87 - THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE, ACCORDING TO BALLET DANCERS-CHOREOGRAPHERS

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The contemporarity in the dance

The dance, as one of the symbolic answers of man in face of the world, has been object of several reflections concerning its aesthetic, artistic and philosophical implications. Recent studies have pointed it as facilitator of practices in the health, education and citizenship fields.

Among the innumerable modalities of dance in the world, in this study, of qualitative character, the contemporary dance is chosen as inquiry focus. Given the fast growth that it has been showing, mainly, after the 90s, the contemporary dance jumps from the marginality's ghetto to the top of the power in the professional market. Such phenomenon is verified in the great urban centers of the occidental world.

The ascending trajectory of the contemporary dance calls us special attention for the context in which it is inserted. According to Stoer (2004), post-modernity has been establishing the loss of the absolute centers, as well as instigating the "rebellion of the differences". In this context, minority forms of speech, first considered "delinquents" or "alternatives", begin to assume themselves as agencies and subjects of their own enunciations, renouncing to passively accept the speeches about them.

Inserted in this gelatinous climate of post-modernity, ballet dancers and choreographers interested in researching new movement possibilities, for beyond the preexisting stylistic patterns, begin to assume their differences in the way of feeling, thinking and moving in life and in the dance. This artistic movement, which in Brazil had it's beginning around the 70s / 80s, was being known as contemporary dance. From the 90s, these professionals who, for years, had been resigned to the label and the limitations of the "alternative" world, considered as pertaining to a "minor art", started to organize as a category and to demand respect inside the own dance field and in the professional art market, according to the statement of one of the emergent professionals of this group,

"Dance is not dislocated from life. Life is not dislocated from politics. The culture from Rio de Janeiro is not separated of the remaining part of Brazil. Social project is important, but to make a conceptual art is also a way of making social project, as it makes to think. We have to fight for it. Things do not fall from heaven. We have to fight further for what we desire. We have to discuss, organize, to be alert, awake, checking what we do, politically participative". (Lais, p.112).

This new watchful attitude, of ballet dancers and choreographers of contemporary dance has taken them to advance to the conquest of politics, artistic and market spaces. In the last years, the contemporary dance has systematically attracted for itself: the attention of the press and the critics of art; the investment of public and private sponsors; several spaces for national and international presentations; important positions in institutions linked to the cultural politics; distribution of awards and incentives to the research; the adhesion each time greater of amateurs and professionals and, above all, the conquest of a numerous and varied public.

Object of study

The desire to better understand this contemporary phenomenon has taken us to choose as object of study the search of the senses of dance for ballet dancers-choreographers identified with the contemporary dance, through the survey of the singularities and the regularities found in the speeches of this social group. Therefore, we carried through semi-structuralized individual interviews with fourteen of those who have been the most distinguished professionals in the dance market from the city of Rio de Janeiro, between 1990 and 2000. They all present the particularity of also being the directors of their own dance companies and sponsored by public or private means.

The methodological option adopted, based on the studies on Social Representations and Imaginary and the Discourse Analysis, had as main references Orlandi (2000), Ansart (1978), Stoer (2004) and Backzo (1985). In this perspective, the imaginary is conceived as a "net of senses" that surpasses the isolated and individual gestures, constituted and constituent, in the interrelation between the social agents. We claim that, "through the speeches that a class attributes to itself, we can raise part of its imaginary". (Backzo, 1985).

Multiplicity of tendencies

In a first look over the dance of the contemporary ballet dancers-choreographers in the city of Rio de Janeiro, we see a multiplicity of choreographic tendencies, methodologies and creation processes. However, through the circumstanced analysis of the voices of these ballet dancers, we realize that these so differentiated proposals, besides the singularities that are peculiar to them, present several traces of regularities.

The global interpretation to which we came to is that dance, for these professionals, gets closer to the philosophy and to *a pedagogy for the diversified mobility,* which basis allows diverse interpretations, applications and ways of entering the aesthetic speech.

The exploratory character of the creation processes used by the professionals gives special emphasis to the conscience of the own body and to the improvisation for the research of new movement possibilities. The option for the not-determination of pre-established steps, on the proportion that any type of gesture, posture or movement, since the most quotidian to the most abstract, may become dance, tends to produce a creation's variety that, frequently, is associated to the greater freedom of speech, experienced by the contemporary ballet dancers.

From this experience arises the wish to produce a differentiated signature, which distinguishes the individual-creator in relation to the social mass, and the choreographic authorship relating to the artistic production. Most of the times, the singularity of each individual ballet dancer-choreographer inaugurates a new way to materialize the dance. This multiplicity of singular tendencies is in such way ample that puts in risk the own concept of what comes to be contemporary dance, as is seen in the following deposition of one of the interviewed professionals:

"Some years ago, I would not be able to say which my focus of inquiry in the movement was. When I realized, my dance already happened thus, there were variations around the flow. The funny is that this has everything to do with what I think relating to life". *(…) The question that people always make is: is this dance? And I say: but is it important to be answered? I think that more important than to answer is to ask".* (Pedro, p. 101).

The most important is not the conceptual label, but the involvement with the creation. The dance that will emerge is resultant of the research process of the ballet dancer-choreographer and its team; this dance may tend to styles already existing or unknown forms. What matters is not limiting the creation previously.

As first result of this research, we verified inadequate the term contemporary dance. The best identification,

1- O termo bailarino-coreógrafo refere-se a profissionais de ambos os sexos que, além de dançar, criam discursos próprios através de suas coreografias.
2- Os depoimentos, disponíveis em Gomes 2002, estão com nomes fictícios.
3- Este termo é uma alusão à micro-física do poder, sugerida por Foucault (1996).

perhaps, as an approach of didactic effect, would be to say contemporary dances, or contemporary ways of dancing.

Ties of senses of the imaginary web

It is interesting to observe that, even if the interviewed professionals do not seem to be worried with the conceptual definition of what comes to be contemporary dance, they usually present themselves as representative of this segment, located in the present time, when they are located in the conquest of the market.

In Ansart's vision (1978), all group or social action presupposes a net of senses that regulates, integrates and guides the reciprocal necessities and expectations of the individual behaviors. Well, the speeches gathered through the interviews point to the conscience of belonging of the interviewed ones to a social group which regularities found are part of an imaginary net, constituent and constituted by these social agents. Among the regularities, presented below, we emphasize the transit by the differences.

The transit by the differences

The option for exploring diverse possibilities of movement and not withhold to the known universe is, for these ballet dancers-choreographers, a result from the desire to produce new dimensions of the corporeity and to bring new questions for the scene. The important for them is the freedom of being able to choose and rearrange, articulate different references, languages, people, physical types, cultures, styles, experiences and fields of the knowledge, according to the vicissitudes of the creation.

The diffuse aspect of the boundaries between the categories, verified on the speech of these creators, demystifies the Cartesian's vision of the world and gives space for the arisen of a multiplicity of readings that exceed the stages and reverberate in the relation with life itself. The transit idea is formulated in explicit form, as seen in the following deposition:

"I find that the word transit does not define only my dance, I find that it defines me. I am interested for what is in between, where the places are not steady, but what is at stake is this between. The between the author-choreographer and the author-ballet dancer; the between languages; to leak the scenic space. I like to speak of a sensitive net where the boundaries are not geographic". (Rúbia, p. 89).

The option to transit by the differences brings the idea of an incorporative-me, that is the mixture of oneself with the experiences, ideas and people with whom we live. *"The mixtures modifies us, the process modifies us, the friends, life".* (Dalva, p. 88). The research of the difference is obsessive, its search is constant:

"The differences are very stimulant for me. I like to work with people who have questions. In this sense, I always need to reformulate my own questions". (Paola, p. 167).

The latent desire of transformation

Transit, mobility, exchange, subversion, searches of new possibilities these words present at the speeches of the interviewed ballet dancers-choreographers, create a semantic basin that takes us to another representation: the desire to be always in transformation.

It is worth to remember that one of the most important myths related to the art of dancing is Dionysius, Neolithic God of the Transformation, that dies and revives in the Spring, symbol of the fertility and the cyclical time of the harvests.

For the interviewed, there is a sort of symbolical death when one dances. The involvement produced by the act of dancing can awake asleep potentials, affinities ever imagined, and demystify images of itself and the other, built long ago. Moreover, according to them, the effects produced by the experience of dancing do not end when the dance finishes, for they continue in the sensitive field of the corporal memory, producing alterations in the intellect and in the way of perceiving and relating with the world. It's what we deduce of the following excerpts. The first emphasizes the transcendence, the second the ludic dimension of the deconstruction:

"To dance is to allow yourself to get away from these questions that fill you in the quotidian, that tie you, that squeeze you, that format you, that identity you with something, that paralyzes you. It is the possibility of getting away from this and to enter in regions that are only allowed in the art". (Silvia, p. 83).

"I work with the deconstruction idea, that also embodies the construction. It is the ludic possibility of being playing, putting, taking, reformulating, in an eternal movement. It is quite as a metaphor of the dance itself, which is the mobility". (Carlos, p. 159).

The risk as attitude

The desire to change, expressed by the interviewed ones, strengthens the pleasure for the risk as attitude in face of the unknown. In the symbolized sense, who dances moves in the threshold between life and death. Not only because the body is placed at risk to try the movements, or for the option of the artistic life that stands out for the instability of the autonomy, but also because when dancing, so many variations and different sensations are experienced that the place of the subject's identity is dislocated, shaken in the logical order of the habitual conscience, immersed in a rally of adventures, rubbing death to retake life.

"To dance makes me feel more alive. The body is beating… It is like a rally of adventures. Of calling your body to life really." (Dalva, p. 93).

"I am a person very connected to life and death. It seems that I have to rub death to retake life. There is a perception that was always very present for me, that my life can finish at any time". (Rúbia, p. 161).

The valorization of the present moment as unique event

To accept the risk of mobility makes that these professionals place their main focus in the present; that is, in the process of creation, and not in the past, as a pre-defined ideal, or in the future, as the obsessive search for a result. The final form comes, but as consequence of the process, that can lead to paths never imagined before, to seas never navigated before.

The ballet dancers-choreographers concentrate in the present, as a way of being always in movement, as professionals, as subjects and as speeches, tied to the weight, materiality and direction.

"Each thing I do, I do now. The scenic presence is in the sense of dealing with the materiality, the weight, the direction [...], the presentation is almost an excuse for the instantaneous experience of the movement, a sharing of that moment with the people". (Michele, p. 86).

The search of an authorial speech

To find an own speech constitutes in one of the main axis of the imaginary universe of these professionals, as much in the sense of the auto-inquiry, as for the necessity of surviving strategy in a globalized market, where is necessary to have an own mark, a signature, to leave the anonymity.

This position finds syntony in the theory of Harvey (1987), for whom the investment in the independent and authorial production, characteristics of post-modernity, has been one of the marketing strategies of the advanced capitalism, as a way of delegating to the individual production the responsibility for the crisis of the system. In the case of the ballet dancers-

choreographers interviewed, they search for the authorship not only in themselves, as well as they provoke it in the other ballet dancers and in each member of their work teams, invited to assume what they are and think.

"It is very important, in our work, that people can assume what they are and think. It is not only to execute the choreography. It is not only mine. I don't like everybody the same. Each one has its own personality, has its manner." (Ronaldo, p.106).

"The contemporary dance plays this role of devil's advocate, it makes me measure all the time what I can, what I believe, what I search for, and this because of the authorship. At the same time that it opens many possibilities to me, it pulls me to the center. Or I am absolutely sharpened with my speech, with what I believe in my concept and in my technique, or it is not supported". (Silvia, p. 110).

New challenges

The transcribed testimonies, part of a bigger series, analyzed in the thesis, point to subtle aspects of the dance as a practice that changes the stability of authoritarian systems of power. To search new possibilities of movements and manifestations of the authorial speech, in an ampler sense, may become a way to exercise itself to walk in the breaches of the social agreement, and thus, to add for the construction of a micron-physics of freedom.

"I chose the contemporary dance for the necessity to place my ideas. My dance is my essence as a person. My work is absolutely me". (Michele, p. 165).

"I do contemporary dance because I live in a contemporary world, I dialogue with it through the dance. I am in tune with what is going on with the present world. And then I ask myself: What am I going to do with it? What am I going to place in scene. What can I construct with it?" (Carlos, p. 165).

For the possibility to dialogue with the current world, whether producing answers, or only questions, the contemporary dances are presented as an important pedagogical and social instrument, in a historical moment where one of the great challenges has been how to learn to transit in the diversity.

In this sense, from the accomplishment of this research, it becomes interesting to investigate with more details the relations that may exist between the representations that these contemporary dances present and the constructions and challenges of the contemporary imaginary.

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THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE ACCORDING TO BALLET-DANCERS-CHOREOGRAPHERS

ABSTRACT

This research of qualitative character, had as object of study to identify the sense of dance for contemporary ballet dancers-choreographers, through the survey of the singularities and regularities most present in the speech of this social group. Therefore, we carried through half-structuralized individual interviews with fourteen professionals among those who had been the most distinguished in the dance market of the city of Rio de Janeiro, between 1990 and 2000. This period comprises the historical moment when the so called contemporary dance jumps from the marginality's ghetto to the top of the professional market phenomenon registered in the great urban centers of the occidental world. The methodological option adopted, based upon the studies of the Social Representations and of the Discourse Analysis, had as main references Orlandi (2000), Ansart (1978), Stoer (2004) and Backzo (1985). For this last one, through the speeches that a group attributes to itself, we can raise part of its imaginary. The results of the research pointed to the inadequacy of the use of the term contemporary dance for, according to the interviewed subjects, what exists is a multiplicity of tendencies that do not attach to one pre-defined form, methodology or style, but that varies as the vicissitudes of the creation. We found some regularities that compose a net of senses in which this different tendencies entangle, among which we distinguish the transit by the differences. Also occurs: the latent desire of transformation; the risk as attitude in life and in the dance; the valorization of the present moment as unique event and the search for an authorial discourse.

Key-words: social representations; contemporary dances; differences.

LA DANCE CONTEMPORAINE, SELON LEURS PROFESSIONELS DE BALLET ET CORÉOGRAPHIE

RESUMÉE

Cette recherche a eu pour but identifier les signifiés de la danse contemporaine pour professionels, atravers l´identification et l´analyse des singularités et regularités plus fortes présents dans le discours de ce groupe social. On a conduit des entrevues individuelles, démi-structurées, avec 14 professionels qui se ont consacrés dans le marché de danse de la cité de Rio de Janeiro, entre 1990 et 2002. Ce période comprend le moment historique dans le quel la danse contemporaine a sorti de l´obscurité au centre du marché professionel phénomène registré dans les grands centres urbains du monde ocidental. La métodologie adoptée, avec base dans les études des représentations sociales et de l´analyse du discours, a eu comme reférences Orlandi (2000), Ansart (1978), Stoer (2004) et Backzo (1985). Pour ce dernier, atravers les discours qu´une classe atribuit à soi-même, on eut identifier part de son imaginaire. Les résultats de la recherche pointent `l´inadequation du terme dance contemporaine, puisque, selon les sujets de cet étude, il s´agit d´une multiplicité de tendences que ne privilegient pás une forme, métodologie ou styles pré-definis, mais que varient selon le contexte de la création. On a trouvées quelquers régularités que font partie d´une organisation complexe de sens, avec priorité pour le transit pours les différences. Il y a aussi le désir de transformation. Le risque, comme attitude dans la vie et dans la dance, et la valorization du momént présent como événement unique, aussi que la recherce d´um discours autorale.

Mots- cléf: représentations sociales, dances contemporaines, différences.

LA DANZA CONTEMPORANEA SEGÚN BALLARINOS-COREÓGRAFOS

RESUMO

Esta investigación tiene como objeto identificar los sentidos de danza para ballarinos-coreógrafos contemporáneos, a través del análisis de singularidades y regularidades presentes en el discurso de ese grupo social. Para eso, realizamos entrevistas individuales semi-estructuradas con cuatorze profesionales, entre los que se destacaron en el mercado de danza de ciudad de Rio de Janeiro, entre 1990 y 2002. Este período comprende el momento histórico en el que la llamada danza contemporánea salta de gueto de la marginalidad para el punto más alto del mercado profesional fenómeno registrado en los grandes centros urbanos del mundo occidental. La opción metodológica adoptada, con base en los estudios sobre Representaciones Sociales e Análisis del Discurso, tuvo como principales referencias a Orlandi (2000), Ansart (1978), Stoer (2004) e Backzo (1985). Para ese último, a través de los discursos que una clase atribuye a sí misma, podemos levantar parte de su imaginario. Los resultados de la pesquisa apuntaron para la inadecuación del termino danza contemporánea pues, según los sujetos entrevistados, lo que existe é una multiplicidad de tendencias que no se prenden a una forma, metodología o estilo predefinidos, pero sí que varían conforme las vicisitudes de la creación. Encontramos algunas regularidades que componen una rede de sentidos en la cual esas diferentes tendencias se mezclan, entre las cuales destacamos el transito por las diferencias. Ocurren, también: el deseo latente de transformación; el risco como actitud en la vida e en la danza; la valorización del momento presente como acontecimiento único e a búsqueda de un discurso autoral.

Palabras-llave: representaciones sociales; danzas contemporáneas; diferencias.

A DANÇA CONTEMPORÂNEA SEGUNDO BAILARINOS-COREÓGRAFOS

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa teve como objeto de estudo identificar os sentidos de dança para bailarinos-coreógrafos contemporâneos, através do levantamento das singularidades e regularidades mais presentes no discurso desse grupo social. Para isso, realizamos entrevistas individuais semi-estruturadas com quatorze profissionais dentre os que mais se destacaram no mercado de dança da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, entre 1990 e 2002. Este período compreende o momento histórico em que a chamada dança contemporânea salta do gueto da marginalidade para o topo do mercado profissional fenômeno registrado nos grandes centros urbanos do mundo ocidental. A opção metodológica adotada, com base nos estudos sobre Representações Sociais e Análise do Discurso, teve como principais referências Orlandi (2000), Ansart (1978), Stoer (2004) e Backzo (1985). Para este último, através dos discursos que uma classe atribui a si mesma, podemos levantar parte de seu imaginário. Os resultados da pesquisa apontaram para a inadequação do termo dança contemporânea pois, segundo os sujeitos entrevistados, o que existe é uma multiplicidade de tendências que não se prendem a uma forma, metodologia ou estilo pré-definidos, mas que variam conforme as vicissitudes da criação. Encontramos algumas regularidades que compõem uma rede de sentidos na qual essas diferentes tendências se enredam, dentre as quais destacamos o trânsito pelas diferenças. Ocorrem também: o desejo latente de transformação; o risco como atitude na vida e na dança; a valorização do momento presente como acontecimento único e a busca de um discurso autoral.

Palavras-chave: representações sociais; danças contemporâneas; diferenças.