70 - THE BODY IN THE CONTEMPORARINESS AND THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCIATION WITHIN THIS CONTEXT

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, the body is conceived as an important instrument of meaning (LE BRETON, 2006). In this context we can notice a change in how the body is understood and expressed throughout the years, depending, among a range of factors, on the culture to which the individual belongs.

Consequently, the culture of each society is expressed on the body and by the body; and the action of and on the body influences the entirety of the collectivity to where it belongs. It is highly relevant to observe man as both agent and product of the environment one belongs to (DAÓLIO, 2001). Therefore, we can highlight that the society aims for the cultural body, as explained by Marcel Mauss e Claude Lévi-Strauss (2003) , which is impregnated of social values adapted to the place in which it is inserted. The body is the surface of such culture. This cannot be considered in an isolate way, because, according to Morin (2006), the body is the product and the producer of the society, being constantly under transformation in relation to ourselves, to others and society, influencing and being influenced by society.

Throughout time, it is possible to notice a difference in how the body has been experienced, serving as a stage for major technological investments. The body has been transformed by several demands upon it, which often surpass its physiological capability in the pursuit of the ideal body (FRAGA, 2001). Nowadays, we can see an overrated concern in the pursuit of the aesthetically perfect body which fits into a standard accepted by society. Recently, the fit body, as mentioned by Silva and Gomes (2008), is an icon of the modern society, hence being sold as a consumption good, inspired on the apparent beauty of the body. Costa and Venâncio (2004) emphasize the practice of physical activities as an important tool for maintenance and preservation of the aimed good shape. Thus, given that Physical Education is inserted in this environment, it is relevant that we observe different aspects regarding this unbridled pursuit of the aimed archetype and the responsibilities of such professional within that context.

THE MEANING OF BODY THROUGHOUT HISTORY

With the change of the economic system from feudalism to capitalism, several changes have occurred within society. In the fifteenth century, with the European Renaissance, the feudal order comes into segregation to make way to the capitalist order. In the realm of philosophical thinking, the rupture with feudalism meant the decline of the cosmocentric-theocentric paradigm, in which men were considered as a mere being, submissive to the natural order of the cosmos and belonging to God. Due to the modification of this look where the meaning of things starts to be formed by the subject's intentional conscious, it begins a line of thought in favor of an anthropocentric look (COELHO; SEVERIANO, 2007). In this way, according to these authors, science also moves forward, causing the desecration of the body. The human being is now a source of study, with an increase of interest towards the body (SILVA, 2001). This object, previously considered untouchable and source of sacred secrets starts to be analyzed by researchers. Versálio, Harvey, Da Vinci and Descartes are the first researchers of the anatomy of the body. According to Descartes (apud COELHO; SEVERIANO, 2007) the body is pure material, equivalent to a machine, having little difference from an animal body, becoming an appendix to the mind, searching for the truth and building science. This author radically split body and soul, advancing the scientific production in studies of the body (SILVA, 2001).

In the nineteenth century, the body in Physical Education was based in the military goals, in pursuit of the healthy body (COSTA; VENÂNCIO, 2004). In this period of time, Brazil was undergoing a development process and needed strong and healthy individuals to function as manpower. As a consequence, Physical Education was a key element in the pursuit of these perfect bodies, which were highly essential for the advancement of capitalist relationships. At that time, there was a great influence of medicine in this area, hence nearly all scientific production related to the practice of physical activities were linked to medical professionals (SOARES, 2005). In addition to the medical influence, a strong influence of militaries in relation to the practice of exercises could be noticed, whereas the medical influence was linked to intellectual functions (GRANDO, 1996). The purpose of Physical Education in the nineteenth century was to bring the body closer to the highest standard of productivity, and the national political context at that time made the practice of activities a patriotic duty.

With the transition from feudalism to capitalism, there is a shift in the mechanist philosophical propositions about the body, imposing a new corporeity regime. It is now seen as an object capable of yielding and serving the State. Whereas in the feudal system there were communities and cooperatives working in the trading system, in capitalism workers can sell their labor power, therefore, one's body is free – “machine-individualism” (Id., 2007, p.86).

With the Industrial Revolution in 1750 and the evolution of production technologies, the worker's body starts to be demanded as the main key for the production process within capitalist industries. Given such demands, some responsibilities started to fall upon the body. According to Foucault (2000), dissipative and subversive powers of the bodies began to be supervised and administered so as not to jeopardize the extensive network of power that captures them. Also, such chaotic movement of crowds of bodies is attached to a thorough and continuous surveillance system, a global look which surveys, rewards, punishes and disciplines (FOUCAULT, 1987). Vaz (2006) states that the capitalist system aimed at preserving the body for production, since it was deemed as labor power. Therefore, at that time it was emphasized that the individual should resist momentary temptations and think about future planning.

In order to prevent a decrease in production levels, arises the need for certain body care which involved the body being in perfect health condition. As a consequence, at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, the great metropolises are influenced by hygiene based medicine endeavors and its great plans regarding sanitary intervention, aiming at sterilizing the social body of elements which could jeopardize public health (COELHO; SEVERIANO, 2007, p.89). Foucault (2000) coined such phenomenon as Biopower, explaining that medical policy started to become effective as a way of educating people, and started to be recognized as a practice of interest by the State. Medical practice was not

conceived simply as an intervention tool, but also to define rules, knowledge and ways to live with the body, different activities and the environment. Thus, medicine had the task to propose, under a regime, a volunteer and rational behavior structure (FOUCAULT, 2000).

Additionally, the advancement of medicine created a form of dependence of the individual, shown through the advances of doctors which applied healing power upon their bodies. Thus, "the doctor becomes the great advisor and expert, if not in the governing art, at least in the art of observing, correcting, improving the social body and keeping it in permanent state of health" (FOUCAULT, 2000, p. 203).

Just as certain medical practices were used as hygiene and body control practices, Physical Education was used as a mean to produce and improve the strong and healthy character for the industrial production (SOARES, 2005). During the nineteenth century, in Europe, scientific gymnastics has emerged as a meaningful part of the new civilian practices and was then detached from military physical exercise. Through physical activity there was a search for a pedagogy comprising rules and standards (Id., 2005).

The advances in research in the gymnastics field allowed it to be more respected by society. Such associations to science explained that gymnastics was capable of implementing a collective order. The European Gymnastics Movement was built upon these grounds and with the purposes of collective order and discipline which could be maximized (SOARES, 2005). Foucault (2000) explains such approach by the State claiming that at such period of time the discovery of the body as a target and object of power took place, the body which can be manipulated, shaped, trained, obedient and skillful.

THE BODY AS CONSUMPTION GOOD

Coelho and Severiano (2007) state that during the sixties several transformations affected society, characterizing the shift from modernity to post-modernity. The advancement of capitalist technologies was one of the greatest marks which transformed our current society. The development of new production technologies and factories raised the need for disposal of goods, creating a permanent consumer market. The overproduction crisis in the most industrialized countries also triggered several changes in the capitalist production system. For that reason, the "consumption education", unlike in the past when it was based on the act of saving, started to encourage the act of consuming (Id., 2007, p.89). Such education was cemented through the cultural industry and advertising, having globalization as its great ally.

Coelho and Severiano (2007) raise questions regarding the way the body is conceived in post-modernity, a moment considered to be of historical rupture. According to these authors, in this century we can notice a reappraisal of the meanings of body, society and culture. Nowadays, there are no demands for bodies to serve as producers. However, capitalist society needs the selling and consumption relation to keep functioning. Thus, what is currently spread is that people shall serve their own bodies, purchasing more products for the wellbeing of their bodies. The body has shifted from "producer body" to "consumer body" (Id., 2007, p.91), having become a profitable investment. These authors, aiming at understanding the different body patterns present in the capitalist production, also emphasize that despite the body being a consumer or a producer, this regime will be the guiding principle of analysis and methods of body control in western societies.

Norbert Elias (1994) reflects on how the body adapts to civilization, where spontaneity was replaced by patterns to be followed. It is constantly controlled to prevent sudden events in pursuit of higher development of mankind. "The body enters the market capable of consuming and being consumed" (VAZ, 2006, p.42). Consume became an activity which provides pleasure and ceased to be a mean to supply necessities. According to this author, the body consumes mainly itself, the idea of "consume without being consumed", a way of standardizing behavior praising self-control (Id., 2006, p. 43-60).

Sant'anna (2001a) states that within the health field a "new hygienism" took place, and this began in 1980 by the "health generation", through bombings of diet and light products and a range of polyvalent food such as enriched food, vitamins, metabolic food and cosmetic food. Moreover, gyms, esthetic clinics and spas are companies which promote massive therapy to the body so it can experience several pleasures such as comfort, youth, staying away from stress and all other harms related to your health.

Besides, analyzing advertising texts, these authors noticed, between the lines, a reshaping of concepts of health, disease and body. Beauty starts to be considered a barrier between health and disease, that is, the appearance of physical wellbeing, called aptitude (BAUMAN, 2001), replaces medical diagnosis. Lucas and Hoff (2006) state that, with the shift from discipline to power, new strategies of Biopower are created from a scientific-medical speech imposing on the individuals the responsibility for their bodies. Additionally, after analyzing the speech in advertising, the same author noticed subliminal messages in the adverts for resizing the concepts of health, disease and body.

THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE INDUSTRY OF THE BODY AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THIS CONTEXT

The modifications used in the seventeenth century to improve body appearance were external to the body, such as corsets, intended to mold shapes. Nowadays, the modifications are made from inside out, through a range of interventions to shape the body. Whereas before people aimed to have good manners and posture, now they value vigor (BETTI, 2001).

An analysis of advertising speech regarding the "healthy body" carried out by Lucas and Hoff (2006, p. 97), compared adverts in the 1920's and the current ones. The authors realized that in 1920 the healthy bodies portrayed in the adverts were robust, blushful and fat. In that period of time cosmetics and medicines promised cure as the benefit. The body, after receiving what they needed or the cure for the disease then carried out the healing process naturally. Being born, growing up, growing old and dying were natural and inexorable stages the body had to endure.

Ferreira and Guimarães (2006) point to the shift of the pursuit of health to the pursuit of beauty in place nowadays, so imperfection focuses on shape and appearance, i.e., the body shall get close to the models exposed in the media in order to be legitimated as beautiful and healthy. The images of bodies displayed in current advertising are idealizations; distant from natural bodies are mere representations of perfection. The cosmetics available nowadays promise longevity and youthfulness, on the opposite way of the order and natural course of life.

According to Fernandes (2003, p.1), "The body is in!". According to her, in post-modernity, the press has shown a great interest in matters regarding the body, which can be confirmed through the high number of reports in our daily lives on this subject and its relationship with health. As a result, health has become consumption good and ways of "getting" healthy have become selling goods (COELHO; FONSECA, 2007, p. 66).

Vaz (2006) points out that one of the fastest growing industries in the last thirty years has been the pharmaceutical industry, targeting to sell youth, beauty and wellbeing. He states that the body mainly consumes itself, and what is sold today is the possibility of being alive and beautiful. The new medical policy, through genetic engineering, immunology, plastic surgery among other scientific techniques, began to inhabit the area of personal freedom of the individual over his/her body. However, the boundary issue between ethics and freedom comes into play.

For Santana, body, technology and world are three pillars which meet in constant exchange of information, influencing and being influenced. As technology is one of these pillars, we can mention the media as an example of great influence. In the media we can observe the strong presence of the standard body, said to be healthy and beautiful, however many times unreachable, which catches our attention and urges us to put a critical look upon the media. If we pay close attention, we can see that it has many ways to manipulate the body and turn it into consumption good. It is commonly seen in their programming simple and quick recipes, which aim at reaching the perfect body, as idealized by people. Tips on how to eat better, correctly use cosmetics, practice physical activities to burn a higher number of calories are common among its programs. Therefore, we must pay more attention to the way the media controls the speech regarding the body through guidelines on health (Id., 2004).

The increasing concern about physical shape nowadays seems to be more connected to the standards broadcasted in the media than to the medical guidelines on actual health (SILVA; GOMES, 2008). The body, previously restricted to private spaces, is now often represented in public spaces. It is common to see the increase in interest upon the body in different media, through reports in which the body is the main character (FERNANDES, 2003).

The media is one of the sources of symbols which are encrusted in the senses of the current world, and one of the responsible for the diffusion of body changing techniques in pursuit of beauty (VAZ, 2006). The bodies which differ from such ideal image only are interesting for the media as examples not to be followed. Whereas those who are similar to the standard are considered symbols of dominance, better social class and higher purchasing power. “The closer the body is to the ideal image, the higher its value and power.” (COSTA; VENÂNCIO, 2004, p.64) Beauty has become a good to be purchased, being directly proportional to the purchase power of each person (SANT'ANNA, 2001).

ANALYSIS OF THE BODY IN THE PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Activity related to “health” also falls into the same line of thought. Through standardizing of bodies produced and broadcasted by the media, physical exercise turns into another way of body change. Betti (2001, p.156) points out the relevant influence by the media upon directing body movement culture tendencies, with repercussions affecting Physical Education. Additionally, Betti (2001, p. 157) explains that the media starts a new speech about body movement culture, causing a “confusion” or “interlacement” among the body esthetics model and the health and physical aptitude model. Such fact can be noticed through advertisements in magazines relating beauty health, physical activity and diet. Costa and Venâncio (2004) have verified that the media massively highlights the beautiful and healthy body image as a means to build an identity. The authors explain that we are going back to the narcissist era, appraising a youthful body image, beauty and health.

Nowadays, according to Betti (2004), exercises and diets are not enough in the pursuit of the ideal body, but surgical intervention such as plastic surgery, liposuction, implants and others are also needed. This idea triggers other perspectives and are, as mentioned above, a large and growing market. These factors directly influence the way the body is conceived and worked within the Physical Education field. It is the PE professional's job to play the mediating role between what can be done and what needs to be done.

The body, according to Grando (1996, p.97), is the subject of study in several fields, and many of them are used to contribute in finding the ideal standard. Several researches are made aiming at reaching “stronger” and “healthier” bodies. These types of body are enclosed into quotes by the author so as to problematize which aspects these words are able to define the legitimate purpose to be attained. The overrated pursuit of better physical condition matches the unreal model of body-machine. The author criticizes other limitations found in researches on the subject, among them we can mention the body thinking separately of the culture in which it is inserted and as a result of higher purchase power social categories.

According to Hansen and Vaz (2006), gyms, which should be seen as places for practicing physical activities to improve health, are the places where the cult of the body can be mostly understood and manifested. As an example, we can mention a new sports category found in gyms called body building. According to Soares (2001), this new sport is about a dispute by still exposure of the body, where the person with the highest volume body wins the champion title. In the words of Courtine (1995), we can notice how the idea of a super muscular body confronts the actual purpose of muscles, which are body movements.

This pursuit of the ideal body, according to Ferreira e Guimarães (2006), is increasingly suppressing the critical ability to the detriment of determined body standards. It is common to have beauty at any price. These authors mention the difficulty human beings have to discern what is normal to what is common. And, most of the times, what is common at a certain locality or time is not necessarily normal to the human species. Thus, it is of paramount relevance to highlight that, despite this unbridled pursuit of beauty and the ideal body is considered common, under no circumstances we cannot consider it normal.

Nowadays, beauty products are called cosmetics, and there is an illusion that if you do not follow the esthetic accepted trend ugliness is the responsibility of the individual, which refers to negligence towards the body. Each person is responsible for their own appearance and shall remain forever beautiful and youthful. There is a contradiction in the fact that there are so many ways to reach beauty and yet the individual chooses to remain ugly and out of the standards. This subject has been under trial and h convicted has been (SANT'ANNA, 2001).

According to Coelho and Fonseca (2007, p.65), life has become a stage of infinite investments involving “time, money and preoccupation”. Life is now the center of discussions, being linked to one's behavior. They understand that Biopower (FOCAULT, 1999) is undergoing a subduing process and body control in the pursuit of the aimed esthetic standard. Health becomes a consumption good, displayed and sold by the media.

CONCLUSIONS

After observing the abovementioned facts, the physical Education professional must have in mind that an individual is simultaneously product and producer of society (MORIN, 1996). Therefore, we must always have a critical eye when relating culture and model of the ideal body effective at a given period of time, and be attentive to the fact that we are in a continuous changing process regarding ourselves, others and society. The conceptions of beauty and ugliness are social and cultural facts which can be changed according to the time or place in which they are observed. Schilder (2004, p. 231) states that “it is really difficult to set beauty patterns when we surpass the barriers of our own culture”. For this reason, it is up to us, professionals, to reflect on the endless power relations which can derive from the subject body and its different manifestations. We must keep a critical stand before the media actions, always taking into consideration ethics and common sense when making exercise prescriptions, being careful when using them to promote body changes.

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THE BODY IN THE CONTEMPORARINESS AND THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCIATION WITHIN THIS CONTEXT.

The present interpretative article presents a reflection upon the role of Physical Education within the body context in the present days. We can notice a change in how the body has been seen and manifested throughout time. Today, we observe that the body has been acting as a stage for an unbridled pursuit of beauty, following an ideal standard imposed by the media.

Given the stereotype built within this reality, it is of paramount importance that the Physical Education professionals impose a critical look upon such condition. They must have in mind that such given standard not always respect the individual limitations. Thus, they shall act as mediators, acting critically when performing their job. It is critical to observe the limitations and specifications of each individual in society, and how far it would be healthy to follow this unbridled pursuit of the archetype presented by the various media we have today. Therefore, our study aims to emphasize how the physical education professional shall act within such context, having a critical look upon its practice and not acting as a mere reproducer of what is being imposed.

KEY WORDS: body, contemporaneity, physical education.

LE CORPS DANS LA CONTEMPORANEITE ET LE RÔLE DES EDUCIATION PHYSIQUES DANS CE CONTEXTE

Le présent article d'interprétation présente une réflexion sur le rôle de l'éducation physique dans le contexte du corps dans les jours à présent. Nous pouvons remarquer un changement dans la façon dont le corps a été vu et se manifeste à travers le temps. Aujourd'hui, nous observons que le corps a agi comme une étape pour une poursuite effrénée de la beauté, suite à une norme idéale imposée par les médias.

Etant donné le stéréotype construit dans cette réalité, il est primordial que les professionnels de l'éducation physique imposent un regard critique sur une telle condition. Ils doivent avoir à l'esprit que ces standards donnés respectent pas toujours les limitations individuelles. Ainsi, ils agissent en tant que médiateurs, agissant de façon critique lors de l'exécution de leur travail. Il est essentiel d'observer les limitations et les spécifications de chaque individu dans la société, et dans quelle mesure il serait sain de suivre cette poursuite effrénée de l'archétype présenté par les différents médias que nous avons aujourd'hui. Par conséquent, notre étude vise à souligner comment les professionnels de l'éducation physique doit agir dans un tel contexte, avoir un regard critique sur sa pratique et n'agissent pas comme un reproducteur simple de ce qui est imposé.

MOTS CLÉS: corps, la contemporanéité, l'éducation physique.

EL CUERPO EN LA CONTEMPORANEIDAD Y EL PAPEL DE EDUCIATION FÍSICA DENTRO DE ESTE CONTEXTO.

El presente artículo presenta la reflexión interpretativa sobre el papel de la educación física en el contexto del cuerpo en los días presentes. Podemos notar un cambio en cómo el cuerpo se ha visto y se manifiesta a través del tiempo. Hoy en día, se observa que ha sido el órgano que actúa como un escenario para una búsqueda desenfrenada de la belleza, un estándar ideal Después de impuestos por los medios de comunicación.

Teniendo en cuenta el estereotipo construido dentro de esta realidad, es de suma importancia que los profesionales de la Imposición de la Educación Física mirar a un estado crítico. Se debe tener en cuenta que no se da siempre como norma el respeto a las limitaciones individuales. Por lo tanto, serán los mediadores act, actuar críticamente Al realizar su trabajo. Es fundamental tener en cuenta las limitaciones y especificaciones de cada individuo en la sociedad, y en qué medida sería saludable para seguir esta búsqueda desenfrenada de los diferentes arquetipos presentados por los medios de comunicación que tenemos hoy. Por lo tanto, nuestro estudio tiene como objetivo poner de relieve cómo la act profesional de educación física en el plazo de este contexto, una mirada crítica sobre la que tiene su práctica y no limitarse a actuar como una mera reproducción de ser de lo que se impone.

PALABRAS CLAVE: cuerpo, la contemporaneidad, la educación física.

O CORPO NA CONTEMPORANEIDADE E O PAPEL DA EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA NESTE CONTEXTO

O presente artigo, de cunho interpretativo, apresenta uma reflexão acerca do papel da Educação Física no contexto corporal atual. Nota-se uma modificação na forma como o corpo vem sendo visto e manifestado ao longo do tempo, sendo que contemporaneamente é observado que este vem servindo de palco para uma busca desenfreada pela beleza, seguindo um padrão ideal imposto pelos meios de comunicação.

Face ao estereótipo construído nesta realidade, torna-se de suma importância um olhar crítico dos profissionais de educação física sobre esta condição. Estes devem ter em consideração, que nem sempre este padrão apresentado, respeita as limitações individuais do sujeito. Cabe então a estes servirem como mediadores, agindo de forma crítica no exercício de sua ocupação. Torna-se imprescindível observar, as limitações e especificidades de cada indivíduo presente na sociedade, e até onde seria saudável esta busca desenfreada pelo arquétipo, apresentados pelas diversas representações midiáticas da atualidade. Sendo assim, objetivamos neste estudo, enfatizar a forma como o profissional de educação física deve agir neste contexto. Atuando sempre com uma visão crítica de sua prática e não apenas como mero reprodutor do que lhe é imposto.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: corpo, contemporaneidade e educação física