# 85 - BODY IN RISK AT DEBORAH COLKER CONTEMPORARY DANCE

ELINE SILVA FONSECA
LIRES - LEL - PPGEF/UGF
Rio de Janeiro - Brasil
elines_fonseca@yahoo.com.br

**Introduction**

The contemporary dance, it is the name given by a dancer stylist during the XX century and had the intention to transmit feelings and ideas. Each choreographer makes his marks, his character, with his movements and they will give to them meanings. This freedom of creation and identity are particular of the contemporary dance, opposed to the classic ballet, which has determined movements.

Deborah Colker, choreographer and contemporary dancer, socializes the risk-adventure and creates the choreographies movements of her company, beginning from a esthetic risk. The choreographies Velox, Rota, Casa, all of them had as theme the boldness and the daily life.

At the Velox choreography, the 3rd movement was inspirited in the mountain climbing, where the dance is executed on a big wall in a vertical climb on the back of the scene. On it. Deborah Colker exploits with success new possibilities to deal with gravity and space, subverting, changing it and creating new relations of the body in movement with the space. Because of this, Velox, which mixes the rappel movements and the climbing, jumping and steps of dance. This was the divisor of water in contemporary dance in the country. It has marked the use of high space and established a body game involving risk and adventure in dancing, an esthetic dimension risk.

The risk concerned to pos modernity, appears in different social practices and it is inseparable of emotion and adventure The compound term risk-adventure, appeared to emphasize an important moving. of modern risk sense that gives life to the adventure as a positive dimension of risks.

This paper has the objective analyze the choreography "climbing" that is part of the show Velox by Deborah Colker in the esthetic perspective of the body in risk.

As methodology, it was analyzed the video Mix, a join of some choreographies of the shows Vulcão and Velox, presented at Teatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro in September 2000. It was used as category the disciplined body in risk in a esthetic perspective.

The interpretation of the risk was based on GIDDENS (1991), Beck (1992) e LE BRETON (2000). The esthetic in SCHILER (1995,1997).

**Body and risk in the contemporary society**

The means of communication inform us every day, it may be at home or at work or in different places where there are wars, crimes, lost bullets, and so on. We are constantly exposed to risks, that characterizes the contemporary society. To BECK (1992) as well as to GIDDENS (1991) the concept of risk is entirely related to the concept of reflexive society, that are the social-cultural and esthetic conditions of the pos industrial era since today. Risks, says BECK (1992) are systematic forms to deal with danger and insecurity introduced by the same modernization process. These new risks are fabricated ones , according to the terminology of GIDDENS (1991).

Beck is used to confirm that the central problematic on classic modernity was the distribution of wealthy, while in a reflexive society the problematic has become the distribution of risks. So, while equality was the key-word in the classic modernity, the motivating strength of a risk society is security.

So, what is a risk, then? A danger more possible than probable. It is an ambiguous term. It is not only observed by the negative side, like wars, crimes. Lost bullets, but also by the positive side. The positive risk appears in different socials practices and is inseparable from emotion and adventure.

This compound term appeared to emphasize an important change of ideas to the modern senses of risk which rediscover the adventure as a positive dimension of risks.

Desired risk, term used by the theorists of risk MACHLIS and ROSA (1990), refers to the "activities or events, that are uncertain in relation to the results or consequences, and in which uncertainty are essential components of behavior?" (p.162)

And why people look for forms of pleasure that involves risks?

Psychology has been studying the desired risk as a trace of personality, that denotes the individual search of experiences and new sensations, disposed to have physical risk.

In the text by GULLONE and MOORE (2000), desired risk has been expanded further the traditional behavior risk. The authors explain about four specific kinds of risk:thrill seeking, dangerous behavior, but social accepted, like rebellious behaviors, that include "passage ceremony" typically in adolescence, like smoking and drink; reckless behavior, probable behaviour of getting a negative result - like driving and drinking or make sex with no protection - and are usually not accepted by adults, and the anti-social behaviours, not accepted neither for adults nor adolescents

At this study we are going to emphasize the thrill seeking risk, that is, behavior with risk, but socially accepted, in this case, at dance. They are body movements that introduce beauty and synchronism , transforming the risk in a esthetic show.

**The esthetic of the risk**

The images invaded the daily life. Technologies imposed the presence of image permitting dramatic temporal constructions, as an example of time alternations of duration time at the construction of the contemporary show, either on the cinema or television. Deep alterations have been happening in the show society (Debord,1997), making her assume a bigger esthetic dimension. New primary stuff, as plastic, has also contributed with its malleable and colors variety possibilities to give more esthetic to the pos-modern life. The risk, also, integrated at the esthetic of daily life, has given possibilities that even the tragedies have become beautiful and admirable .

Deborah Colke, observing this tendency and looking further to the contemporary dance has taken to the stage with her choreography Velox at this visual risk context where perfect bodies, flexible and beautiful make movement in the air drawing movements and promoting a visual experience that makes impact to the assistants , sharing feelings and common emotions, an imaginary, a specific form and social organic links, marked by the group communion and the effervescent, according to MAFFESOLI (1997).

At the occidental contemporary society , it is given a great importance to the body. The vision has a supreme power above others senses, making by this form a super corporal image valorization, and its appearance seems to depend on our society situation. We invest a lot on the body nowadays, at the image of the perfect body, because it has considered what is immediate , near and characteristic, that is, we are subjects of our own body and it represents our subjectiveness and of our history (Guzzo, 2003)

Our body is not ours anymore, it has transformed in an image. These images put us in front of the valorization of risk in sports, in the financial marked, at work, at the show. There is a stimulation to the risk by means of frangibility of body, this body that is thought and made of different technologies. It has transformed in virtuosity demanding new relations with it.

*"The body abandons the floor and its points of support, climbs the flux in the interfaces; it serves only as lines of running away from it"* diz (DELEUZE,2002)

It becomes an expressive place and action of human being and, on it, takes forms and conceptualize its potentialities. At this esthetic valorization given to the body as a place of experience of the world, it makes visible the consumption of the experience.

The body in risk is an objective of all physiological, chemical transformations that will adapt the body and its limits It seems that to find a physical limit is something that justify the body sacrifice. Even if the body has a great suffering, it is a conscious suffering, desired, and may be associated to the pleasure subsequent of it.

LE BRETON (2000) says that this is an anthropological necessity, and the search of it means, at last, the solicitation of death to guarantee existence. But these dancers do not search for death; they challenge the limits of their possibilities in action in a stage.

It is necessary to have a prepared body and efficient to make the choreography with a higher degree of difficulties. Nowadays, at dance, the body is built, in relation to the technique and physical training, especially to the demanding of each choreography, and they are several possibilities of movements creation. On them, particularities of their culture are subscribed

It does no matter to the contemporary dance to present perfect bodies, neither unified by the form nor by the sexual or imperative esthetic. Dance expresses, in reality, the multiple corporal forms, made by muscles, bones and inequality of human being, talking about themselves with no "mask" to people that identify what they see. Elizabeth Dempster, at her play *Women Writing the Body: Let´s Watch a Little how She Dances*) (Mulheres Escrevendo um Pouco como Ela dança). The author gets to the conceit of body as well as an organism in flux. For her, the body is not a fixed entity and is not mutable , but a live structure that can be adapted and transformed continuously , disposed to many speeches. Dance, in this perspective goes towards a process of construction of a lot of bodies, […], the "subscription" of the body. Dance, however, is conditional, circumstantial and above all, transitory. It is a subscription that finishes itself at the moment that is being written. The body presents, so, as instable, light, subject of many representations (SILVA,2005).

Transforming the risk in a esthetic dancing show, it is necessary a strict discipline and an intense training to prepare the body and makes it able to execute difficult high movements that makes the image of the risk without putting apart the beauty of a body´s dancer gestures.

SCHILLER 91997). On his studies, affirms that Beauty or the judge about Beauty is never entirely pure, once men will always be predicted to contemplate esthetics, according to his spiritual state at the moment, becoming so, necessary a perfect balance to this appreciation. And these, the dancers' - bodies of Velox reached perfection.

One of the fundaments of esthetic philosophy by SHILLER (1995) is the dynamic esthetical phenomenon, a moment of creation, a transitory space of freedom, a temporal confluence and especial of the same. He suggests that there he finds an energetic field of great receptiveness: playful(in the case of Beauty); or with a big intensity, pathetic, in the case of sublime, that the individual takes the most of it.

But, what caused the change in the forms of shows, before so formal and foreseeable? According to LE BRETON (2000), there is a metaphoric game with life, enough to impulse a symbolic change that favors a relation in the world in which the taste of live is conquer again.When the social order is not doing the anthropological existence of orientation, so, it is experimented the risk of the own body., in a condition of comfort with the body. We celebrate life, through the symbolic metaphor of the body and making hard training, getting from this point, a new man, a super-man.

**The Velox Choreography**

Velox in latin means "fast"; this contemporary dance show created by Deborah Colker in 1995 is composed by several themes. He tells us about sports, about mechanic of movements and about the questioner of gravity in the choreography called "Alpinism" where there is a vertical stage.

Deborah Colker, choreographer and contemporary dancer, in her creations, socializes the risk-adventure and creates its movements starting from the esthetic of the risk. She graduated in Psychology and played volleyball which permit us identify the convergence between sport and dance like balance and concentration The thematic of sports is constantly present in her creations.

It had an absolute success "Velox", but it has also received critics: *"The specialists have said that it was a lot of physical, athletic"*, reminds Colker.*"And these same people say today that that choreography using the wall it was a great goal* ". Thus, in Velox, the floor and the walls may be only one and can confuse at all.

The cerography and the art direction is made by Gringo Cárdia, an usual collaborator of the company , and the music is composed by Berna Ceppas and Sergio Mekler.

At Velox show, on its 3rd movement, inspired on Alpinism, the dancers put their bodies in risk together with the alpinists, in a high vertical surface, perpendicular to the floor, only with the feet and hands support. There is a kind of desire of elevating the bodies, they try to frustrate the gravity phenomenon, with the sense to go up, get out from the floor, where the corporal weight is sustained, even executing inverted sustentation against the action of gravity in a vertical ballet that begins from its own strength , potentiality, flexibility and precision There are also balancing and women passages suspended by men´s hands, making a reference to rappel, without rope.

The music makes us remind the selvage nature, proper from adventure sports. The vision, a blue vertical big wall with a red circle in the middle , makes us remind the image of a sight , which is the interior, where the arrow, universal symbol of passage of normal conditions, and the imaginary liberty of distance and gravity. These will the transcend the limit of human condition, where the dancers actors climb mountain in a big wall, symbolizing the meeting of sky and earth, and at the same time, the center of the world, a mark where it joins desire and power.

The security of this esthetic of body in risk is done by means of an intense physical training, that, according to the choreographer, has taken nine exhausted months, with a lot of discipline and determination. Besides the technical body domination in a new spatial language, which supports and planes always change in contradiction to the conventional dances. It

had been necessary the beauty in the movements so that it could be transformed in dance, in a unique vertical dance.. A dance in which the “air” language could be translated in flight images of the bodies which dance, from vertical positions, from creation of a dynamic instant, and we become admirers , a light reality and clearness, the impression that there is a light of dream in ascension.

To Deborah Colker the discovery of this new language has opened new ways as examples of choreography “Rota” that is this vertical movement where the dancers dance in a huge wheel in movement.

But how ca the dancers´ bodies sustain themselves with gravity, which images are built that permit the subscription of these and those bodies of such significant movements, contrary to the strength of gravity? Accustomed to balances and unbalances in jumps and screams, they challenged complex things, which were summarized in support points that constitute multiple centers of strength . They subscribe in their bodies specific ways of subjectivities of balance and movement.

The disciplined dancer body presents the relation of control-discipline discussed by FOUCAULT (1987), that is, the control imposes the best relation between gesture and a global attitude of the body, an efficient condition and fast too.

The discipline, according Foucault makes sub missed and exercised bodies, light bodies. The body gets stronger in economic terms of utility and diminish these same strength in obedience political terms. It means the exercise that has the function to get stronger the body capacity, to modulate to take it out and keep it even more and better its potential to the use of its own domain. The efficient and artistic domain

**Final Considerations**

It was inherent at the Velox Choreography was to reach the higher creation where the dancers, in a supreme suppuration of themselves, from the transposition of obstacles, with complex difficulties, these, made their bodies expressive places and the actions in which they take form and concretize their possibilities.

The dynamic imagination presented in this choreographer study revealed a esthetic dream of flying, dreams of high and light elevation, as Bachelard (1990) said. These dancers bring on their heels the wings of Mercury (hermes), which impulses makes a fast creation in a dynamic instant.

**References**

BACHELARD, Gaston. **O ar e os sonhos.** São Paulo: Martins Fontes Editora Ltda 1990.
BECK, Ulrich. **Risk society: towards a new modernity.** London: Sage, 1992.
COSTA V. L. M. **Esportes de Aventura e Risco na Montanha.** São Paulo: Manole,2000.
DEBORD, Guy. **A sociedade do espetáculo: Comentários sobre a sociedade do espetáculo.** Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 1997.
DELEUZE, G. **Espinosa: Filosofia Prática.** São Paulo: Escuta, 2002.
GIDDENS, Anthony. **Modernidade e Identidade.** Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2002.
FARO, Antonio Jose. **Pequena Historia da Dança.** Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1986.
FOUCAULT, Michel. **Vigiar e punir**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1987.
FUX, Maria. **Dança, experiência de vida.** São Paulo: Summus, 1983.
GARAUDY, Roger. **Dançar a Vida.** Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1980.
JIMENEZ, Marc. **O que é estética.** São Leopoldo, RS: Ed. UNISINOS, 1999.
LE BRETON D. **Passions du risque.** Paris: Éditions Métailié (éd. Mise à jour), 2000.
MAFFESOLI, Michel. **A transfiguração do político.** Porto Alegre: Sulina, 1997.
PAREYSON, Luigi. **Estética: Teoria da formatividade.** Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1993.
SCHILLER, F. **A educação estética do homem numa série de cartas.** São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1995..
SCHILLER, F. **Textos sobre o belo, o sublime e o trágico.** S. l. Imprensa Nacional/ Casa da Moeda, 1997.
SILVA, Eliana Rodrigues. **Dança e pós-modernidade.** Salvador: EDUFBA, 2005.
SILVA, T.T. **Identidade e diferença: A perspectiva dos estudos culturais.** Petrópolis,RJ: Vozes, 2000.
SIQUEIRA, D. da C. O. **Corpo, comunicação e cultura: a dança contemporânea em cena.** Campinas, SP: Autores Associados, 2006.

Avenida Adolfo de Vasconcelos, 401/807
Bairro: Barra da Tijuca - RJ
CEP: 22793 380
e-mail: elines_fonseca@yahoo.com.br
Tel: (21) 2498 7799 / 9847 9449

**BODY IN RISK AT THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE BY DEBORAH COLKER**

**ABSTRACT:**

This paper has the objective identify the body in risk at Deborah Colker´s dance. We analyzed the video Mix (2000), a join of some choreographies of the show “Vulcão” an “Velox”, with a especial attention to the Alpinism choreography, in which dancers use the stage in a vertical position, which desire of amplitude, elevation, these bodies try to frustrate the gravity phenomenon, to climb until the higher point of the unique creation. The study is imperative, with a qualitative role, presenting as investigation field the contemporary dance company by Deborah Colker. We concluded that the body in risk constructed in a esthetic production and beauty on the at the contemporary dance shoes by Deborah Colker with her dancers, is a different social practice that involves risk, normally at the contemporary times, that makes use of risk-adventure, concept for a positive risk, as an important moving of the modern senses of risk, in which brings back adventure as a positive dimension of risk, also called desired risk, where pleasure comes from the concretized objective

KEY-WORDS: contemporary dance, body, risk.

**LE CORPS EM RISQUE DANS LA DANSE CONTEMPORAINE DE DEBORAH COLKER**

**RESUME:**

Cette étude a le but d'identifier le corps en risque dans la danse contemporaine de Deborah Colker. Une analyse du Vidéo Mix (2000) a été faite, l'ensemble de quelques chorégraphies des spectacles Volcan et Velox, en faisant attention spécialement à la chorégraphie Alpinisme, où les danseurs dansent sur une scène verticale et par le désir d'élévation de leurs corps, ils essayent de frustrer le phénomène de la gravité, pour monter jusqu'au sommet le plus élévé de la création inédite. Cette

étude est interprétative, avec approche qualitative, et présente comme champ de recherche la compagnie de danse contemporaine de Deborah Colker.

Nous sommes arrivés à la conclusion que le corps en risque bâti dans une production esthétique et de beauté dans les spectacles de danse contemporaine de Deborah Colker, , à partir de ses acteurs danseurs est l'une des diverses pratiques sociales que contiennent le risque, commun à la société contemporaine, qui se sert du risque-aventure, concept pour le risque positif, comme déplacement important des sens modernes du risque qui reprend l'aventure comme dimension positive du risque, applé aussi risque désiré, où le plaisir vient de l'objectif concrétisé.

MOTS-CLES: danse contemporaine, corps, risque.

**EL CUERPO EN RIESGO EN LA DANZA CONTEMPORÁNEA DE DEBORAH COLKER**

**RESUMEN:**

El presente estudio tiene el objetivo de identificar el cuerpo en riesgo en la danza contemporánea de Deborah Colker. Se hizo un análisis del Vídeo Mix (2000), conjunto de algunas coreografías de los espectáculos Volcán y Velox, atendiendo sobre todo a la coreografía Alpinismo, donde los bailarines danzan en una escena vertical y por un deseo de elevación intentan frustrar el fenómeno de la gravedad, para subir hasta la cumbre más alta de la creación inédita. Este estudio es interpretativo, con enfoque cualitativo, presentando como campo de investigación la compañía de danza contemporánea de Deborah Colker.

Se concluyó que el cuerpo en riesgo construido en producción de estética y belleza en los espectáculos de danza contemporánea de Deborah Colker partiendo de sus actores bailarines, es una de las diversas prácticas sociales que envuelven el riesgo propio de la sociedad contemporánea, que utiliza el riesgo-aventura, concepto para el riesgo positivo, como traslado importante de los sentidos modernos del riesgo que recobra la aventura como dimensión positiva del riesgo, conocido también como riesgo deseable, donde el gozo proviene del objetivo realizado.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: danza contemporánea, cuerpo

**CORPO EM RISCO NA DANÇA CONTEMPORÂNEA DE DÉBORA COLKER**

**RESUMO:**

Este trabalho tem como objetivo identificar o corpo em risco na dança contemporânea de Deborah Colker. Fizemos uma análise do vídeo Mix (2000), junção de algumas coreografias dos espetáculos Vulcão e Velox, com atenção especial para a coreografia Alpinismo, na qual os bailarinos dançam num palco vertical cujo desejo de elevação, os corpos desses tentam frustrar o fenômeno de gravidade, a fim de subir até alcançarem o cume mais alto da criação inédita. O estudo é interpretativo, com abordagem qualitativa, apresentando como campo de investigação a companhia de dança contemporânea de Débora Colker. Concluímos que o corpo em risco construído numa produção de estética e beleza nos espetáculos de dança contemporânea de Deborah Colker a partir dos seus atores bailarinos, é uma das diferentes práticas sociais que envolvem o risco, próprio da sociedade contemporânea, que se utiliza do risco-aventura, conceito para o risco positivo, como um deslocamento importante dos sentidos modernos do risco o qual recupera a aventura como dimensão positiva do risco, chamado também por risco desejado, em que o prazer decorre do objetivo concretizado.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: dança contemporânea, corpo, risco.