficult because he does not watch sport:

*Um, [both laugh] that's pretty hard because [laughs] I don't watch sports. Um, so, I get on with people that aren't in the industry but it's normally um, as far as like family friends I don't really have friends that are outs-, (Okay.) outside the industry. (Ja.) I mean I wouldn't know how I would actually describe it to them (Appendix E, Interview 1, line 98-102).*

P1 further elaborated on this point in response to a follow up question regarding the ways he thought watching sports would make it easier for him to describe his sense of masculinity to other people:

*I don't think it would make it easier, I suppose that wasn't clear on that question, I mean it just means it's that I'm still a guy it will be like I am a guy, I still enjoy sports, but I don't, I'm not into sports I don't watch them, not that I'm saying, I just, I've got no interest in them. So it would be easier if I could, if I, to describe to them like look guys I still watch sports even though I do ballet, which I don't, is that what you? (No that does make sense, so do you think that people outside of ballet see sports as, generally, a masculine thing and so that would make it easier?) Definitely, ja, definitely a masculine thing, ja (Appendix F, Interview 2, line 38-40).*

P1 clearly believes that watching sport is widely perceived as masculine in South Africa, and so by engaging in such behaviour he would be able to demonstrate his masculinity to others. P2 expands on P1's statements in when asked to explain why he thinks there is more support for the sports as opposed to the arts in South Africa:

*We're a sporty country, you know, I think we're a sporty country, that's the way it is, you know, the, the guys would rather watch rugby and soccer and, and formula ones and whatever else than watch, go and sit, what male, in his right mind wants to go and sit and watch a ballet? Not too many I know [both laugh], but the guys will watch rugby and the soccer and the whatever sports are on, on the weekend, you know (Appendix G, Interview 1, line 169).*

Therefore, participants seem to hold the view that gender is something one does and that one's apparent gender can change by virtue of the way that one behaves. Further, according to the participants, masculine traits such as assertiveness and dominance (Bem, 1974) can be expressed through different dance styles. In this way male ballet dancers seem to move between being masculine and feminine quite freely. It is this "looseness" with which they embody their genders that they can begin to challenge the socially dominant ideas of what it means to be a man. While some participants link the concepts of masculinity and sexuality, others do not, and this may be due to the fact that certain behaviours which they believe to be connected to certain sexual orientations as well as genders.

#### 4.3.2. Sexuality

The participants have constructed different styles of dance as being equated with different sexualities. Again, participants draw on the imagery of the feminine versus the masculine dancer. This connection indicates that some of the participants see gender and sexuality as being linked in some way. Indeed the idea of ballet being a feminine career is often tied to homosexuality. It would appear that the participants have attempted to link sport with ballet in order to make sense of the contradictory positions they hold in society, being male ballet dancers. Thus, they may manage this conflict in their identity constructions by identifying with, what they believe is a profession that is largely viewed by society as masculine: sport.

The construction of ballet as a homosexual occupation in South African society comes through in many of the participants' answers to the question "what are the stereotypes about male dancers that you have heard or come across, and what would your responses to these stereotypes be?"

P3 stated that:

*The most obvious is that, apparently, all men who do ballet are gay. We are also weak, "twiddle on our toes" and only do Ballet because we are intellectually challenged and could not find a decent job. As it stands, in our company, in a group of 13 male dancers, there are only 2 who are gay (myself included) obviously, there were other gay dancers before, but I would say a pretty even ratio... (Appendix I, line 9).*

When asked to explain why he thinks people hold these stereotypes about male ballet dancers, P3 suggested that:

*Most South African men (and women) believe in a strong, sports fanatic nation. If you don't play sport, there is something wrong with you as a man. I don't know where it came from as Europeans don't have this notion (a generalization I know, but look at the arts overseas how they thrive and encourage it). This is what was made apparent to me from a young age and anyone can guess when they look around that this is true.*

P4 responded to the question “what are the stereotypes about male dancers that you have heard or come across, and what would your responses to these stereotypes be?” by saying that:

*The most common stereotype is that male ballet dancers are homosexual. Often, this is true but not always. Most male dancers are more feminine, due to the nature of ballet and people don't understand the difference. Another stereotype is that male dancers are not good at sport. Often, dancers are better because of their understanding of their bodies in relation to movement (Appendix J, line 12).*

When asked to further explain what he meant by the nature of ballet, P4 went on to say that:

*When ballet was established a few centuries ago, it was derived from court spectacles that were used as entertainment between courses at lavish dinner parties. As time went by, ballet as a form of performance was moulded on women so it largely became a female art form and men would merely enhance the female's beauty. So, by nature of ballet, I mean it was always seen as a female thing to do (Appendix J, line 13).*

P1 also stated in response to the question “what are the stereotypes about male ballet dancers that you've heard or come across and what would your response to them be?” that:

*Well most of them if they say 90%, if they, all ballet dancers are gay (Appendix E, Interview 1, line 116).*

When asked to explain the reason why he believes people think that, P1 answered:

*Because it's such a feminine um, profession, (Okay.) and you're in tights and you're dancing with girls in tutus and everything's pretty and fancy, (Ja.) and fairytale so they automatically go there. (Okay.) They don't see the art and the behind it and the love for dance, and how hard it is [Laughs] (Appendix E, Interview 1, line 137-143).*

The stereotyping of male ballet dancers as homosexuals and as being very effeminate may be society's way of suppressing the possible influence that male ballet dancers may have over challenging dominant constructions of masculinity (Foucault, 1977). By equating dance with

femininity, society exerts control over male ballet dancers by equating them with women, who are devalued in society. This moves them out of an influential position, and into a marginalised category.

#### **4.3.3. Power**

Male ballet dancers are a marginalised group within South African society. Ballet is constructed as an inappropriate profession for men and boys who engage in ballet are often ridiculed. The image of money as power and the fact that ballet dancers do not earn a substantial income reflects the construction of ballet as an inferior career choice for men.

P3 was bullied for being a ballet dancer when he was younger and recounted that being a ballet dancer was a disadvantage to him in his childhood:

*I think it was a disadvantage in my childhood. Growing up, I had to hide the fact that I did ballet as I was constantly ridiculed, made fun of and treated like an outcast as I was doing a "girls thing" which earned various names such as "Tight-pants moffie", "faggot" to name a few (Appendix I, line 5).*

The lack of support given to the arts as a career for men comes through in P4's answer to the question "in your experience, what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the Arts, especially ballet? Further, can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?":

*Artists in general are not given the opportunity to prove themselves. Until they do. Most people in SA believe that being an artist does not constitute as having a career. It's rather sad. A few members of my family were skeptical [sic] about my career choice until they started being able to loan money from me (Appendix J, line 17).*

When asked to explain why he thinks it's sad P4 expressed:

*I think it's sad because artists do not get fair treatment from establishments like our government. Some people assume that performance is not a real career and it saddens me because the hours that an artist spends, honing their craft and practising is not an easy task. Just because we don't sit behind a desk for 8 hours a day we get treated differently. As a dancer, I spend those 8 hours on my feet. Literally. (Appendix J, line 19).*

The researcher further asked P4 to expand on what ways his family were sceptical and what their reasons were for being sceptical, and P4 stated that:

*Largely it was a lack of understanding. I spent 5 years in an art school and 4 in an Arts campus of my university. All this time spent on art did not make sense for them. They were skeptical [sic] because they thought I was capable of much more than just art as a career. They were skeptical [sic] because I did well academically and they just hoped that I would get into something with a larger pay-cheque (Appendix J, line20).*

Following this train of thought in a later question surrounding what the other men in P4's life have said about him choosing to be a ballet dancer, P4 explained:

*My father was not impressed by my choice of careers and I constantly had to prove myself to him. Even during high school. All he cared about was the financial benefits – or lack thereof. My brother has never seen me on stage. The idea of “men prancing around in tights” does not appeal to him (Appendix J, line 25).*

When asked to explain further why this idea did not appeal to his brother, P4 said that:

*Well, as a sport-loving, township-born man, he has never really been exposed to the world of the arts. Him and I don't have the greatest of relationships either so my art was always an excuse for him not to come and see my shows (Appendix J, line 26).*

P4 expressed that it is important for a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet to always know their reasons for dancing, the researcher asked why he would give this advice and whether he had a personal experience where this was important to him, and P4 answered that:

*Yes. Many people do many jobs for wrong reasons - financial benefits being the most common, followed by parent's demanding certain things from their offspring. Something like dancing takes its toll on an individual. There is hardly any time to*

*ponder whether it was a right decision or not. It only gets tougher and you can't replace anything because your [sic] don't work with objects - you work with your body.*

*Personally, I spent my 3rd and 4th years of study as the Mentor for my department and later for the entire arts campus. The range of problems I got from the students were rather scary. Many were either studying art against their parents' wishes and some were doing it as a 2nd option. I failed to understand why these were realities but in the end, it made sense: being an artist is scary because there are not many guarantees. If your reasons are not valid for YOU then you are simply wasting your life (Appendix J, line 35).*

Therefore, P4's father was not supportive of his career choice because he did not view it as a valid occupation, as he did not believe that P4 would make any money. Over and above this, P4's brother was put off by the fact that he perceived ballet as homosexual and thus not an appropriate career choice for P4.

P1, on the other hand, indicated that he did have the support of his family for his career choice, however, he acknowledged that this is not the norm.

*(In what ways have, have um, your father and your brothers supported you? Did they -) Well number one my never, my dad always attended everything that I did (Okay.) coz you get those parents that don't, he was there for everything that I did, um, he still is. He um, obviously paying for things [both laugh] as well when you're a kid. But um, And my brothers as well they always bragged about me to their friends and um, they never put me down and their friends used to come and watch when I did shows as well, they always supported me. They were never um, against it and um, "ah you're wasting your life," I never had that at all. (Okay.) I was very lucky (Appendix E, Interview 1, line 204-208).*

P1 explained that South Africans construct ballet as an invalid career option for men because they receive less pay than other professionals:

(No, no, their beliefs about male ballet dancers.) *I dunno, I never, I've never had any encounters where people go-, I've had people say to me before um when I say I'm a dancer they go 'but ja, what do you do for your real job?' and I'm like 'that is my job' they don't understand they go 'but how can you just be a dancer?' and I'm like there is money in it, people just don't, I don't think people, there's not enough education in this country in the arts and people don't go to theatre enough to understand that there is ah, it is a career, does that-? (Ja, that makes sense.) Does that make sense? (Um, so you'd say that there's this belief there's, that ballet is not really a career and, and what do you think would spark that, those kind of, those kinds of beliefs?) I just think it's a big, people that haven't been exposed to culture like that, people that don't go to the theatre coz we don't have a lot of it in this country because the funding is so bad and ballet dancers I think I said earlier as well they, they don't get a lot of money at all, they, you can get through on it but it's not like someone that's earning 40, 50 thousand rand a month (Appendix F, Interview 2, line 95-99).*

P2 also indicated that because ballet is constructed as being feminine and homosexual, and stated that men who pursue careers in ballet may be ostracised:

(Okay and what advice would you give a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet?) *Jis, keep it up, go mad, keep it up, um, work hard, it, it's not easy, ah, I unfortunately I'm thirty now I, I can't continue, and um ja, best of luck. (Okay.) Don't listen to what the guys have to say, they're all jealous [both laugh], they're all jealous because you're looking at pretty women all day long, (Okay.) unless you're gay, in which case you should be on the rugby field (Appendix G, Interview 1, line 333-337).*

Despite being ridiculed outside of their profession, male ballet dancers are in fact at an advantage (as to be addressed below) within their industry. Therefore, in terms of being privileged within their careers, male ballet dancers are in a similar position to men in the larger South African context.

P3 said that he is praised or commended for being a man “all the time really, as it is incredibly rare to find a man interested in dancing in this country, particularly Ballet” (Appendix I, line 3). In a complex manner, by disadvantaging men within the broader society

and by constructing ballet as an inappropriate career for men, society has in fact perpetuated men's privileged position in the workplace by making men a rarity in the ballet industry.

Both P1 and P2 indicated that within the ballet profession, it was advantageous for to be a man given that there were so few of them:

P2: (Okay, can you tell me about a time in your career um when you were praised or commended for being a man?) *The first time I can remember, this was dancing at the [place name 1] Eisteddfod and I walked off and somebody backstage said to me “we don't get a lot of male dancers” (Appendix G, Interview 1, line 18).*

P 1: (Umm, can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?) [Long pause] *I actually don't think there was. (Mmm.) There, I don't think there ever was because male dancers are so few and far between that we the most, the-, we, very, there's a big demand for us so it's never a disadvantage to be a male as a dancer especially if you've been well trained (Appendix E, Interview1, line 18-20).*

Therefore, male ballet dancers inhabit a contradictory and contested space and in order to navigate their gender identities, ballet dancers draw on certain constructions of gender, sexuality and power. Gender is largely understood as a performance where masculinity is enacted through activities such as conforming to specific styles of dance and watching or playing sport. Since dance is understood as being feminine and homosexual within the broader South African society, male ballet dancers construct their masculinity through the image of ballet as a sport. Given that ballet goes against conventional ideas of masculinity in South Africa, ballet is constructed as an invalid and inappropriate career choice for men, as indicated by not only the social but also the monetary value afforded to this career choice. This construction is evident in the bullying and marginalisation of male ballet dancers. It is through these social conduits that hegemonic power is expressed.

## **5. Strengths and Limitations**

The use of multiple technologies provided an innovative way of doing research and of negotiating the difficulties surrounding data collection. By collecting data via e-mail, the researcher was able to collect and analyse the interviews in an efficient manner which may serve to counter-act a large shortcoming of qualitative research as a whole, the fact that it is a

time-consuming process. A narrative analysis also allowed for both the structure and the meanings of participants' narrative stories to be examined, thereby looking at both specific elements such as themes as well as their overall experiences which have contributed to their gender identity constructions.

The scope for the transferability of the interpretations made in this research is limited due to the fact that the sample was small, restricted to a specific context and was not ethnically diverse. Even so, a narrative, qualitative research design allowed for a depth of understanding in terms of the way that particular male ballet dancers construct their gender identities, both in terms of their bodies and sexualities. The method of collecting and analysing the data allowed for the voices of the participants to come through by limiting the role of the researcher in the interview and ensuring that the participant's responses were presented as coherent wholes and not spliced to merely reiterate the researcher's views. Therefore, the experiences of the participants were not reduced to dehumanised data. Constructs were also presented in a way that participants would naturally tend towards, through narrative.

Nonetheless, this research does not allow for an exploration of how these constructs came about in a way that discourse analysis would. Narrative analysis does not allow for an in-depth look at the specific terms used, their meaning and their possible implications, whereas techniques such as discourse analysis would be able to look at the participant's language usage and how they construct meaning more closely. Although the researcher has attempted to remain reflexive, it is important to acknowledge that the data which was examined was limited by the scope of the research questions and that ultimately the interpretations made by the researcher will be subjective as it is not possible for the researcher to remove herself from the context of the research. Ultimately, however, this research has tackled the difficulties that are faced by a marginalised group of male ballet dancers in Johannesburg who occupy a contested space where they embody a role that openly challenges dominant beliefs around masculinity.

## **6. Recommendations**

The clearest indication for a way forward, however, is the equation of dance with sport in order to increase its profile and attempt to alter the feminised constructions of ballet male dancers. By referring to ballet in sports terms, which are already broadly recognised as being masculine, the ways in which masculinity is currently constructed will be exposed by using a

vocabulary that is already available. By uncovering these constructions, the potential for altering the ways in which masculinity is understood in Johannesburg is made possible.

## **7. Future research**

The present research is, to a degree, limited by its methods of data analysis. Future research could examine the discourses that male ballet dancers use when accounting for the ways in which they construct their gender identities, bodies and sexualities. This type of analysis would further bring to light terminology such as “moffie” or “poofda” and the contexts in which they are used, in a way that a narrative analysis does not make allowances for. A bigger and more diverse sample of ballet dancers or ballet dancers in alternative contexts could contribute to a more rich understanding of the ways in which ballet dancers construct their gender identities and challenge dominant beliefs about male sexuality, body and gender.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study has explored the unique ways in which male ballet dancers construct their gender identities in Johannesburg, South Africa. The male ballet dancers in this research have been found to construct their genders as performative but they do not have uniform views on how to be masculine. By making their bodies either soft or hard, male ballet dancers can enact their genders through different styles of dance. Although they do not believe that their gender, occupation and sexuality are necessarily connected, they recognise that in society’s view these constructs are inextricably linked. Male ballet dancers are often ostracised because of this since ballet is largely stereotyped as being homosexual and feminine. Male ballet dancers fall into a marginalised category because they do not conform to the broader conceptions of heteronormative masculinity. Thus, they are constructed as a subordinate group, not in terms of being disadvantaged in comparison to their female counterparts, but rather in terms of society at large. Ultimately, through the association of ballet with sport, a masculine construction, male ballet dancers may begin to change South African society’s understandings of what it means to be masculine.

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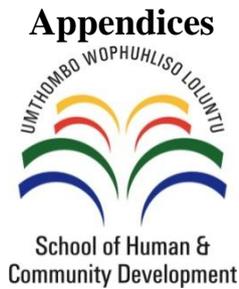
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## Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Psychology  
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University of the Witwatersrand  
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050  
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559



Hello,

My name is Megan Reeves; I am a Masters candidate from WITS University. I am conducting a research study on gender identity. The focus of my study is to investigate the how male ballet dancers create and develop their gender identity in relation to their sexualities and their bodies. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

I would like for you to be aware that participation is completely voluntary and there will be no consequences if you decide not to participate. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. Please note that while your name will be known, it will not be linked to the interview records in any way nor will your name be mentioned in the research report, further publications or presentations. Whatever is said in this interview will be kept confidential, as only my supervisor and I will have access to the audio recordings or interview transcripts.

I will be conducting the interview and it should not take more than two hours to complete. Please note that you may be called upon to participate in some follow up interviews in order to clarify information that you present. With your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded while I take some brief notes so that the interview can be transcribed for data analysis. Further, the information from the interview will be used in the research report and this may include the use of direct quotes.

Your details will not be written on the interview records or research report and neither will the names of any organisations you are affiliated with, a pseudonym will be used in place of your real name. Although the recordings and transcripts of your interview will be kept indefinitely for the purposes of further research, they will be kept in a secure locked cupboard where only my supervisor and I will have access to them. To participate in this interview with me now, please sign the consent form attached to show that you have read and understood the aim and process of this interview. Should you be interested in these results I will send you a one page summary of my findings or a copy of the full report via e-mail.

Further, although I do not anticipate that this is likely, should this process cause you any distress please note the following free counselling services:

Lifeline: 011 728 1347

Love Life: 0800 121 100

South African Depression and Anxiety Group: 011 262 6396

Thank you so much for your time.

**Researcher: Miss Megan Reeves**  
**E-mail: [megan\\_moya@yahoo.com](mailto:megan_moya@yahoo.com)**  
**Supervisor: Ms Lynlee Howard-Payne**  
**E-mail: [lynlee.howard@wits.ac.za](mailto:lynlee.howard@wits.ac.za)**

## Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

I (the participant) have been given the participant information sheet for the study being conducted by Miss Megan Reeves. I have read this information sheet and understand its contents.

### *I understand that:*

- My participation in this research is entirely *voluntary*; as I am free to choose to participate or not to participate.
- I may decide to stop participating at any time, since there is *no penalty* for withdrawing or refusing to participate.
- I may choose not to answer specific questions and there is *no penalty* for refusing to address these questions.
- I agree to allow for the use of direct quotes from the interview in the research report.
- All information will be treated with the utmost *confidentiality*, whereby pseudonyms will be used in place of my real name, no identifying information will be use in the transcripts, future publications or research report and the names of any organisations I am affiliated with will be omitted.
- No names will be recorded on the interview transcription.
- I understand that although the recordings and transcripts from this interview will not be destroyed, they will be kept in a secure locked cupboard where only the supervisor and researcher will have access to them.
- If I agree to participate I need to *sign* this form as proof of my acceptance.

I understand the conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.

Participant signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Participant Consent Form for Audio Recording**

I (the participant) have been given the participant information sheet for the study being conducted by Miss Megan Reeves. I have read this information sheet and understand that the interview will be audio recorded. I understand that the recordings will be kept in a secure locked cupboard along with the interview transcripts indefinitely. I further understand that no identifying information will be used in the transcripts or research report, future publications or presentations as pseudonyms will be used and the names of my affiliated organisations will be omitted.

Please accept my signature as my consent to being audio taped in this interview.

Participant signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Schedule**

*Information to be given to participants:*

Throughout this interview I want you to imagine your life as a dancer like a book that consists of different chapters or parts, specifically think about stories relating to your gender and your experiences as a male dancer. I would like you to bear these stories and parts in mind when you answer the following questions:

*Interview Questions:*

1. When did you decide to become a dancer and what influenced your decision?
2. Can you tell me about a time in your dancing career when you were praised or commended for being a man?
3. Can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?
4. What are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?
5. What are the stereotypes about male dancers that you have heard or come across, and what would your responses to these stereotypes be?
6. How would you describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet?
7. In your experience, what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the Arts, especially ballet? Further, can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?
8. Who are the people who have had an impact on you as a dancer?
9. How do/did your co-workers (male and female) view your being a male ballet dancer, how did they respond to your working with them?
10. What have other men in your life said about you choosing to be a ballet dancer?
11. What have women in your life said about your choice?
12. What career do you think you would have chosen if you couldn't dance?
13. What advice would you give to a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet?

## Appendix E: Interview 1 with P1

1. MR: Okay so throughout this interview I want you to imagine your life as a dancer like a book
2. P1: Okay.
3. MR: Um, with different chapters or parts. And then bear these kinds of stories in mind um, when you're answering the questions in relation to your gender and your experiences as a dancer.
4. P1: Okay.
5. MR: Okay. Alright um, so first question, when did you decide to become a dancer and what influenced your decision?
6. P1: Um, it was my choice but my mom is a dancing teacher
7. MR: Okay.
8. P1: and I was born into um, the industry, so from two weeks old I was in a, a, play pen and was in the corner of a dance studio.
9. MR: Okay.
10. P1: And I started dancing when I was three, but since I was small I've always wanted to be either a dancer an actor or a singer.
11. MR: Okay.
12. P1: So it's like totally in my blood, I was born into it, so that's pretty much how it started, it started when I was three.

(00:48)

13. MR: Alright. Um, can you tell me about a time in your dancing career when you were praised or commended for being a man?
14. P1: For being a man? I would say when I was a teenager dancing in the studio because I was the only male.
15. MR: Okay.
16. P1: So I used to have to do all of the *par les deux*, the lift work with the girls and that and because I was the only male the girls not fight over me but used to envy it if I would be able to dance with them so I could lift them, I would say, ja, that would def, ja, when I was a teenager I would say, being able to work with the girls.

(01:20)

17. MR: [Laughs] Umm, can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?
18. P1: [Long pause] I actually don't think there was.
19. MR: Mmm.
20. P1: There, I don't think there ever was because male dancers are so few and far between that we the most, the-, we, very, there's a big demand for us so it's never a disadvantage to be a male as a dancer especially if you've been well trained.
21. MR: Okay.
22. P1: So I honestly can't think of a time ah it was, a, a disadvantage. [Pause]
23. MR: Well, were you-
24. P1: A personal disadvantage
25. MR: Ja, Ja?
26. P1: and I hope you think

[Both laugh]

27. P1: This is where the gay thing comes in
28. MR: Okay.
29. P1: Is that we, me and, there were two of very good friends of mine the, all three of us were gay and we always used to get jealous because we weren't allowed to wear feathers or hhh you know like be a show girl we always wanted to do that so we were jealous of the girls being able to look more glamorous on stage
30. MR: Okay.
31. P1: than what we were but that's not more a disadvantage that's just like a jealousy thing being um, what'd you wanna say, envious
32. MR: Okay.
33. P1: Ja.
34. MR: What sort of things did you have to wear?

(02:35)

35. P1: Um depending on what kind of shows we did, like when I was younger growing up um, I was a ver-, um, a big ballet boy growing up
36. MR: Okay.
37. P1: and then um, my actual professional career took me into more show work as in like I worked on cruise ships in the States for seven years and in [place name 1]

38. MR: Oh wow.
39. P1: and I did 3 [theatre 1] extravaganzas and so those kind of shows were more, if we did, we did musical shows on the ship like Mama Mia and um, Hairspray and we did um, ex-, um, little excerpts from those shows so depending on the character you were doing you would wear suitable clothes for the character say if you were like the Mama Mia costume I was dressed as Napoleon
40. MR: Okay.
41. P1: for Waterloo
42. MR: Yes.
43. P1: So I had like a big hat on with a feather and a long, sh-, um, tailed coat with silver shiny pants
44. MR: Yes
45. P1: But at [theatre 1], [theatre 1], the [theatre 1] shows were more, um, hope I can say this, more tits and ass
46. MR: Okay.
47. P1: so we used to dance in G-strings as well as the girls
48. MR: Really?
49. P1: Ja.
50. MR: Okay.
51. [Both Laugh]
52. P1: So depending on the show you were in, the [theatre 1] shows and the extrav. like very Vegas-type
53. MR: Ja.
54. P1: shows where the girls were in feathers and that and we were in G-strings with boots and maybe a collar on
55. [Both Laugh]
56. MR: Okay.
57. P1: So that's about, about it.  
(03:41)
58. MR: Okay. Um, what are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?
59. P1: Hhh a male ballet dancer, professionally, um, you saying like body wise?
60. MR: Ja, body wise.

61. P1: Um, well you have to be extremely fit you have to make sure for ballet especially you have to do at, at least a two hour ballet class ev-, I'd say four to five times a week, um, you obviously can't, your body has to be in shape as in you can't be overweight you have to make sure the boys especially their legs are very built
62. MR: Okay.
63. P1: If you ever look at a, a professional ballet dancer their legs and their bums are very strong from lifting
64. MR: Okay.
65. P1: Your arm strength is um, important but a lot of the lifting you use your legs to get the girls up as well
66. MR: Okay.
67. P1: So your body has to be in very fine shape um, not big built more lean
68. MR: Okay.
69. P1: But that, you, your body gets built not from doing gym [bangs rhythmically on desk] it's literally from a ballet class two hours at least four, five times a week.
70. MR: Okay. So you have to have quite a bit of stamina?
71. P1: Ja.
72. MR: to get through everything
73. P1: And dancers are very unhealthy people though.  
(04:39)
74. [Both Laugh]
75. MR: Why do you say that?
76. P1: We are. I'd say 80% of the dancers smoke
77. MR: Okay.
78. P1: Um, we don't eat properly. it's just the way of life we always, coz you do shows till late and then you'll finish late so you'll get, won't have a proper meal, you'll buy something on the way home or you quickly have snacks during the day while you're in rehearsals, you won't eat proper food it's very bad. And um, we socialise a lot so there's a lot of drinking as well
79. MR: Okay.
80. P1: So that's when I say we're very unhealthy people.
81. [Both Laugh]  
(05:20)

82. MR: Okay, um, how would you, describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved, ah in ballet?
83. P1: [Pause]
84. P1: And Are you saying like am I more?
85. MR: Like umm-
86. P1: [Coughs]
87. MR: How would I describe, like how do you kind of demonstrate to them your own personal way of, of embodying being a man?
88. P1: Even though I'm a dancer?
89. MR: Ja.
90. P1: [Deep sigh] someone that's totally not in the industry?
91. MR: Totally uninvolved, ja.
92. P1: [Pursing lips] [trolley in corridor] Um, I don't know how to answer this.
93. [Pause]  
(5:55)
94. P1: As in like I, [trolley stops] explain to them that I'm a guy or what do you, I mean, I don't?
95. MR: Umm, like ja explain to them the ways in which you feel like you're a guy or
96. P1: I'm still a guy?
97. MR: Ja, ja.
98. P1: Um, [both laugh] that's pretty hard because [laughs] I don't watch sports. Um, so, I get on with people that aren't in the industry but it's normally um, as far as like family friends I don't really have friends that are outs-
99. MR: Okay.
100. P1: Outside the industry.
101. MR: Ja.
102. P1: I mean I wouldn't know how I would actually describe it to them. [Pause]  
(6:36)
103. MR: Like what do you think brings up the challenges to it? Like do you think it's a lack of understanding or-
104. P1: Why I'm in the industry?
105. MR: Ja.
106. P1: I don't know I've never really, the people that I've com, um, straight guys and that especially that I've met have never really looked down on me they actually,

- they're interested in what my career is about and that I've never really had guys that are like 'oh you're a dancer', I really haven't, I haven't had that
107. MR: Okay.
108. P1: A lot at all in my life. Also because I went to the [art school] so I never was around guys that were not in the industry if that makes sense?
109. MR: No that does. Okay.
110. P1: [Shifting in seat]
111. MR: Sorry I know that was a tough one.
112. P1: [Laughs]
113. MR: Even when I was, was thinking about it I was like 'how would I answer that?'
114. P1: [Laughs]  
(7:20)
115. MR: Okay um, that leads us onto the next question, what are the stereotypes about male ballet dancers that you've heard or come across and what would your response to them be?
116. P1: Well most of them if they say 90%, if they, all ballet dancers are gay.
117. MR: Okay.
118. P1: And that's not true. That's not true at all. Ay, look [sigh] 90% of them are gay.
119. [Both Laugh]
120. MR: [Inaudible]
121. P1: But there is that 10% that aren't.
122. MR: Okay
123. P1: That's the, the um, that's the biggest thing that's, ah, gets stuck to us, is that we're all um, gay.
124. MR: Okay.
125. P1: There's nothing else that really gets, I get from people.
126. MR: Okay, just that one?
127. P1: Just that we're all gay, that's all, the people don't-
128. MR: Okay. And you would just be like 'it's not true'?
129. P1: It's not true. I've got a very good friend of mine he's phenomenal ah, b-, ballet dancer he's British
130. MR: Okay.
131. P1: and he's as straight as they come
132. MR: Okay.

133. P1: by far. And a friend of mine that I grew up with as well he's also he's married with kids. The biggest, biggest thing is that they say is that we're gay or we're all gay.
134. MR: Okay. Do you-
135. P1: [Coughs]
136. MR: Do you have any idea about why they would think that?
137. P1: Because it's such a feminine um, profession.
138. MR: Okay.
139. P1: And you're in tights and you're dancing with girls in tutus and everything's pretty and fancy
140. MR: Ja.
141. P1: And fairytale so they automatically go there.
142. MR: Okay
143. P1: They don't see the art and the behind it and the love for dance, and how hard it is.  
[Laughs]
144. MR: Ja. [Sigh] Okay.  
(8:36)
145. MR: Umm, when you say how hard it is um, do you want to explain a bit more about that?
146. P1: It's, everything in ballet is, against what your natural body wants to do. We have to turn our feet out, that's not normal. We taking out, stretching getting our legs up and that. Everything against what the human body is actually designed
147. MR: Okay.
148. P1: to do. And it's by far, ballet is by far the hardest form of dance to do. I've done everything. I've done Spanish, jazz, hip-hop, Latin, ballroom. I've done show dance and it is the hardest form, technique wise because of strength. And it's the oldest form of dance
149. MR: Hmm.
150. P1: that's been around. And um, and Show dance and stuff like that or you can get away with personality and it's, it's easier, this is very everything coming from your centre being ab-, being very supple you have to be limber and have strength as well.
151. MR: Okay.
152. P1: So it, it's by far the hardest form of dance.
153. MR: Okay.  
(09:28)

154. MR: [Sigh] And Um, who are the people who have impacted on you as a dancer?
155. P1: Well first person was my mother and my older sister. My sister is 13 years older than me. She ah, is a teacher as well
156. MR: Okay.
157. P1: but she never danced. They were big influences in my life when I was younger. And then growing up I, I grew up with, musicals I used to watch a lot of musicals
158. MR: Okay.
159. P1: and Mikhail Baryshnikov was a big influence
160. MR: Hmmhmm.
161. P1: in my life and Nureyev as well was a big influence in my life. But um, [coughs] I'd say the changing point in my life was when I saw my first extravaganza that totally changed my whole um, outlook
162. MR: Okay.
163. P1: and that um, influenced me big time. So um, if you want a name I'd say um, [name 1] was a big influence in my life.
164. MR: Okay.
165. P1: Ja.
166. MR: And when you say, um, coz you're speaking about the old dancers and I don't want to say their names again because I'm terrible at pronouncing them
167. P1: [Laughs]
168. MR: but in what way did they impact on you was it watching?
169. P1: Just watching the...the videos, like um, movies like "White Knight" and "Dancers" and that they are old they're from
170. MR: Okay.
171. P1: like
172. MR: Okay.
173. P1: '86, '87 [both laugh] Um, I was little and just watching them and I just loved seeing them dance and perform on stage.
174. MR: Okay.
175. P1: And I knew that's what I wanted to do.
176. MR: Did, did you as a family just um, take out recordings of those and [inaudible]?
177. P1: My mom used to have them all on video.
178. MR: Okay.

179. P1: And I used to watch them as a child over and over and over and over by myself.  
My brothers used to get a little bit irritated with me.
180. MR: [Laughs]
181. P1: Coz I'm the youngest so
182. MR: Okay.
183. P1: I used to watch it over and over and over I just loved it.
184. MR: And um, how many brothers do you have?
185. P1: Three brothers.
186. MR: Three brothers, okay.
187. P1: Ja, none of them are dancers,
188. MR: Okay
189. [Both Laugh]
190. P1: All opposite to me.  
(11:15)
191. MR: All opposite, Um, what have the other men in your life said about you choosing  
to be a, a ballet dancer?
192. P1: As in like boyfriends?
193. MR: Boyfriends, family members
194. P1: Family members
195. MR Friends, anything like that.
196. P1: Um, my fam-, my father supported me from when I was young
197. MR: Okay.
198. P1: my brothers have also been a big support they've been very proud of me and  
what I've done and what I've achieved. Um, and as far as, it's actually [laughs] as far  
as boyfriends it quite a good um, it sparks interest in gay guys
199. MR: Okay.
200. P1: who aren't in the entertainment industry, they go "you're a dancer that's so cool"  
so it's not, and it like, it's like a glamorous thing to them.
201. MR: Okay.
202. P1: So um, I've had a lot of support I actually I've had no one that's really put it  
down. I've really been lucky.
203. MR: In what ways have, have um, your father and your brothers supported you? Did  
they-
204. P1: Well number one my never, my dad always attended everything that I did

205. MR: Okay.
206. P1: coz you get those parents that don't, he was there for everything that I did, um, he still is. He um, obviously paying for things [both laugh] as well when you're a kid. But um, And my brothers as well they always bragged about me to their friends and um, they never put me down and their friends used to come and watch when I did shows as well, they always supported me. They were never um, against it and um, "ah you're wasting your life," I never had that at all
207. MR: Okay.
208. P1: I was very lucky.  
(12:26)
209. MR: Um, and the women in your life, what have they said, about your career choice?
210. P1: Um, pretty much the same, well, my mom and my sister taught me, especially, well my mother taught me
211. MR: Okay.
212. P1: from young so she was over the moon that I wanted to become a professional dancer. She also danced professionally when she was younger in, [place name 2]
213. MR: Okay.
214. P1: in the um, late 1960s [cough] and um, my sister as well supported me all the way, with everything. She, they never ever, really put me down or um, said that I'm making the wrong decision. But um, I know most of this is on like ballet, the only time that they were upset with me was when I didn't -
215. MR: Okay.
216. P1: I left the ballet company to go dance, at [theatre 1]
217. MR: Okay.
218. P1: and on, overseas and on the ships that. But at the beginning they were a little bit 'What are you doing you know you've trained to be a ballet dancer and that' and but at the end they did support me
219. MR: Okay.
220. P1: coz my mom was a big, big ballet um, [cough] teacher and her, her whole life was about ballet and then when I left she got a bit sad but then she saw that I'd made the right choice and that I was happy what I was doing. That's the only time I'd say they didn't support me. But, my mom and my sister, and as far as girls go, as friends, um, I've never had anyone that never supported me
221. MR: Okay.

222. P1: all very proud and um, a lot of the girls wanted to come dance that I taught and so I've been very lucky.
223. MR: Okay.
224. P1: Ja.  
(14:07)
225. MR: And what um, what made you move away from ballet into show dance and travelling and that kind of thing?
226. P1: [Sigh] Um, I'd, My, the ballet teachers and the people, the ba-, I would say out of all the industries , all th- a, um dance industries, ballet is the bi- the ah, most bitchiest
227. MR: Okay.
228. P1: and the cattiest. It's very, the girls are horrible to each other, to the boys, the boys are very horrible to each other, you have to have a very strong personality, and the ballet teacher was very, strict and um, it actually it killed my love for ballet a little bit in the end and, that's when I decided to go and try going on the ships and travelling the world and d-, dancing um, in [place name 2] and [theatre 1] I just wanted a change. And I also loved the glitz and the glamour
229. MR: [Laughs]
230. P1: of it because ballet, ballet is beautiful and pretty but the extrav.'s and all those big shows and that are, they're just so much more fun and also to be honest with you the salary coz ballet dancers get paid nothing
231. MR: Okay
232. P1: They get paid absolutely nothing and the salaries on the other side are a lot bigger.  
[Sigh]
233. MR: Okay, And um when you say you have to have a strong personality, do you mean like a, a good sense of who you are and self esteem?
234. P1: [Sigh] Yes you have to make sure that you are confident within yourself. You can't let snide little comments and catty things put you down because you will break down and you won't be able to pick yourself up you'll hate going to work every day
235. MR: Okay.
236. P1: Coz people can be ver-, it's jealousy and if you better than someone or you get the part that someone else wanted and people can be very horrible you have to be confident in who you are and know what you want and focus on your goal. Don't worry 'Oo if I try for that part I'm going to upset this person' you can't think like that you have to, go for it and if the other person gets it well good then they, the, the better

person deserves it, sometimes it's not the better person deserves it sometimes it's favouritism which happens but, it's like any job I suppose.

(15:51)

237. MR: Ja, okay, and what, what kind of career do you think you would have chosen if you couldn't dance?
238. P1: Hairdresser.
239. MR: Hairdresser. Okay.
240. P1: [Laughs] Straight up!
241. MR: What draws you to that?
242. P1: I just always, you can um, even ask [name 2] I'm always dying my hair different colours and I love experimenting and I'm always involved in hair shows and
243. MR: Okay.
244. P1: I just, ee-, you, quite a few people have asked me 'if you never danced what would you have done?' I would have been a hairdresser. It's still the same kind of environment it's crazy it's out there the people are very wacky and that
245. MR: Mmm.
246. P1: and um, no one really cares about what, if you're straight gay or, you know people are very liberal and open minded and it's still a creative side of things with um, hairstyles and stuff like that so I definitely would have been a hairdresser.
247. MR: And what kind of drew you back into ballet after your
248. P1: After I'd done?
249. MR: Ja.
250. P1: After I'm finished dancing? I'm fully qualified, ah teacher.
251. MR: Okay.
252. P1: I teach already. So um, it, I perform as well now but um, I'm starting to settle down and um, teach. I've been teaching full time for 5 years now.
253. MR: Okay, wow.
254. P1: So I've got the studio set up because it my, was my mom's studio and she's now retired and we've got just over 230 students.
255. MR: Oh, wow.
256. P1: Ja, so it's been going for quite a while but it's not ju-, it's ballet, jazz, tap and hip-hop.
257. MR: Okay.

258. P1: in the studio. So we teach everything and we teach all ages from 3 years old all the way up to, I teach, I have ladies adults classes which they just do it for fun
259. MR: Okay.
260. P1: and fitness and that and I've got, I think the, the oldest is 56, that I teach, ja.
261. MR: Wow, that's quite impressive.
262. [Both laugh]  
(17:17)
263. MR: Um, what advice would you give to a young man that wants to follow a career in ballet?
264. P1: [Sigh] in this country? Okay, in this country I'd, I'd say follow your dream I would get basic training in everything but if he, if the boy could go study a high school career overseas like in the UK at the royal ballet
265. MR: Okay.
266. P1: Coz the industry in this country is dying; they don't support the arts here. We used to have ah, four ballet companies we now have one. It's, it's very, very sad so I would always encourage them to go, to follow their dream but I would help them maybe with their parents to look into going to study at um, the Royal Ballet School in London or maybe when they finished school try get into Julliard in New York and um, br-, broaden their horizons by going overseas, not staying here
267. MR: Okay.
268. P1: But I'd definitely tell them to follow their dream.  
  
(18:20)
269. MR: And why do you think that there's um, such a lack of support for the Arts in South Africa?
270. P1: There's n-, I know not, it's, there's never been, a been, a big support in this country for the arts ever.
271. MR: Okay.
272. P1: Um, and I don't know who to blame for that because
273. MR: [Laughs]
274. P1: everything, ah well blame, but everything is given to sports in this country everything and in the States when I st-, I was there for, um, I was there for a while like seven years everything gets backing arts as much as sports as everything is

supported and the government helps f-, fund, well not to, the government but you get funding for

275. MR: Ummm.

276. P1: um, from companies for the arts and people are very, very, very supportive.

277. MR: Okay.

278. P1: There, I dunno, there just no, people aren't interested in this country. It's all about rugby and um

279. MR: [Laughs]

280. P1: *braai vleis*.

281. [Both Laugh]

282. MR: Ja?

283. P1: It really is.

(19:08)

284. MR: Okay well umm, that was my last question is do you have anything that you wanna add P1?

285. P1: No I not I don't think so I think you've got if you've got an-, you can e-mail me and I can answer if there's anything else you wanna know.

286. MR: Okay.

287. P1: Is that it?

288. MR: That's it.

289. P1: Oh okay.

290. MR: Thanks very much.

291. P1: [Laughs]

(End time: 19:26)

## Appendix F: Interview 2 with P1

1. MR: Okay so the last time you were here I asked a couple of questions, and I'm just going to clarify a few things with you now.
2. P1: Hmmhmm.
3. MR: [Reads off paper] Okay so the question that I asked you last time was: 'Can you tell me about a time in your dancing career when you were praised or commended for being a man?' And you mentioned that it would, would have been a time when you were a teenager dancing in the studio because you were the only male. Okay, so in follow up to that I'd like to ask in, in what ways did they praise you and who specifically praised you?
4. P1: Umm I w-, the people that praised me I would say were the other girl dancers because they wanted to do partner work with me and that and it, they more looked up to me I would say
5. MR: Hmmhmm.
6. P1: They um, I think it's because I was the only guy.
7. MR: Okay, okay.
8. P1: And then another time that you can say for praising um, was when I went to go dance overseas on the ships, the girls also were not envious but wanted also looked up to it as something they could do.  
(00:57)
9. MR: Okay. Okay, um, and then another question
10. P1: Was it, was that okay.
11. MR: [Nods] another from um, last time was 'Can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?' And you mentioned a personal disadvantage um regarding the girls being able to look more glamorous on stage, so I wanted to ask you, [Looks at paper] sorry, um, about a particular point that you raised about being a 'big ballet boy growing up' and I wasn't quite sure what you meant by that, um, so I just wanted to ask what do you by a being 'a big ballet boy growing up' and how does that fit in with what you wore and being disadvantaged?
12. P1: When I, what I meant by being big ballet boy was that, is that it was my forte that's what I did
13. MR: Okay.

14. P1: I did two hours of ballet every single day and I did like modern and ah hip hop and that maybe once twice a week so that's what I meant by 'big ballet boys' it was my main focus of dance. And what I say is like a disadvantage of is that the girls would get to look more glamorous coz we normally end up in a pair of pants and a nice top and they get to wear well not really in the ballet industry but what I'm doing now
15. MR: Hmmhmm.
16. P1: The girls get to wear the feathers and the sequinned outfits and the big over the top costumes and we just get stuck in a pair of pants and a top. [Laughs]  
(02: 17)
17. MR: Okay um. Alright in regards to a previous question 'What are the physical requirements for a ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?' Ah you mentioned that sometimes dancers can be very unhealthy people and I wanted to ask you how does being unheath-, being unhealthy impact on dancer's bodies?
18. P1: It shortens you career span if you don't look after your body. Especially if you um you overindulge in alcohol and smoking and that especially um smoking coz of our lungs
19. MR: Hmmhmm.
20. P1: So you're not as fit so it'll shorten your career, if you look after your body you can go up to your late thirties for, um, certain stuff um not really ballet normally like mid-thirties. But for any other form of dance maybe push it into your early forties if you look after yourself but if you don't eat correctly and you smoke and you drink a lot and that you're shortening your career.
21. MR: Okay so you mean that you won't be as fit um in terms of your lung span being able to cope with dancing
22. P1: Yes.
23. MR: for long hours that kind of thing?
24. P1: Yes.
25. MR: Okay is there anything else you'd like to say on that point?
26. P1: Um, as far as the smoking as well um with your lungs it also ages your skin
27. MR: Hmmhmm.
28. P1: And um your appearance which is a big thing in our industry you have to look good because it's, people come to be entertained they don't wanna look at someone

- that's not, that's not looking after themselves. And also with drinking, um drinking alcohol is fattening
29. MR: Hmmhmm.
30. P1: So you put on weight, so you have to make sure that you keep your body in shape and you don't let it go, get, pick up too much weight.  
(03:49)
31. MR: Okay thanks, and um, [Reads off paper], okay, now the next one from before ah 'how would you describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet?' And you said that's pretty hard because you don't watch sports, and I wanted to clarify with you in what ways you think watching sports would make it easier for you to describe your sense of masculinity to other people.
32. P1: It would, with someone that's not in our industry and if they also don't have any interest in the arts and that maybe if I was interested in sports we'd have a common, something common between the two of us
33. MR: Hmmhmm.
34. P1: And I actually don't know how to answer this. Um, Nnn-, as far as, because you wanna know how, how, let me see what this says here [takes paper and reads], sorry [MR] where am I? Here? [Reading] I'm a bit, what, I'm, I'm confused on this question, sorry.
35. MR: Okay, um I just mean like because you wanna just tell them you know like
36. P1: I'm still a guy?
37. MR: I'm still a man even though I do ballet. What, what would watching sports do to make it easier to explain to them that you're still a man.
38. P1: I don't think it would make it easier, I suppose that wasn't clear on that question, I mean it just means it's that I'm still a guy it will be like I am a guy, I still enjoy sports, but I don't, I'm not into sports I don't watch them, not that I'm saying, I just, I've got no interest in them. So it would be *easier* if I could, if I, to describe to them like look guys I still watch sports even though I do ballet, which I don't, is that what you?
39. MR: No that does make sense, so do you think that people outside of ballet see sports as, generally, a masculine thing and so that would make it easier?
40. P1: Definitely, ja, definitely a masculine thing, ja.  
(06:01)

41. MR: Okay great, right, um, okay then I asked you some questions about the people who have impacted on you as a dancer and you mentioned your [interruption] mom and your older sister and I wanted to ask you in what ways exactly did they influence you?
42. P1: In what ways exactly did they influence? Well, they were my teachers number one, so they taught me how to dance from I was three years old when I started, and my mom and my sister, my sister is ah thirteen years older than me, she taught me jazz and my mom taught me ballet, and they were big influences on my as how far I was pushed, um and how hard I worked and they were also, they were good teachers because personally I don't feel that I dance, just because it's ballet don't, I'm not feminine or ah, I still look like a man on stage.
43. MR: Okay, umm when you, when you say that you still feel like a man on stage do you want to describe this to me?
44. P1: Um you get guys that dance and you actually have to sometimes, ah because we wear for ballet, you wear tights and that you have to actually second guess if they actually are guys or not, coz they dance very feminine, very soft, and they, they if they not built properly as well if they, we get a few male dancers that I've seen they, they get trained liked girls and their bodies actually start develop, they very skinny, they don't have um ah, ah muscle tone in their arms so they look, they could look like a girl on stage as opposed to boys dancing strong arms not soft, very masculine.
45. MR: Okay, so are there different techniques in training, some more feminine and more masculine and could you describe those to me?
46. P1: There's not really different techniques it just depends on your teacher and how the, the a girl can do an arm and it can be soft and a boy must do it more harder it mustn't have, it mustn't be too um what's the word I'm looking for it mustn't flow too much it must have more um resistance behind it.  
(08:03)
47. MR: Okay thanks [P1], um and then you mentioned your first extravaganza that you saw and that it's, it changed your outlook but I wasn't quite sure um how exactly it changed your outlook and um I wondered if you could describe to me, going to that first extravaganza.
48. P1: Okay, ja um, I was as I said I was very big into my ballet and it was my main focus growing up. Even though I did do other forms of dance and then when I went to see my first extrav. it was, it's all glitz and glamour, it there were impersonators in the

show that did Liza Minnelli, Barbra Streisand and Tom Jones, it was, a lot more, everything's a lot bigger than doing a classical ballet on stage

49. MR: Hmmhmm.

50. P1: Everything's, that they spend more money on the show's, it's very glamorous you feel if you wanna describe it like a rock, it's like being a rock star on those kind of stages, so everything was over the top, there was an illusionist in the show, um, which I actually got to work with, couple of years ago we did a show together at [casino name] down in [place name]. Um and the show was just when I saw it I said to my mom this is what I wanna do, this is much more my thing than being on stage and doing, ah being a ballet dancer.

51. MR: Okay so more your thing in the sense that it was more rock star?

52. P1: More glitzy, much more glamorous. Being a ballet dancer isn't glamorous. It's a lot of hard work and it doesn't have as much publicity and it's much especially when you're in the casino and it's the whole Vegas-style shows, that, I love the glamour of it.

(09:39)

53. MR: Okay and um the, you also mentioned [name 1]

54. P1: Hmmhmm.

55. MR: But I wasn't quite sure who [name 1] was and how she influenced you.

56. P1: Okay, ah, she was um our dance captain at [theatre 1], she was in charge of us as dancers and taught us the shows and she influenced me as in, she worked overseas she was a dancer at the Moulin Rouge in the Lido in Paris, and um I, I looked up to her as a person, um as a dancer and what she'd done, and um I, she made me wanna work harder to do and accomplish what she had accomplished in her life.

57. MR: Okay, what, what sort of things did she accomplish in her life?

58. P1: Well number one getting into the Lido and the, ah Moulin Rouge at, at in Paris is a big thing as a dancer, it's one of the biggest running um extravaganza shows in the world, hmm, very over the top working with chor-, ah choreographers from all over Europe and also they um, it's not an easy thing to get into, you have to work hard you can't just, it's not like, easy to get an audition there and also easy to just get hired, so she, the, when I watched her dance and the way she and how was disciplined about warming up and stretching and everything, ah, she made me wanna do the same and follow in her footsteps.

(10:55)

59. MR: Okay thanks [P1]. Umm, just having a look here [looks at paper], oh last one, for this question, um you spoke about watching videos of Nureyev and um Baryshnikov
60. P1: Baryshnikov.
61. MR: And I wanted to ask you, coz you said here um, I just loved seeing them dance and perform on stage, and I wanted to just confirm with you, if you could describe their performances to me a little bit and what um about them performing on stage made you look up to them so much.
62. P1: Um, especially Baryshnikov, when he danced, he's just, he was a very strong dancer, um, when his one performance he does in white night, it's an old ah movie it's just the, the way he dances, how many pirouettes, turns, he does, he pulls off eleven pirouettes where the average person on a good day can maybe pull off four of five, and you just think will I ever be able to do that and it just makes you wanna try and wanna work harder towards it, and his body as well how, how you can have defined he was and how strong he was as a dancer, that inspired me as a young, as a young performer.
63. MR: Okay, and um that was Nureyev right?
64. P1: Baryshnikov.
65. MR: And, and Nureyev?  
(12:14)
66. P1: Nureyev was, I would, Baryshnikov was more of an influence in my life than Nureyev was, Nureyev was a good, very good dancer, but it was like I said earlier he was a more feminine than Baryshnikov wa-, ah um was, I think, I don't know if it's also got to do with also sexuality coz Baryshnikov is a straight male dancer and Nureyev is also, um he's, he's gay.
67. MR: In what ways was Nureyev more feminine than Baryshnikov?
68. P1: Hmmhmm, his body, his build and when he danced he was a lot softer
69. MR: Hmmhmm.
70. P1: He wasn't um as strong and masculine his movements were more, um they flowed more and that, Baryshnikov was a very hard dancer.
71. MR: Okay thanks [P1], [laughs] umm, just a couple more.
72. P1: That's okay.  
(12:56)
73. MR: Um, the question I asked you before was 'what have the other men in your life said about you choosing to be a ballet dancer,' and you said that 'it sometimes sparks

interest in gay guys and that it's a glamorous thing to them,' and I wanted to ask you why would you say it's a glamorous thing to them and can you explain what you meant by this?

74. P1: Well to an ordinary guy I'd say for example someone that works at the bank or is an accountant they have a pretty normal life of going to work, working from eight to five and that, and our lives we're on stage, we're in the spotlight it's um, we work very odd hours and it is a totally different life where it's very, very social, out there kind of um environment, and ah people it sparks, coz we also I think as in performers we more outgoing

75. MR: Hmmhmm.

76. P1: and we in very touch with our bodies and that so we're comfortable with who we are and to people like that they, kind, I don't know if they look up to us but most of the guys it's 'oh my word you're a dancer on stage that's so cool' like they don't, I don't know if they don't hear or meet a lot of people like that but they, they look at it as being quite interesting.

(14:06)

77. MR: Hmmhmm, and, and when you say they look up to you because you're more in touch with your bodies, um could you explain that to me a little bit more?

78. P1: I hope I don't get too graphic here, um [both laugh], when um, well as performers you know, [stutters over words] how our bodies move and everything

79. MR: Hmmhmm.

80. P1: And also we also, when you're doing shows and that and you're backstage and you're getting changed you change in front of anyone, you don't care, a lot of the time after the show as well we walk around we have our under um, ah g-, they're called gaffs,

81. MR: Hmmhmm.

82. P1: They're like flesh coloured g-strings that we wear under our costumes and that, and we walk around in those or sometimes without even anything on so, and we don't give a damn about the other performers so we're very comfortable with who we are and we don't,

83. MR: Okay.

84. P1: And most people everyday aren't really that comfortable with who they, in touch with their bodies.

85. MR: Okay.

86. P1: Does that make sense?
87. MR: Yes, that makes sense.  
[Both laugh]  
(14:52)
88. MR: Um, okay then there were two additional questions that were actually inspired by your original interview
89. P1: Hmmhmm.
90. MR: Um, in your experience what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the arts, especially ballet, and further can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?
91. P1: [Long pause] Um, I will be honest the arts, I think I mentioned it, I don't know if I mentioned it earlier on is, the arts is not very well supported in this country. We don't have, we used to have a lot more ballet companies and contemporary dance companies
92. MR: Hmmhmm.
93. P1: And we have one big ballet company left which is the [ballet company name 1], [ballet company name 1, abbreviation], so the arts I actually feel are not very well supported in this country. So ah, I w-, as far as being, you wanna know about being praised?
94. MR: No, no, their beliefs about male ballet dancers.
95. P1: I dunno, I never, I've never had any encounters where people go-, I've had people say to me before um when I say I'm a dancer they go 'but ja, what do you do for your real job?' and I'm like 'that is my job' they don't understand they go 'but how can you just be a dancer?' and I'm like there is money in it, people just don't, I don't think people, there's not enough education in this country in the arts and people don't go to theatre enough to understand that there is ah, it is a career, does that-?
96. MR: Ja, that makes sense.
97. P1: Does that make sense?
98. MR: Um, so you'd say that there's this belief there's, that ballet is not really a career and, and what do you think would spark that, those kind of, those kinds of beliefs?
99. P1: I just think it's a big, people that haven't been exposed to culture like that, people that don't go to the theatre coz we don't have a lot of it in this country because the funding is so bad and ballet dancers I think I said earlier as well they, they don't get a

lot of money at all, they, you can get through on it but it's not like someone that's earning 40, 50 thousand rand a month

100. MR: Hmmhmm.

101. P1: I know the ballet company they earn about, I think principal dancers are, get about 10, 11 thousand rand which is okay, it's good money you can live off it but it's not a huge amount, it's not a huge salary.

(16:59)

102. MR: Okay, Okay and last question, um how do or did your co-workers, both male and female, view your being a male ballet dancer and how did they respond to your working with them?

103. P1: You speaking about the other dancers?

104. MR: Ja.

105. P1: Um, ah actually- (facial expression indicates he didn't understand the question)

106. MR: So, how did the females respond to you, as a male ballet dancer?

107. P1: Ah the fem-, I would, I actually get on better with girls than I do with the boys, I hope I don't go on about this too much, also it's because of our sexuality.

108. MR: Okay.

109. P1: The girls are comfortable with gay guys and we get on with girls very well, um, this, um so I was, more of a comfortable connection between me and the girls

110. MR: Hmmhmm.

111. P1: They guys as well, especially if, the other gay guys you get on as well. We had a very good environment in the um, in our working industry,[theatre 1] and in the ballet company and that, but um it's like anywhere it just depends on, you're gonna get to work and you're gonna get on with some of your colleagues and you're not gonna get on with some of them

112. MR: Hmmhmm.

113. P1: Even though you've all got the same interests you're still gonna have conflicts of personalities.

114. MR: Hmmhmm, and why would you say it was easier to get along with the girls and the other gay male dancers, um as opposed to the ah, straight, straight guys?

115. P1: [Laughs] I think it's coz we, we're more in touch with our feminine sides, so the girls are comfortable with us and they know they they're safe with us as far as um anything relationship wise

116. MR: Hmmhmm.

117. P1: That we're not looking for anything but friendship. And they gay guys as well we've got common interests, as long as you don't get involved with them on a romantic basis, coz that can also cause problems, so we have more of a connec-, common connection than we do with the straight, the straight guys yes we both dancers but we still have other interests
118. MR: Hmmhmm.
119. P1: If that makes sense?
120. MR: Okay, so would you say that the straight dancers didn't feel comfortable, that they were maybe threatened by your sexuality a little bit?
121. P1: Some of, not, If you had to give it 90% of the straight guys were comfortable with it but coz they in the industry coz they know what it's like
122. MR: Hmmhmm.
123. P1: but you also used t o get that ten percent were un-, a little bit uncomfortable but they were always q- also, questioning if they were straight or gay.
124. MR: Okay is there anything else you'd like to add [P1]?
125. P1: I don't think so, how much, good, I hope so, I hope you got everything.
126. MR: Okay thank you very much. (End Time: 19:15)

## Appendix G: Interview 1 with P2

1. MR: Okay so umm throughout the interview I want you to imagine your life as a dancer like a book that consists of different chapters or parts, ah specifically think about stories relating to your gender and your experiences as a male dancer hhh, um, and I'd like you to bear these stories in mind ah when you're answering the following questions, okay so-
2. P2: Hmm.
3. MR: When did you decide to become a dancer and what influenced your decision?
4. P2: I was four.
5. MR: Okay.
6. P2: And I walked into a-, where, I was in crèche and my teacher sent me to the back of the crèche, her daughter had a little dance studio on the side hhh and I walked in to give something over and I thought jis that'd be lekker hey, and ah, ja, I went back and asked my mom and she said no she laughed at me and I went back to school and I said to my nursery school teacher I wanna, wanna dance and mom won't let me. So she walked me to the car that afternoon and said to my mom ag, let him try it he'll do it for a day or two and he'll give it up, and that was up until I was 19 years old.
7. MR: Did your mom tell you why she said no?
8. P2: Well what boy goes to their mother and says to their ma [starts laughing] I wanna dance?
9. MR: Okay, okay.
10. P2: And ah, ja no, ag, they she laughed it off and the next day I, I asked and you know the teacher came and said let him try it and that was it
11. MR: Okay.
12. P2: And ah ja, I started and jis I loved it, I loved it, I liked the discipline.
13. MR: Okay, and when you looked at the, the class what, what made you decide okay this would be lekker?
14. P2: I dunno, I dunno, I just walked in and thought to myself ag, I, I can do this there was no other guy in there, there were just girls and I just though jis I, I can do this you know
15. MR: Okay.
16. P2: And ja [laughs] I did it!  
(01:42)

17. MR: Okay, can you tell me about a time in your career um when you were praised or commended for being a man?
18. P2: The first time I can remember, this was dancing at the [place name 1] Eisteddfod and I walked off and somebody backstage said to me “we don’t get a lot of male dancers” and ah there were two of us there was myself and [P1] and that was the first, first time I think that I’d ever been
19. MR: Okay.
20. P2: Praised.
21. MR: How old were you at the [place name 1] Eisteddfod?
22. P2: Jis, hhh umm eight, nine somewhere around there.
23. MR: And what, what is the [place name 1] Eisteddfod, can you tell me?
24. P2: Ah it’s run it was run in the days by, [P1’s] mom and dad. And they would do the [place name 1] Eisteddfod. And it was all for, for all the dance studios to get together and do a, a big competition and you know you, you get golds and silvers and ah, ja you you’d enter your different categories of dancing and you would go perform and the judges would judge you and, you’d get your certificates, jis that’s going back hey [laughs].  
(02:50)
25. MR: Umm, can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?
26. P2: Being supple, [laughs], definitely being supple, ah I battled a little bit with that, but ah, other than that no, no not really I was always put into prime, roles, being the only male dancer you know, so it was always ag, [P2] you’ll just come do this and ag [P2] you’ll just come do that, I failed standard seven at [art school].
27. MR: Okay.
28. P2: And ah, ja it’s because I was dancing we, there were sixes and sevens, and [P1], was a year below us [taps table] so there was only the two of us, ah there was nobody eight nine and Matric, so all [taps table] of the eisteddfods and concerts and stuff that they put on at the theatres and it was always [P2] don’t you just wanna come perform in this and [P2] please come and, so I was always dancing as opposed to doing actual, work.
29. MR: Okay.
30. P2: You know I was always pulled from pillar to post, oh [P2] we, we’ve got this on this date and we, we just need you to come and perform, aw, [P2] we’ve got this on

that date and we just need you to come and help us with this you know, so ah ja, always busy.

31. MR: Did you feel a little bit taken for granted in that sense then?

32. P2: A little bit, a little, I didn't mind [laughs], I quite like being centre of attention, so no I didn't mind, no I didn't mind.

(04:11)

33. MR: Okay, and um kind of leading into your supple comment earlier

34. P2: Hmm.

35. MR: Um, what are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer?

36. P2: Jisis.

37. MR: and what should a dancer look like?

38. P2: Ss-, hmm, there's different perceptions, ah, when I was growing up there were a couple of different male dancers that were teaching guys, and ah one particular person was teaching these guys to dance like a female, Thin and you know, must eat at certain times and, and ah supple, supple was *it* you know and very feminine lines and very, and then I was on the other side of the spectrum where they wanted the, *strength*, you know, um, so strong I, I would say being from the other side I would say a strong dancer, hhh um, you need to, to lift the women and all the rest of it, ah, great in *par les deux* work and you know what supple ja, eat right and, and lots of work and, and supple, *supple* was, was, I think was key.

39. MR: Okay. In *par les deux* work, what is that?

40. P2: Ah male and female working, ah they normally do a little dance together.

41. MR: Okay.

42. P2: Ah, called *par les deux*.

43. MR: When you say that there were two kind of trains of thought um, was that something that was rigid um, or did you find that there was a, a room in between?

44. P2: Nhmm, I kind of was the in between.

45. MR: Okay.

46. P2: Um, but no, ah, ah I was strong at school eh, I was strong when I danced, um, I was in good physique. I'd like to think I still am, I still trained and stuff. I don't dance as often I, I'm broken [laughs]. It, it beat the crap out of me, I've had injuries ankles, knees, hips, ah, spine, spine was my major one.

47. MR: Okay.

48. P2: But ah, ja , i-, i-, it, it's, you're training that body everyday to do something that it's not supposed to be doing, and ah, ja like I said ah, I really like the, I like the, the routine you know, you, do your class and you, ja it was ah it was my exercise, I enjoyed it.
49. MR: When you say like something that your body's not supposed to be doing what do you mean by that?
50. P2: S-, well look at any sports person suffers from injuries ah any, any major sports person suffers from injuries, it, it's with the territory, and I just don't believe the body's meant to be, drilled like that every day.
51. MR: Okay.
52. P2: You know ah I, I went to school with a lot of um, gymnasts. And the, the things that they were put through I, I, I don't think was right. But i-, it wasn't my, ah you know there's a couple of things that I didn't agree with. Um...I've trained the, the [rugby team name] ah, ah wr-, rugby team for a warm-up. They wanted to do ballet so they pulled me in there [laughs] I did a class with the guys that was quite ah, it was fun. Ah but I've done you know, and then training with them but they again different trainings
53. MR: Hmm.
54. P2: Routines they were on the field and we weren't-
55. MR: Okay, what was their interest in, in, in ballet?
56. P2: Suppleness.
57. MR: Okay.
58. P2: To get supple and, an-, to try and help with a lot of injuries.
59. MR: Okay.
60. P2: And ah ja, I don't know if it worked or not but ah I, I did my bit it. And, and, you know it was mainly with their ah, physio. coaches and that stuff like that. try and stretch the guys and. I think it was to teach them different warm up routines, you know, ah we used to warm up our bodies 15 , 20 minutes before actually doing a class, so, rigorous
61. MR: Okay.
62. P2: And, and maybe different warm-up I think is what they were after, help with the hamstrings and the Achilles and that type of thing.  
(07:40)
63. MR: Okay, An-, w-, what do you think a dancer should look like, a male dancer?

64. P2: Jis ah, again I, I, I danced with [name 2] who was built like a brick shit house really he, he was in the prime, umm m-, masculine, he was a big lad, ah, and then there was [name 3] nice and tall but also legs like a machine
65. MR: Okay.
66. P2: Um, also very cut toned ou, the-, and then there were the g-, gay side you know who had the ladies physiques they were very slender and long ah between that line of being on the slender and I, I, I'd prefer to be a bit more, a bulky.
67. MR: Okay.
68. P2: You know bulkier, I, I like my male dancers looking strong.
69. MR: Okay, in terms of sexuality coz you spoke about a different kind of physique for, for, um gay dancers
70. P2: Well, ja, I'm putting people into brackets but okay.
71. MR: Um, but is that what you've found or-?
72. P2: Yes, ja.
73. MR: Okay.
74. P2: All my life growing up, all my life.  
(08:46)
75. MR: Okay, um, what are the stereotypes about male ballet dancers that you have heard or come across and what would your response to these stereotypes be?
76. P2: Jis that's a difficult question.
77. MR: Hhh.
78. P2: Um, I don't think I have an answer.
79. MR: Okay.
80. P2: Stereotypes I was always raised as being gay, you know. And ah i-, it never fancied me
81. MR: Hmm.
82. P2: But I've never had a problem because I've grown up with everybody, everybody each to their own you know, it, it made me a better person, made me look at things differently.
83. MR: Okay.
84. P2: Um, ja.
85. MR: So what would your response to that I mean you said a gay stereotype, what would that be?

86. P2: Ah, I used to in primary school I used to beat people up, hhh, and ah, that wasn't the right way of doing things, so-
87. MR: Okay.
88. P2: But ja, we were kids you know it was, in high school I never had a problem, I, I went to [art school], so high school I never had a problem if I'd gone to another school maybe, I definitely think the dancing would have stopped, but it's what I wanted to do and I went to [art school] and ah met my wife there
89. MR: Okay.
90. P2: and ah, ja no, I, I think my path was chosen for me before I'd realised you know that, that there were options out there, but I was happy.
91. MR: Okay.
92. P2: I danced.
93. MR: Did you find umm, that the [art school] was a supportive environment for all-
94. P2: Extremely so.
95. MR: the dancers?
96. P2: Extremely so, I learnt to do a lot at art school hey, I learnt to read music, I learnt to play drums, ah, I danced every day, we had the drama section, ah art, I was no good at art [laughs], paintings and stuff I wish I was jis ah, but art and drama I never really got into mine was classical, I, I wanted to be a classical ballet dancer, which was also I think a bit narrow-minded all through my school I should have trained to, to do a lot of other things, ah, I think the classically trained is what damaged me.
97. MR: Okay.
98. P2: And I never did and ah, ja I regret that, but that's about the only regret.
99. MR: [Laughs]
100. P2: Is not being versa-, is not having the versatility, whereas [P1] eh, you know he, he's done jazz and he's done funk and he's got the hip-hop going and he's, ah just a bit more versatile I think it kept it interesting I was very regimented at, you know I wanted to, I wanted to be a professional *ballet* dancer, and I did, ah, I made it for a long time with ah [theatre 1] and then [theatre 1] closed and then I went back coz I left school at 16. Ah I got offered a job and left.
101. MR: Okay.
102. P2: It's what I wanted to do an-, and school was just fuckin' school. Ag I was there to dance. It's what I was doing an-, and when the opportunity I sat my mom and dad down and said look I, I think I must go, you know it's what I, so at 16 I moved out

and went and stayed with the little commune there an-, ja I had the next five years world-class when it was the [theatre 2].

103. MR: Okay.

104. P2: Class started at ten, some days, some weeks you finished at half past eleven you go and do a class, ah it was lovely

105. MR: So when you say-

106. P2: It was lovely

107. MR: It damaged you do you mean in term or opportunity or-.

108. P2: No, ah body, ah, I think if I'd trained differently I don't think I'd be suffering from as many injuries as I do now.

109. MR: Okay.

110. P2: But ah, ja I should've, I should've trained I did at, at school we did Spanish and ah ballet which is what I was there for and then we got African dance which was a load of kak. But ah, you know from when I look at [P1] who's still dancing now and still doing his thing umm, ja he's just that much more versatile he can go to [theatre 3] and go perform

111. MR: Mmm.

112. P2: For six months at [theatre 3], gets bored of it he goes and climbs on a boat coz he's got that, you know he can tap and he can, hhh so it's just that, I think it ah, I was very narrow-minded but I was at the [theatre 2] doing what I wanted to do or I wanted to be, and then with the closures and the re-opening and the privatisation and the, and my body was damaged I, I kept, you know I kept coz we kept pushing so bloody hard.

113. MR: Okay.

114. P2: And ah, ja at the end of it, t'was it.

(12:40)

115. MR: Okay, um, hhh, okay, um, how would you describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet?

116. P2: [Pause] I've never had to prove myself if that's what you're asking.

117. MR: Okay.

118. P2: Um, everybody I've know hhh, has accepted it, ah, grade two, my, my two best mates now from grade two [name 4] and [name 5]. Ah two Portuguese brothers ah, and ah, I've grown up with them, and [name 4] has always said to me even to these days he's like jis, [P2] you're the only guy I know hey that grew up staring at

beautiful women all day [laughs]. And, and I, I've had friends like that you know, that have, I, I've never really been put down, I was always supported.

119. MR: Okay.

120. P2: You know once after that first day with my mom and dad not wanting to they let me try jis then they, they were in you know if this is what you want to do then do it. And I've never, I've never had the, two way of, of people bickering or, ag primary school the guys would laugh, and ah ballet dancers are

121. MR: Okay.

122. P2: poofers and blah, blah, blah, but it's ja, it's funny it's always I, I wanted to do it, and I did.

123. MR: Okay cool.

124. P2: and I had a jol [laughs], I loved it.

125. MR: An-, and now if someone asks what you did before do you ever find you have to-

126. P2: No.

127. MR: defend it or-

128. P2: No I'm a ballet dancer ah, I was a ballet dancer, um, jis we sky dive now, my wife and I sky dive, ah, there's no, ah, it's funny if I've wanted to do something I've been able to do it, I've never had people say to me you 'ah you shouldn't because you'll be gay'

129. MR: Okay.

130. P2: You know, and, and growing up were a, at art school most of the guys there were, gay and, and I've seen a lot of people come out you know ah, fighting, no I, I'm butch I, I'm straight I want women and three months later he's out of the closet he's gay you know eh

131. MR: Okay.

132. P2: I've seen a lot of the guys fight through that hey, especially being at art school, ah our classes were all mixed and then you'd go off and do your speciality so you would go and do your m- ah, dance or your music or your drama and that was all at the same times for your standards you know so and then we were all in different classes and I've always just been with a nice mix of people so I've never had a problem with anybody or, or anything like that

133. MR: Okay.

134. P2: So no I've never had to defend myself. Um, other than the one time I kicked [name 6], but [laughs]

135. MR: [Laughs] Do you wanna tell me about that?
136. P2: He was going on at me about being ballet dancer and ‘poofers dance’ and what, what, what, and it was ‘ag whatever, whatever, I’ve heard it all before there’s nothing’, you know and I walked away and he said something about my mom, and that was it and I turned and I chased him and he was running away, and I ran and I ran and I jumped and kicked him in the-, in his back ‘Boof’, and he dropped and the bell went and everybody went to class except [name 6] was lying on the floor, and we had woodwork and jisis we had a strict teacher he would eat cactus
137. MR: [Laughs]
138. P2: Ja, the oddest fuckin' oak you'll-, cactus plant he would cut off and then skin it and eat the cactus, he was a bit mad I think, throw the dusters at you an-
139. MR: Ah.
140. [Both laugh]
141. P2: He was a bit mad, he was accurate as hell, but a bit mad, and ah we went up to class and [name 6] was on the field and the next thing an ambulance picked up [name 6], and [laughs] sods law would have it my dad was home that day and ah, [laughs] I got off the bus and my dad’s car was in the driveway so I walked in the house and he went off at me ‘what the hell have you done ah-ah-a, you’ve broken this kids ribs and fractured diaphragms and blah, blah, blah’ and I was in big shit hey, and I said to him ‘but dad it wasn’t about the ballet it was what he said about mom’ and when I repeated it my old man went off his face and ah, wanted to go down and ah anyway, nothing ever came of that, fortunately
142. MR: Okay.
143. P2: But ah, I think that was the biggest fight of my life, [name 6] running away and I kicked him in the back.
144. MR: Okay.
145. P2: It was a bit shit. [Both Laugh]  
(16:40)
146. MR: Um, okay in your experience um, what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the arts, especially ballet, and, further can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?
147. P2: [Pause] No, most of the time guys have just said to me ah ballet dancers are, are queers
148. MR: Okay.

149. P2: You know, ah but I've never, jis I'm trying to think of a time, [pause] no I've never, again I've grown up differently you know, ah I've always had the support of my family and friends, and the, ah Other than that comment but it was about my mom
150. MR: Hmm.
151. P2: it was I've never gone or had to get aggressive about *being* a ballet dancer, 'oh you're gay' ah fuck whatever, [laughs], water off a ducks back and, and, and carried on with life, I was doing what I wanted to do and, and who are you to tell me? What do you do oh you're playing soccer okay well so are 60 000 other people, you know, 'oh sorry you're playing rugby well lekker good for you', you know, I, I think I lost a lot of things when it came to the sports side, ah coz I was always dancing
152. M: Hmm.
153. P2: You know I didn't go play soccer, and cricket and rugby and, and I enjoy watching those sports and but I never played them, there was just never time, you know.
154. MR: So do you think there's more value placed on sports in South Africa?
155. P2: Flat out.
156. MR: Okay.
157. P2: For sho', after what my personal experience being with [theatre 1] and [theatre 1] closing and the guys privatising and that closing, and then we were [theatre 2], well ah, first it was the state theatre that was run like that for a couple of years you'd have to double check me but two or three years, and then [theatre 2] took over and ran the state theatre for an additional couple of years and then that went belly up, and then, there's no money in arts in this country, there's no money, ah I look at people that I went to school with [name 7], ah who was I forget her maiden name, she's married now, um, she still works at, at, at [theatre 3] you know.
158. MR: Okay.
159. P2: And trying to make a living at it and, but it's just not what it, it's no money, I, I couldn't I was just at that stage of my life when they closed down and we'd privatised and it was the November the moers who'd taken over had taken all the revenue from all the tickets ticket sales which was meant to pay us and then whatever and fled the country, climbed on a plane and left, so we sat November, December, January, February with no pay slips, the March, I was like no fuck I, I can't do this anymore I, I gotta eat, we got a fat lump sum, I don't know who or where it came from but we

got a fat lump sum and it was i.e. R 50 000 okay but I hadn't been paid for the four months prior

160. MR: Ja.

161. P2: I got a lump sum now and they can't tell me when I'm getting another salary, so it's *world class* being 21 earning that type of money but how long, how long have I gotta budget in advance, how long can pay my rent, how long can I *sustain myself* like this, you know, and that's where the not being versatile enough I think kicked me in the arse a little bit.

162. MR: Okay.

163. P2: coz I, I didn't you know I wanted to dance I, I had the opportunity to go to Cape Town and, but the guys were going and fleeing, you know, the, ah shutting the doors, so no there's no arts ah and yes we do support our, our, and even there not supported ah as much as they as they could be, you know

164. MR: Okay.

165. P2: but there's no money in arts, really, not in dance, not in music, there's no more orchestra, ah the Johannesburg Youth Orchestra I don't even know if that's still running, but ah, ah [name] played in a moersa Johannesburg Orchestra for a while and ah also they went belly-up, no there's no money in the arts the, the comedians and stuff that are putting stuff on at Monte Casino aren't selling to packed houses.

166. MR: Hmm.

167. P2: Ah unless it's this overseas guy that's just come back, I forget his name, he'll sell to a packed house but the local guys aren't. And it's not viable for them to rent out that venue, you know, for a week and they're just not making money.

168. MR: Why do you think there's this more support for the sports as opposed to the arts?

169. P2: We're a sporty country, you know, I think we're a sporty country, that's the way it is, you know, the, the guys would rather watch rugby and soccer and, and formula ones and whatever else than watch, go and sit, what male, in his right mind wants to go and sit and watch a ballet? Not too many I know [both laugh], but the guys will watch rugby and the soccer and the whatever sports are on, on the weekend, you know.

(21:14)

170. MR: Okay, and um, who are the people who have had an impact on you as a dancer?

171. P2: Like a role model? Jis, well obviously there's the main ones Mikhail Baryshnikov, um, ah teacher wise, we had ah my ballet teacher from school [name 8]

her husband [name 9], [coughs], I went and did classes with him on a Saturday and he kind of moulded me into being a better, *stronger* dancer, you know, um, ja ah, and myself. I've really had to motivate myself to keep going and, and keep my goals and ambitions and, and stuff alive, you know, coz nobody else is gonna do it for you.

172. MR: Hmm.

173. P2: So ah ja, a couple of the big names but in all myself, I was, I got out of bed every morning and, you know, I went and did the classes coz I wanted to and learnt and, so a big part there aimed to *myself*. You know that ah, from the aspect of having to push myself, but ah, role models, ja my dancers [name 9], my mom and dad obviously they, they stood behind me through thick and thin, um, ja no but that's about it ah

174. MR: Okay.

175. P2: Other male dancers ag, at, at ah, [theatre 2] would be, would have been [name 2], ah, I thought he was a magnificent dancer.

176. MR: What sort of things did he do that-?

177. P2: No ah he was, he was just one of the male principals I was there, I was ah lower than shark shit when I joined there, and he was a principal dancer and he was just, his lines were good, he was strong, he would, he jisis he could jump he, he was just an all well-rounded, you know, his *par les deux* work was fantastic, um, him and [name 3] ja, I really enjoyed watching the two of them on stage they just had something about them, you know and ah. The highlight I think of my career ah would be [dance company 1].

178. MR: Okay.

179. P2: Ah the American dance company when they were out here I had the opportunity to perform with them. And I think that was the *highlight* of my dancing career. Ah I've done plenty. I've done all the classical ballets, you know, Swan Lake and Romeo and Juliet, and ah La se Vie and ah what's the other one Pap-, Papillion.

180. MR: Hmm.

181. P2: It that means butterfly, ah, so I've done all the major ballets but that was out of my, you know that was more contemporary and I loved that I thrived on that [dance company 1].

182. MR: Okay.

183. P2: So I think that was the highlight, and again it was, it was because of nobody, it was due to hard work that I got to perform with them, but being the only male at arts school and then performing at the [theatre 3] where looking for male ballet dancers so

I just happened to be there, you know what I mean hey, I've been lucky that I, I've just fallen into those roles.

(24:02)

184. MR: And um, what's the difference between classical and more contemporary ballet?

185. P2: Ah, training and work, classical is very regimented [taps desk] whereas contemporary you could release the body a little bit more, you know you could, sway the hips, you can-, whereas in classical you can't you've gotta be very regimented as such you know.

186. MR: Okay.

187. P2: Body's gotta be like this, your stomach's tucked in, you've gotta have your bum tucked under and you've gotta, so again I enjoyed the discipline

188. MR: Okay.

189. P2: I enjoyed the discipline through school, you know, but ah that was what I wanted to do and the more you do it the better you get, the practice takes, practice makes perfect.

(24:39)

190. MR: Okay, okay, and um, what have other men in your life said about you choosing to be a ballet dancer?

191. P2: [Laughs] Other than I'm a poof or I'm a fag?

192. MR: Ja.

193. P2: Ah for wanting to dance? Again, I just go back to that comment that [name 4] made with, you know the, seeing all the sexy ladies in all their tight outfits or [laughs], and that, that one little comment has, has taken away all the negativity for me.

194. MR: Okay.

195. P2: So, you know, um, no everybody I know all the guys, ah some of the people are like 'jis you, you really used to dance hey?' you know, it, it's but no, n-, ah nobody's come to me and said 'ag ja you're a poofda, blah, blah, blah', but I also did, ah dated my wife [name 10] all through school, she's also been a big role model in my life, um, she was also there through, you know, at school with me and we were in ballet class together and.

196. MR: Okay.

197. P2: She's, we've done a lot together.

198. MR: Okay.

199. P2: Been with her, we, th-, I'm thirty now, we were fourteen, when we started dating so what's that thirteen years ago?
200. MR: That's a long time.
201. P2: Fourteen years ago, hhh, so ja, she's helped huh, she's also always been there, you know, if I've needed something and so my wife's also been a big role model.  
(25:52)
202. MR: Okay, umm so a similar kind of leading from that um what have women in your life said about your choice of career?
203. P2: Jis no, I've seen more boobie in my [laughs as speaking] dance career than ah, ja no it was mad, quick changes back stage the chicks run, strip onto the next one, again it was never ah, jis, I always liked looking at the girls I won't lie to you
204. MR: [Laughs]
205. P2: but ah it was never a big thing for me because we were always performing, you know
206. MR: Okay.
207. P2: there was always that ah, but, ja I think I've used a line try 'oh I'm gay' and the chicks have said to me 'oh we'll convert you', [both laugh], 'TRY' [both laugh] and it worked, so ah, ja but no, ah jis ah, seen lots of boobs in my life.
208. MR: Okay.
209. P2: But never had the ja, I, I dunno I'm happy.[Laughs]
210. MR: [Laughs] and how does your wife feel about that?
211. P2: Well, she was there most of the time.
212. MR: Okay.
213. P2: So it, a lot of the times it was her doing the quick changes and the
214. MR: Okay.
215. P2: You know, back stage and ja.
216. MR: And your mom is she more supportive now that you've come through all this time?
217. P2: Ag you know there was a lota disa-, ah I think a lot of people were upset when I gave up. But I was at that stage at my life where you know what, I, I can't make a career of this I can't live, I can't support myself, you know, how do you live on, on a salary that you're receiving maybe, maybe every six months a year? There's just no, ah there-, ah fuck there's just no way to make a *career* out of it, ah, ah people at the [theatre 4], I don't know how they do it, I don't know how those guys stay open, you

know, and run households and have children and, ah ja, different, I, I made the choice to, to go and get an actual job and, and unfortunately leave the arts because there's no, there's no money in it, there's no-, I didn't foresee a career for me anymore ah in Johannesburg um as a dancer, I, I had to leave ah I would have to go abroad um or, or Cape Town, if Cape Town would have accepted me. And I don't, I don't know at the time if they would've coz they had a lot of influx of people down there. So ah, difficult.

218. MR: So would you say for your parents there was this move from um like this kind of this tension of like 'oh does he really wanna be a dancer' to kind of a pride and now-

219. P2: Ja, and then to ah let down's such an ugly word hey

220. MR: Okay.

221. P2: But they were also of the realisation that, you know, they, they during that time I had to leave my flat and, and go back home to mom and dad and then commute one a week to Pretoria and back because I couldn't afford to, to pay rent and, and stuff, and ah ja just I sat them down one night and said look guys, you know ah unfortunately I appreciate everything but ah, I, I'm at this crossroad now if I either carry on and I'm injured so I, I've got a long road ahead of me or you know I, I just pack up and call it a day here, and I dunno maybe I should've tried, bit jisis ah ag I was at, I was at that stage of my life, you know, I wanted to settle down, I wanted to get with my wife now and buy our first little house and I just didn't see it happening at, in the arts.

222. MR: Okay.

223. P2: You know, so ja, go get a real man's job, so they, I think my folks went from a bit of 'ag whatever, you know, he's three or four years old talking a bit of nonsense here that he wants to go dance' to ah jisis you know before you know it I'm sixteen leaving the house to, to go and do what I wanted to do, so there was certain pride I'm sure from their side, you know, when I was on stage and all the rest of it, but ah ja also ag I think they were a bit upset, you know, that I couldn't, coz something I'd also wanted to do.

224. MR: Hmm.

225. P2: But there's no money, and I wasn't, I didn't wanna leave Johannesburg, I wasn't prepared now to pick up my life my, [name 10] and I were, we were back together and things were going well, you know, so I didn't wanna leave, I didn't wanna leave Jo'burg. And unfortunately I, I couldn't carry on dancing, got a job, [both laugh], got a job.

(29:50)

226. MR: Okay umm, so I suppose this might help explain ah what, what career do you think you would have chosen if you couldn't dance?
227. P2: [Laughs] Ah well I certainly don't see-, wouldn't have seen myself where I'm sitting now, ah but ah jis ah I, I really dunno, also, you know, dancing at school my education wasn't where it's supposed to be, you know, and a lot of people carry on and go and study at v-,universities and stuff, I didn't I, I left school at sixteen, I made a career decision, ah I don't regret it, um, I, I'm yet to go into a job or, or speak to somebody that they're like 'oh pardon you don't have a Matric', 'oo Fuckin,' 'oh what's wrong with you?' Ah, so I've never had that problem, um, but what would I be doing? Jis as like a mythical, or what I'm actually doing?
228. MR: Um, both.
229. P2: Ok well
230. MR: What, what would you do and what are you doing?
231. P2: Okay well, what I'm doing now is I'm in sales, I've got a niche in the market I supply equipment to the hospitality industry.
232. MR: Okay.
233. P2: Um, and we've got a niche in the market so we're very fortunate with the boom of the world cup and all the hotels, you know, we're preferred suppliers with [company name 1], um, I'm very passionate I've been with [company name 2] for 8 years, ah they've been very good to me ah, ah you know but ah I bring in the lion's share of the work each year, so one hand washes the other there, you know they're good to me and, and it turn I, I do my job well, but ah, shit I did a couple of odd sod jobs, which never, [laughs] never-, but all in sales I think coz of my personality.
234. MR: Okay.
235. P2: You know I, I just kind of slipped into a sales type of environment.
236. MR: When you say your personality could you say-?
237. P2: Jis, I'm a bubbly person hey [laughs].
238. MR: Okay.
239. P2: I'm loud and obnoxious and I always want to be centre of attention and I'M THE LEO GOD DAMN IT AND I WILL BE HEARD! [Bashes desk][laughs]
240. MR: Okay.

241. P2: So ah, ja no, and, and I just think it landed me in the position I am now with my company, [tape recorder switches over], you know, I'm thirty now I've been there for 8 years so what's that? 22 I joined them, ja, it was just before the end of my career
242. MR: Okay.
243. P2: I was 21, I was 16 when I was badly injured at school, hhh, and that was I think also a bit of a sign in life, you know.
244. MR: Okay, so what would you have done if you couldn't have danced?
245. P2: Jis, if I couldn't have danced? I dunno, I really dunno. I, I, I'd never thought about it until. You know and the opportunities of where I am now actually fell on my lap, so I was very
246. MR: Okay.
247. P2: Ah, I've been very fortunate like that, you know, ah I've kind of, work's come to an end and the privatisation and I, I was working for [company name 3] and that was pure bastard's law, ah I was sitting doing my passport, I've got a British passport. And I was sitting doing my passport and the woman, I heard the woman behind me say to me, ah, ah say to her partner 'oh I wonder if they take cheques here?' and I know they don't and, and I thought ag, as opposed to her sitting in the queue, I said to the woman 'look ah they don't accept cheques, ah you need cash', and her and I got chatting and I loaned her the money and she wrote me a ca-, ah cash cheque
248. MR: Okay.
249. P2: Which I thought was a bit of a bogus thing anyway, and the more we spoke ah, it turned out that like her niece or something, she was also at the theatre, ah she'd finished her Matric, we were in school together, I forget her name, And ah we were. She was doing her graduate course at the theatre, um you did a year's graduate and then if they wanted you they, they asked you otherwise you, you know moved on, and um it was her mom's niece or fuck I don't know how they were related, and she said to me 'oh if you need a job here's my business card.'
250. MR: Okay.
251. P2: And I said to her I need a job, ah the theatres closed and at the, we're done, I'm getting my passport I'm, and it was in Jo'burg so I moved back to with mom and dad, I worked there for a while but it was casual work, you know, packing boxes and it was the time that Hansie went through all his kak.
252. MR: Hmmhmm.

253. P2: So we landed up burning all the [beer name] banners and threw away all these caps and cut up all the t-shirts and
254. MR: Okay.
255. P2: and casual work, and then after that my next job also funnily enough landed on my lap, I was somewhere and had spoken to somebody and the next thing ‘ah here’s my card if you need work’, and then the theatre phoned, ‘no we’re privatised come back’, went back and bit of money and worked and then the oke left with all the money and ah
256. MR: Ah.
257. P2: And it was right before performance, so we sucked it up and we did our performances for no money. And the orchestra played for us thank god as well, um, ja money, money was a big issue hey.
258. MR: Okay.
259. P2: But not for me and then they closed and then it was got another job, and you know my brother helped me with a job, he was doing very well with a company called [company name 4] and I got in with ah [company name 5] and I ran a van for a while. And again in sales, it’s funny packer or sales [both laugh], ‘ah I’d like to be a packer,’ no nobody really asks that or wishes that do they?
260. MR: Okay.
261. P2: No that was it and ah, hhh ja, and then [company name 2], [coughs] I was working for the [company name 6], I was in sales for them, ah actually I had it very nice there, um, lot of ah the, [company name 6] was Durban at the time and Cape Town and you know, they were kind of booming, now they’re a bit dodgy so I’m glad I got out when I, when I did, but ah that was through a recruitment agent and, and I walked in and the guy met me and said I think I’ve got a position and I went and met the people and I got the job, um, I, I ah, we had problems with, with ah people and their fingers in the pie there, you know
262. MR: Okay.
263. P2: So, so, but I was there for a while and that got me on my feet and then I joined ah, [company name 2] design, and ah I believe I’ve grown ever since, you know, ah a lot of the jokes are ah like maths ah at work hey I’ve always got have a calculator, I suck at maths, god I’m terrible, and ah so I’ve always, you know, used a calculator, [laughs] my boss always rags me he just says ‘shut-up [P2] you went to ballet school,

- you know nothing', [both laugh] ja so ah there's a running joke in the office about me going to, but all light-hearted, you know
264. MR: Hmm.
265. P2: There's no, I don't think there's, I don't think anybody's really ever had bad digs at me about dancing or wanting to be a dancer or , you know and if they have, jis comments like [name 4], ah it, it's that one comment that just blow the rest of the kak, it's water off a duck's back, you know.
266. MR: Okay.
267. P2: Um, ja and like I say I went to art school, I think I would have battled if I'd gone to a normal school, to try now and fit in to play soccer or rugby or baseball or softball or whatever the okes were playing, um, but my career was chosen for me I, I went to art school and at the end of standard eight ah I performed with [name 11] and ah what did we perform, it wasn't Nutcracker man, jis I performed something with her and anyway it was the best, it was the best show I think I'd ever put on, and ah she, ah and [name 12] from the [theatre 2] was actually in the audience and afterwards she came up and said to me 'please come and, come and work for us', superb! Went home, I said to mom and dad 'right, I, I'm leaving school, I'm going to work', my mom and dad were over the moon about it, you know and then [theatre 1] closed and then it was state theatre and so it was, we, jis we had a lot of peaks and valleys with, with the job, you know
268. MR: Okay.
269. P2: a lot of peaks and valleys, but all-in-all exciting, ah [P1] still dances, I haven't seen him for a while, I miss that oke, but you know it's a different life
270. MR: Ja, he's not-.
271. P2: He's on boats for six months and, he's works at [theatre 3] and then he's got this on and then he's teaching his juniors for the eisteddfods and so ah big up to the oke you know I take my hat off, it's, it's something I, I, I, he can pack up for six months and go, you know I, I can't.
272. MR: Okay.
273. P2: I didn't want to, you know, I didn't want t, it's such a move and then you have to come back and worry about finding another job and oh fuck I, I got to that crossroad and made a decision and I'm happy
274. MR: Hmm.
275. P2: I'm unfit and broken but I'm not, I'm not unhappy. [Both laugh]

276. MR: Okay.
277. P2: When I say unfit I, I couldn't go and do a full class, you know as, but ah I still gym and my wife and I eat right and it, it's been drilled into me it's funny that regime living ah it, it's drilled you know even know chicken breasts and brown rice and, just eat properly.
278. MR: Hmm.
279. P2: You know, coz I, I've been so used to doing it that ah take-aways and shirt are nice but it, it's not, you know, I generally cook healthy meals, I'm the cooker in the family my wife lets me get on with it, and I generally roast chickens and you know there's no deep fried stuff.
280. MR: Okay.
281. P2: And you know I think it, that's just a way of life now you know for me know you coz ah being at the theatre jisis you use a lot of energy, you've gotta eat right you know, and ah look I don't eat six meals a day anymore, probably only two.
282. MR: Okay.
283. P2: Which is not right I don't, but we carry on, you know.
284. MR: So when you say regime you mean like in terms of lifestyle-
285. P2: Yes.
286. MR: That you've carried on?  
(39:01)
287. P2: Ja, the, we used to start class at ten in the morning, and I battle now to get to work, coz I'm so used to that lie in. I could lie in bed until nine, get up, climb on my bicycle, coz ah wait, driving my car was a waste
288. MR: Okay.
289. P2: Cycle down to the theatre, coohoo [sound to show how quick it was], took me ten minutes, climbed, got dressed went and did my class if I was finished, climbed back on my bicycle, cycled back to my flat and then whatever, climb in the car go to Hatfield or, or did whatever. And that sleeping in late, you know, has become a bit tiresome, but I-
290. MR: Okay.
291. P2: Because [Laughs] jisis there's mornings you're up at seven now. Ah now I also find I raise, I, I'm up a lot earlier, I have a four and a month old daughter so that's probably why.
292. MR: Hmm.

293. P2: But ah [coughs], I just find that I don't need as much sleep as I, as I used to, I can go to bed at ten and um I can get up at six so I've broken that cycle of going to bed at ten and then getting up at like half past eight or nine, you know, now, ag ja, Saturdays, fuck they kill me.
294. MR: [Laughs]
295. P2: The one day you can sleep in hey, six o'clock in the morning, now I think I'm up, I'm like 'come on!' [raises hands up] But then it's go make breakfast and feed dogs and
296. MR: Okay.
297. P2: all those things to do, you know.
298. MR: So did you, did you used to party a lot when you were dancing?
299. P2: Jisis, no, all the time, every fuckin' night hey we partied, the, no it was bad, guys used to come to my house, I lived, at one stage I lived with an Auzzie, his name was [name 13], and ah one of the guys that was in, we had two different dancing fields at the [theatre 2], we had the contemporary side and we had the ballet side.
300. MR: Hmmhmm.
301. P2: Obviously the ballet side was a lot bigger. I think the contemporary; I think there were only like thirteen or fifteen people, so it wasn't a very big they were the elites, ah difficult to get in there, you know.
302. MR: Okay.
303. P2: And ah, oh where was I going?
304. MR: The lifestyle, the partying.
305. P2: Oh ah, and, and when my, when this flatmate [name 13] from Oz moved in, we got three new Auzzies that moved now to come and work with us.
306. MR: Okay.
307. P2: And it was devastating because it was six or seven months before, look they were all happy coz they were all gonna go back and join other companies back in Australia, you know., they all had that opportunity, and ah [name 13], shit [name 13, [name 13] could drink, holy fuck, ah I must find the cases, the, the beers, the cases of beers in that oke's room and he just never threw them away.
308. MR: Okay.
309. P2: Eventually it stank, it got that like mouldy [rubs fingers together], cases after cases, they were piled in his bedroom, and ah ja, he was a big drinker, so we used sort of every night smoke a fat joint and drink loads and loads of beer and play Playstation

310. MR: Hmm.
311. P2: God damn it until [laughs] whatever time, and then the, get up at half past eight or nine, be there at ten till half past ten if you had no rehearsals you off for the rest of the day so you go do whatever, go back to the flat, smoke, drink
312. MR: Okay.
313. P2: Ja it was mad, I used to smoke in those days, I don't smoke anymore, that's another thing I stopped.
314. MR: So you used to do healthy eating and yet-
315. P2: But then [laughs], well ja, living with [name 13] was an exception to the rule.
316. MR: Okay.
317. P2: That was only six months, and after that it, it all went belly up, you know.
318. MR: Okay.
319. P2: Coz the theatre closed and everybody moved and I couldn't keep the flat coz I had two tenants ah and myself, and ah all dancers live in like a little three bedroom, two bathroom commune, you know, with one kitchen type of thing.
320. MR: Okay.
321. P2: And ah convert the lounge into a bedroom, and bedroom, and bedroom, you know, so, but that was the only way we could afford it, but I paid my own way
322. MR: Okay.
323. P2: You know, I was earning a salary, but I paid my own way, I didn't rely on my mom and dad, I fuckin' should have
324. MR: [Laughs]
325. P2: I should have relied on them a bit more, but I didn't, I, I decided
326. MR: Okay.
327. P2: But I'm funny like that, I'm, I'm quite regimented, you know, my, I've got my day book and my computer's all in order, and ja, bit of, bit of ah what's it called, OSD, or not OSD, bit obsessive compulsive.
328. MR: Okay.
329. P2: Ja, but ah I think that's from being disciplined, you know, ah right this is what we wanna do, this is how we gonna achieve the goals, this is what we gonna do, okay we can't do this anymore, next set of goals, you know, we move on.
330. MR: Okay.
331. P2: Pick up and move on.

(43:12)

332. MR: Okay, and what advice would you give a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet?
333. P2: Jis, keep it up, go mad, keep it up, um, work hard, it, it's not easy, ah, I unfortunately I'm thirty now I, I can't continue, and um ja, best of luck.
334. MR: Okay.
335. P2: Don't listen to what the guys have to say, they're all jealous [both laugh], they're all jealous because you're looking at pretty women all day long.
336. MR: Okay.
337. P2: Unless you're gay, in which case you should be on the rugby field.
338. [Both laugh]
339. MR: Okay.
340. P2: Ja, no best of luck really, ah, it's a lot of hard work, um, jisis, you're gonna suffer a lot of injuries, ah [name 3] at [theatre 4] he's had hip replacement but he still dances.
341. MR: Okay.
342. P2: He's fuckin' mad.
343. MR: [Laughs]
344. P2: He's fuckin' mad! Hip replacement and that but he carries on, An- ah, ah ja that's where the passion I think for me died, hey, the, the injuries absolutely killed me, I was sixteen and I was paralysed.
345. MR: Hmm.
346. P2: Ah for three months, I had ah, displacement in three different segments of my spine.
347. MR: Shjo.
348. P2: And down my lower it had moved and pinched the nerve, and I was doing a bursary to go to London, and ah halfway through the [coughs] we'd done the bar, we'd done the warm-up at bar and we were on centre and we were doing a jumping exercise and I landed, jisis and I hunched over like this [hunched forward and brought his fist to his chest], and I went and I, I couldn't stand up, I couldn't move I was locked and I was in so much pain, and when I sat in the car that's when the, tis when the
349. MR: Hmm.
350. P2: Disc moved like that, coz it had slipped and when I sat and it pinched the nerve and as I sat down my, I, I, just I got this, the weirdest feeling ever down my left leg,

and that was it, it was numb, and we got to the house and my dad said get out the car and I said to him 'I can't', 'Ah stop fuckin' playin' around! Get out the car,' and I said to him 'dad I can't', anyway got out and it was hospital and it was a moerse thing. The first surgeon I saw wanted to operate, ah at sixteen, my dad told him, in his British language, exactly what he

351. MR: Hhh.

352. P2: what he can do to his, you know, with his scalpel.

353. MR: Okay.

354. P2: And ah I went to [hospital name 1] in [place name 2] and I saw a gentleman [name 14] who's an- specialist, spinal specialist, um, and he said to me 'I've got a physio., I'm gonna give you to my physio. therapist' and he said for a week and he said 'if there's no improvement after that week, he said look ah I'm out of options I, I'm going in' [tapping desk], and ah I was paralysed hey, I, I was like that, jisis a month and a bit, anyway the week, that first week she obviously reported well downstairs and, and ah I, I didn't land up having the surgery, but I still go and see [name 15] who's still at the [hospital name 1], doing her

355. MR: Okay

356. P2: And ah magic, she knows, ah since I was sixteen, you know, she's known me two years less than my wife [laughs], so she's also my physio., phone her '[name 15] help', and she only sees in-patients

357. MR: Okay.

358. P2: at the hospital, you know, she deals with some real serious cases, um, but also she, she also deals with athletes, and ah one her girls who's a Quadriplegic

359. MR: Okay.

360. P2: Ah ag, no quad is four, hey?

361. MR: Hmm.

362. P2: So paraplegic then, it's from her waist down, but she is a horse rider. And she's actually racing now in the Paralympics

363. MR: Really?

364. P2: She qualified last month, so big up to her, way to go [laughs], she's braver than I am I won't sit on a fuckin' horse.

365. MR: Okay.

366. P2: And ah she's riding in the Paralympics um so she, she's dealt with professionals, she's got a lot of people that still run Comrades Marathons that have had major, you know
367. MR: Hmm.
368. P2: spinal surgery and stuff, so I, I also owe a lot to her, she got me back on the, on the track without thankfully ever having surgery.
369. MR: Okay.
370. P2: Ja, that was a scary time hey, being paralysed, but with her in the week, she got the progress that she wanted, um she managed to release the nerve so the blood flow, again the weirdest sensation ever, it's just like somebody stops the blood, and it's h-, like a hot and cold and it just runs down your le-, and it's done.
371. MR: Hmm.
372. P2: Ah and you can't move it, you can't, you can't jiggle, you can't move, ja it was just locked, ja scary shit, and ah I thought then that my career
373. MR: Ja.
374. P2: was over. And it all goes back to dancing, my, you know, I was suffering from my knees but my knees were related to my spine, so my, the whole time my spine's been giving me all these warnings and I ignored them
375. MR: Hmm.
376. P2: And we were taking care of ankles, I've had moerse ankle surgery, um, jisis the doc said to me it would be three or four stitches, it was fifteen staples later down the side, ah I'd ripped the tendon off the bone [coughs], that hurt, -nd ah snapped my Achilles tendon, that hurt [laughs], riddled with injuries, hips
377. MR: Okay.
378. P2: Knees, ankles, shoulders, but it's all from my back, and it's all from that positioning, you know, as you're growing, which is not what the body's built to do
379. MR: Hmm.
380. P2: And ah ja I think in turn it ah, it's injured me a bit.
381. MR: Okay, is there anything else you'd like to add?
382. P2: No, hhh I'm good.
383. MR: [Laughs]
384. P2: I think you've got everything,
385. MR: Okay.
386. P2: I think you've got everything. (End time: 48:34)

## **Appendix H: Interview 2 with P2**

Since the first interview with P1 was verbal, and this second interview was written, the follow-up questions presented here are in bold.

Participant responses are italicised.

- 1. In your interview you mentioned that Mikhail Baryshnikov had an impact on you as a dancer, could you explain to me why and in what way?**

*He was the first male dancer to escape his country so he could follow his dreams, he was also the first manly looking dancer of his time. He was the greatest dancer in my eyes, his lines were superb and he could pirouette like a machine.*

- 2. How did your co- workers, in the ballet industry, (both male and female) view your being a male ballet dancer, how did they respond to your working with them?**

*I think my work colleagues viewed me as a co-worker in the company and we were all there to do a job.*

## **Appendix I: Interview with P3**

Initial questions (asked in the first interview) are in bold, while follow-up questions (asked in the second interview) are in plain text.

Participant responses are italicised.

### **When did you decide to become a dancer and what influenced your decision?**

- 1. I come from an artistic family. My mom, sister and older brother danced and my oldest brother did figure skating. My grandfather even participated in a ballet production once, so I guess you could say that it was the norm :-)* Only myself and my younger brother dance now.

What do you mean by “it was the norm?” and is this why you became a dancer?

Why is it that only you and your younger brother dance now?

- 2. "It was the norm" was my choice of phrase as I regarded it as normal to dance because I came from such an artistic and artistic friendly family. It was only until much later (roughly at the age of 7 or 8) when I realized that not many people danced, particularly the boys. Only my brother and I dance as my other siblings decided to pursue a more financially beneficial life. I think that they out grew the artistic life as it was never a real passion for them in the 1st place.*

### **Can you tell me about a time in your dancing career when you were praised or commended for being a man?**

- 3. All the time really, as it is incredibly rare to find a man interested in dancing in this country, particularly Ballet.*

Who in particular praises you and why?

- 4. I am complimented by friends and even total strangers who find out that I dance. A lot of them realize how demanding ballet is and that the artists life is never an easy road, but a few I think (not to blow my own horn) ask me how I got the body that I have and are impressed that it is because I dance all day. Whether their intentions are pure or not I cannot say... :-)*

**Can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?**

5. *I think it was a disadvantage in my childhood. Growing up, I had to hide the fact that I did ballet as I was constantly ridiculed, made fun of and treated like an outcast as I was doing a "girls thing" which earned various names such as "Tight-pants moffie", "faggot" to name a few.*

Who made fun of you and why do you think they treated you this way?

6. *I would say 80% of my primary school mates who knew I danced mocked me. I do believe it is normal, even in the 21st century, to demonize something you are not familiar with and don't have the mental capacity to understand something that is foreign to you.*

**What are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?**

7. *A male dancer has to be strong, both in mind and body. A man needs to be able to partner a woman, lift and support her. A man needs to be able to jump incredibly high in the air while performing various sequences in the air with his feet and legs. A man needs to be, in general, athletically fit and have the mental capacity to deal with any encounters he has on the stage and in the rehearsal room.*

What is your idea of "athletically fit", can you describe it to me?

What sort of encounters are you referring to and what sort of mental responses should you have to them?

8. *To be athletically fit is to be able to get through physically demanding events that the common person would not be able to do. And more importantly, to do it well. There are various types of sports and thus various degrees of strength, but as long as you can perform a sport of your choice without dropping dead in the first few minutes and performing the sport better than someone who just came off the street, I believe you are athletically fit. I do believe however, that this applies to all sports that involve*

*high cardio training such as the running, jumping and swimming sports. But I am sure that someone who plays table tennis has a good athletic fitness too, so ya, pretty much every sport. The encounters that I refer to are every day problems that a dancer can face on stage. If your partner is sick, how much more can you push yourself without destroying your partner or making them look bad. If you acquire [sic] an injury during a solo on stage and you can't get off stage to see to it. Do you push through and risk making it worse? And if you can't just push your way through the dance, what do you need to compromise or cut out of the dance to get yourself through while plastering a stage smile on your face and muster together whatever technique you have left? Dancing on stage is a gamble and there are so many scenarios that can go wrong. You have to have the discipline, the passion and a strong mind with quick decision-making skills.*

**What are the stereotypes about male dancers that you have heard or come across, and what would your responses to these stereotypes be?**

9. *The most obvious is that, apparently, all men who do ballet are gay. We are also weak, "twiddle on our toes" and only do Ballet because we are intellectually challenged and could not find a decent job. As it stands, in our company, in a group of 13 male dancers, there are only 2 who are gay (myself included) Obviously, there were other gay dancers before, but I would say a pretty even ratio. We dance 8 hours a day, it is physically challenging and we do more strenuous jumping than the women so we are definitely stronger than most, and the added benefit of partnering women makes us stronger than most in terms of upper body strength. As dancers, we have to remember complex steps and sequences of those steps for ballets that be 2-3 hours in length so we are probably brighter than most in terms of intellect.*

Why do you think they hold these stereotypes?

10. *Most South African men (and women) believe in a strong, sports fanatic nation. If you don't play sport, there is something wrong with you as a man. I don't know where it came from as Europeans don't have this notion (a generalization I know, but look at the arts overseas how they thrive and encourage it). This is what was made apparent to me from a young age and anyone can guess when they look around that this is true.*

**How would you describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet?**

*11. Most people who meet me do not realize that I am gay. I am, in a sense, masculine in every way but I am sensitive and at times, a softie when it comes to animals and some matters of the heart. I have never felt (in my adult life) the need to assert my masculinity or convince people of my masculinity which I think is important as a man. The one who feels the need to defend themselves are often the ones who feel they have something to hide. Closet homosexuals, if you wish to label it.*

Can you give me some examples of the ways that you are masculine?

*12. I find I cannot explain this. I guess you would have to know me to find the answer you are looking for. I am definitely not feminine though if that helps :-). Most people who meet me always comment when they find out that I am gay that I do not appear to be.*

**In your experience, what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the Arts, especially ballet? Further, can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?**

*13. As explained in point number 5. I encountered it with regards to myself personally up until the age of about 15. I however, still encounter it as I see it in our own company. No mockery is made of being gay, but if you act "Like a fairy", there is a certain amount of ridicule towards that person. I must admit, even by me. It makes me angry to see a fellow dancer feeding the stereotype that I despise and in my opinion, gay guys are men who like other men, so act like a man or get a sex change.*

What do you mean by "it"?

Can you explain what the term "act like a fairy" means, in your understanding?

Why do you despise this stereotype?

What do you mean by "act like a man"?

14. *By "it" I mean the mockery and stereotypes. To act like a fairy would be to act in a stereotypical way that reflects gay men in a overly feminine way. What is now a days referred to as a "Queen". I despise the stereotype because I believe that if you were born a male, you should not try to be something you are not, ie, a female. And not just a female, but the stereotypical "Sandton coo girl" behaviour. By this I also mean to act like a man.*

**Who are the people who have had an impact on you as a dancer?**

15. *Numerous to mention but perhaps the most influential was my mom and of course my 3 ballet teachers that I grew up with and my 2 Spanish Flamenco teachers. My mom was forced to end her career and so lived her dreams through me (though she would never admit it). She pushed me in ways that I am grateful for and at the same time, in ways that still today, I will judge her for.*

How did your teachers impact on you?

Can you explain the ways that your mother pushed you?

16. *My teachers also became close friends who I would talk to about things and seek their advice as well as instilling their love of dance in me. My mother pushed me physically such as forcing me to rehearse on weekends with ankle weights on. Again and again, making me dance and jump around as males do in their dancing as men do a lot more allegro/jumps than women do. But also emotionally and mentally, trying to make me out do not only myself but everyone around me.*

**What have other men in your life said about you choosing to be a ballet dancer?**

17. *Funny enough, despite my hardships as a child, there were a few (boys in my school) who respected the fact that I danced. I only nowadays associate myself with classy, open-minded people (straight, Bi and Gay) who applaud my talents and my choice of career and my Fiancé of course loves the fact that I dance so I have not received much, if any, adverse feelings towards my art form or me.*

What exactly have the people you associate with and your fiancé said about your career, can you remember any particular conversations with them?

18. *I don't remember exact conversations, but they have always been positive reactions to my choice of dancing.*

**What have women in your life said about your choice?**

19. *Women have always loved the fact that I dance and have always supported me. I have never received nonsense from women :-)*

Can you mention a few women in particular and what they have said to you?

20. *As I said above, I don't remember exact conversations. These women are too numerous to mention. Friends, acquaintances, total strangers.*

**What career do you think you would have chosen if you couldn't dance?**

21. *Something in the medical field. I am bonkers for Human anatomy, Physiology and Pathology. I have received my certificates in Swedish, Holistic and Sports massage therapy in 2008 so I do that on the side when I have time for private clients and I treat the ballet dancers. I plan on retiring from dancing in the next year or 2 so that I can study to be a Chiropractor.*

Can you explain why you are bonkers for human anatomy, what do you like about it?

22. *I just love the way the human body works and is structured. It makes sense to me if you would like to put it another way.*

**What advice would you give to a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet?**

23. *To really understand what you are going to be putting yourself through, physically, mentally and emotionally. It will not be an easy ride but if you have the strength of character, it will be the most rewarding thing you can ever do. I myself am suffering from bad arthritis and bone spurs growing in the joints of my feet and I'm only 26, not*

*to mention knee surgery when I was 22. Ballet dancers suffer for their art. However, to be couped up in a 9-5 job in a stuffy office is for the birds. Stepping on to that stage and hearing the roaring applause and you know that that applause is for you, the unadulterated joy that you have brought to those people, it is one of the greatest feelings that a person has the honour of ever feeling.*

Can you give some examples of what they would go through, physically, mentally and emotionally?

What do you mean by “strength of character” and why would they need this?

In what ways do ballet dancers suffer?

What do you mean by “it’s for the birds”?

*24. Ballet is an athletic sport, so they will need to go through pretty much the same things an athlete would but with (possible) added rejection and mockery from people who don't know any better. Ballet dancers suffer injuries but will also have the added stress of money problems compared to most as well as the fact that dancers have a shelf life and cannot dance forever. The average age for a dancer to retire is about 35. This can leave a void in some dancers' lives as not all were born to teach and so have to make a complete break away from the dancing world they know and love. For the birds, I meant that it is something that is not so great and you can definitely do without.*

## **Appendix J: Interview with P4**

Initial questions (asked in the first interview) are in bold, while follow-up questions (asked in the second interview) are in plain text.

Participant responses are italicised.

### **When did you decide to become a dancer and what influenced your decision?**

- 1. In high school, I studied drama and many of my friends were in the dance department. I enjoyed listening to them speak about their dance classes and always felt like being a part of them. Hearing the music during rehearsals was also a huge influence because I always imagined what I would do if I had the chance to be in such a space. My biggest influence was doing Arts and Culture. Each term we would do a different art form (Music, Art, Dance or Drama) and when we did Dance, I was sold!*

What did your friends talk about that drew you to want to join them?

- 2. They often expressed how difficult their classes were on certain days or as a result of certain teachers. They also threw about a lot of dance jargon that made no sense to at the time and I was just so eager to want more.*

What exactly did you imagine yourself doing?

- 3. I imagined myself creating movement pieces to the music I would hear. I imagined being in one of the dance studios and just jumping, turning, kicking and having a good time whilst doing it. At times I would pretend to have an audience while I imagined all these things.*

What did you do exactly that sold you on dance, can you remember a particular lesson?

- 4. For our Arts and Culture classes we used to spend a term on one of the four arts disciplines: Art, Dance, Drama or Music. When we did dance, all the lessons we were taught by the late [name 1] were special to me. A lesson that has always stayed*

*with me was when he choreographed a piece on us using the song "Stimela" by Hugh Masekela. That day, Mr [name 1] had taught us how to do turns from the corner. To me it was not just merely turning - it was acknowledging that I could a REAL, TECHNICAL dance move. It was simple yet it was special.*

**Can you tell me about a time in your dancing career when you were praised or commended for being a man?**

- 5. Our dance company has a show entitled "Somebody To Love" and one of the pieces in the show is 'Bohemian Rhapsody' which is mainly a duet for two men. When my colleague and I first performed it, a lot of people praised us not only for the interpretation but the cohesive thread we created with movement, music and emotion.*

What about being a man performing this dance earned you praise, can you remember what a few people said to you?

- 6. The idea behind the piece is for it to show off the softer side to men with portraying them as soft. The duet hints at a potential relation between the two men but it is in no way meant to suggest an obvious "male" and "female" role as we observe in most relationships.*

*The choreographer was happy with our work and she said something along the lines of "it was beautifully executed with a great sense of strength".*

*Our rehearsal mistress was equally impressed and let us know that we did an "amazing job". She dislikes it when male dancers appear whimsical and fairy-like on stage, unless its intended to look so. She appreciated the masculine manner in which we performed the duet.*

**Can you tell me about a time when being a man was a disadvantage to you in your chosen profession?**

- 7. A few years ago I was part of a team that performed for all the "[name]" cricket matches in that year. All the male dancers in the team only did a few shows because*

*the audiences, sport-loving men, did not want to see other men dance. Our female colleagues wore short skirts and sports bra's which was gladly received by the audience.*

Why do you think this particular audience would not want to see other men dance?

8. *Well, in most cases, sport is watched by men. Lots of men. I think they didn't want to see other men dance because it became an unwelcome distraction. As we witness in most situations, if a man is watching sport in the comfort of his own home, his female companion is often uninvolved in the whole thing. What more when he is at the actual stadium? Having females in skimpy clothing for part of the good distraction so I guess that's why they didn't want to see other men dancing. Its not as appealing.*

How did the audience react to your performance?

9. *Some started shouting at us, demanding that we leave the podiums we were dancing on. One lady complained to one of the managers and demanded that she get another seat where her view wouldn't be blocked. Some on the other hand were really supportive and would engage with us during our breaks. Crowd favourites like the "Mexican Wave" won us their support.*

**What are the physical requirements for a male ballet dancer and what should a dancer look like?**

10. *Ballet is very demanding on the body and one always needs to be in good shape. Working out at a gym, eating healthy and attending as many classes as possible is the best way to stay in shape. Male dancers need to have a lot of upper body strength in order to execute the intricate lifts when dancing with (usually) female dancers. When it comes to looks, height plays a huge role because it will determine what kind of role you get in a ballet. So in essence, taller men will play the prince and shorter men will play sub-characters like jesters.*

Can you explain further what you mean by "be in good shape", what is your idea of good shape?

*11. Being in good shape means that your total body mass is aligned with your height - so in essence, one should not be too heavy or too light for their own body (if that makes sense).*

*In more laymen's terms, being in shape means you look comfortable if you're dressed in an outfit that not only highlights your entire body, but enhances it too. As dancers, we often have to wear some weird and wonderful things on stage. So, one has to LOOK (and be) comfortable in their own body - especially if you're required to wear white unitards...*

**What are the stereotypes about male dancers that you have heard or come across, and what would your responses to these stereotypes be?**

*12. The most common stereotype is that male ballet dancers are homosexual. Often, this is true but not always. Most male dancers are more feminine, due to the nature of ballet and people don't understand the difference. Another stereotype is that male dancers are not good at sport. Often, dancers are better because of their understanding of their bodies in relation to movement.*

What do you mean by the nature of ballet, can you explain what you mean by this to me?

*13. When ballet was established a few centuries ago, it was derived from court spectacles that were used as entertainment between courses at lavish dinner parties. As time went by, ballet as a form of performance was moulded on women so it largely became a female art form and men would merely enhance the female's beauty. So, by nature of ballet, I mean it was always seen as a female thing to do.*

**How would you describe your personal sense of masculinity to someone who isn't involved in ballet?**

14. *Masculinity is simply the manner in which one behaves (like a man). Certain personality, vocal and habitual traits make up your pool of masculinity. I would just let them know I am different to the characters I portray on stage. I may be homosexual but it does not affect my dancing.*

What kind of personality, vocal and habitual traits, can you give examples of these?

15. *I'm generally loud, expressive and my confidence is easily noticeable. Vocally, I do have a nasal quality about my voice that makes it a bit higher-pitched for a man (I sang Baritone in the choir though!). I also tend to speak "proper" English, sometimes with a British accent and often avoid making use of incorrect grammar. Other habitual traits include having both hands on your waist (a pose we jokingly refer to as "The Hungry Look" and generally being expressive with my hand gestures...*

Can you describe your own?

16. *Please read above - I combined those two answers.*

**In your experience, what beliefs do most South Africans hold about men who are involved in the Arts, especially ballet? Further, can you remember a particular time when you encountered such beliefs?**

17. *Artists in general are not given the opportunity to prove themselves. Until they do. Most people in SA believe that being an artist does not constitute as having a career. It's rather sad. A few members of my family were skeptical [sic] about my career choice until they started being able to loan money from me.*

When has an artist proved themselves, how would you know?

18. *As a performing artist, you are in the business of showcasing your talents to other people. So if you are able to be watched by an audience (and earn money for it) then I'd say you have proved yourself.*

*If people recognise your work as plausible then I'd say you have made it.*

Why do you think it's sad?

*19. I think it's sad because artists do not get fair treatment from establishments like our government. Some people assume that performance is not a real career and it saddens me because the hours that an artist spends, honing their craft and practising is not an easy task. Just because we don't sit behind a desk for 8 hours a day we get treated differently. As a dancer, I spend those 8 hours on my feet. Literally.*

In what ways were they sceptical, what were their reasons for being sceptical?

*20. Largely it was a lack of understanding. I spent 5 years in an art school and 4 in an Arts campus of my university. All this time spent on art did not make sense for them. They were sceptical [sic] because they thought I was capable of much more than just art as a career. They were skeptical [sic] because I did well academically and they just hoped that I would get into something with a larger pay-cheque.*

**Who are the people who have had an impact on you as a dancer?**

*21. All my lecturers in varsity ([list of names]) had a huge impact on me because they always encouraged me and were dancers themselves. Mikhail Baryshnikov dancing in Don Quixote with American Ballet Theatre was the reason I started dancing.*

In what ways did they encourage you, can you remember a particular time?

*22. I was told to believe in my craft and do all that I could to make it better. When I was in my second year of study I was cast in a role for a dance piece about a young man who was SO involved in his studies that he alienated all his relationships with other people. It was a 15-minute piece and I was on stage for 14-and-a-half minutes.*

*After the piece, I was congratulated for the way I sustained the character and executed the story through movement. I wasn't as well-trained as my colleagues at the time yet I had the lead role and was required to perform some intricate dance steps. My lecturers were impressed after seeing that show and started looking at me as a potential dance student because I was studying Musical Theatre.*

What about them being dancers meant that they had an impact on you?

*23. Their advice was based on years of experience. They were not there as teachers only but as artists too. They looked beyond the studio but rather onto moulding professional performers.*

What about this particular dance and dancer impacted on you?

*24. I loved his musicality, technique, artistry and comic-timing. Don Quixote is a Spanish-based ballet so a lot of it has some dramatic scenes coupled with sensual music that also gets lively and feisty. I watched that production on DVD and thought "I'd love to do that too. It looks amazing, fun to do and its entertaining"....!*

*So I would watch that DVD a lot in the library and try to mimmick some of the movements I had seen being done. It was quite something!*

**What have other men in your life said about you choosing to be a ballet dancer?**

*25. My father was not impressed by my choice of careers and I constantly had to prove myself to him. Even during high school. All he cared about was the financial benefits – or lack thereof. My brother has never seen me on stage. The idea of “men prancing around in tights” does not appeal to him.*

Can you explain further why this idea does not appeal to him?

26. *Well, as a sport-loving, township-born man, he has never really been exposed to the world of the arts. Him and I don't have the greatest of relationships either so my art was always an excuse for him not to come and see my shows.*

**What have the women in your life said about your choice?**

27. *My mother has always been supportive. My best friend too. She sees all my shows and loves the dancing world. My other mother, an ex-teacher of mine from high school, has also been encouraging towards me. Generally, the women in my life respect me and my work.*

In what ways were they supportive, can you remember particular times?

28. *When I joined the dance company I'm with now, I was fresh out of varsity and really nervous about being with acclaimed, professional dancers (some who I grew up watching). I was frightened of the unknown.*  
*There was also a time when I went to India for a 4-month contract and I was really scared about living and working in another country. The support I got was great cos I felt more at ease with dealing with all that came with such a task.*

Why do you describe your ex-teacher as your other mother?

29. *In high school I was a hostel student and she became like a mother to me because she knew of the problems I had at home. She could always tell if something was wrong and she always offered some kind of help to make things a bit easier for me. In the beginning she took notice of me because I did well in her class (she taught Afrikaans - it was my highest distinction in Matric). Some of the essays I would compose would worry her and she would ask me to talk to her. I was also heavily involved with activities just to keep myself occupied after school. She noticed such things and as a result, our relationship was strengthened and I could count on her. Always.*

**What career do you think you would have chosen if you couldn't dance?**

30. *If I couldn't dance I would be in Reflexology (because I love feet!), a teacher (because it's my ultimate goal) and I'd also do Handwriting Analysis (because I love handwritings).*

What do you love about feet?

31. *I love how individual they are. They are one of the most private parts of one's body but in dancing they are your most public. I was always fascinated with how feet do what they do in dancing. Then I discovered that apparently, all the good dancers have ugly feet. I wanted to see what "ugly feet" meant so I started conciously looking at people's feet. Sometimes I feel like its boderline obsession :- ) I forget people's names but I never forget their feet.*

What kind of teacher would you like to be, and why?

32. *Ideally, I would be a movement teacher in a drama department. That way I could introduce newer things to a movement syllabus. Things I wish I was taught back in high school.*

*I also want to teach Musical Theatre Studies and Arts History. This is because I had THE BEST lecturer for both of them in varsity - the man was a walking library. He approached all his lessons as an artist. Even when he directed some productions for the institution, he always found links with the artistic side of things. He was always teaching!!!*

What about handwriting styles do you love?

33. *I just appreciate how we are able to decipher personality traits from handwritings. The biggest reason however is that we no longer WRITE anything nowadays. We spend more time on digital devices and we hardly write letters, postcards and notes. I often find myself missing the look of my own handwriting.*

**What advice would you give to a young man who wants to follow a career in ballet?**

34. *Start as early as possible because it will only make you better. Once you get into the industry, enjoy it as much as possible because unlike other jobs, you can't really do it in your 40's and beyond – although it's not impossible. Lastly, always know YOUR reasons for dancing and never stop unless those reasons are no longer yours.*

Why would you say it is so important to always know your reasons for dancing, did you have a personal experience where this was important for you?

35. *Yes. Many people do many jobs for wrong reasons - financial benefits being the most common, followed by parent's demanding certain things from their offspring. Something like dancing takes its toll on an individual. There is hardly any time to ponder whether it was a right decision or not. It only gets tougher and you can't replace anything because you don't work with objects - you work with your body.*

*Personally, I spent my 3rd and 4th years of study as the Mentor for my department and later for the entire arts campus. The range of problems I got from the students were rather scary. Many were either studying art against their parents' wishes and some were doing it as a 2nd option. I failed to understand why these were realities but in the end, it made sense: being an artist is scary because there are not many guarantees. If your reasons are not valid for YOU then you are simply wasting your life.*

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## Appendix K: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MRES/11/006 IH**

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Male Ballet Dancers' Gender Identity Construction: Sexuality and Body.

INVESTIGATORS

Reeves Megan Moya

DEPARTMENT

Psychology

DATE CONSIDERED

15/04/11

DECISION OF COMMITTEE\*

Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 25 May 2011

CHAIRPERSON  
(Professor M. Lucas)



cc Supervisor:

Ms. L Howard-Payne  
Psychology

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**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)**

To be completed in duplicate and one copy returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

**This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2013**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES