Questions about the masculine gender in school dancing practices: a brief state of knowledge

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Abstract
The current work, of state of knowledge basis (ROMANOWSKI & ENS, 2006; FERREIRA, 2002) aims to trace academic studies which have discussed the masculine gender inside dancing scopes, beginning from spaces occupied by the dance in schools to conflicts related to gender in school as well. This research is reinforced by primary data collected from theses and dissertations of the BDTD (Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations), presented between 2009 and 2019. With regards to the results, aspects such as hierarchical inequality concerning the social roles of masculine and feminine subjects; and the school as a reproducer of gender inequalities within the sphere of corporal practices, leading us to perceive the fragility in questions about gender, sexuality, and its ramifications within the educational setting. Therefore, there is a need for promoting such discussions in the context of the pedagogical implementation.

Keywords: Dancing in school. Masculine gender. Body. State of knowledge.

Reflexões sobre o gênero masculino na dança escolar: um breve estado do conhecimento

Resumo
Esta pesquisa do tipo estado do conhecimento (ROMANOWSKI & ENS, 2006; FERREIRA, 2002), foi realizada com a finalidade de mapear estudos acadêmicos que discutem acerca do gênero masculino na dança e as suas relações com o ensino na escola pública, partindo do espaço ocupado pela dança no contexto escolar e os embates que estão relacionados às questões de gênero na escola. O estudo foi desenvolvido com dados primários obtidos através de teses e dissertações da BDTD, estas defendidas entre 2009 e 2019. Nos resultados, aspectos como: a desigualdade hierárquica dos papéis sociais entre sujeitos masculinos e femininos; e, a escola como reprodutrora das desigualdades de gênero no âmbito das práticas corporais, leva-nos a percepção de uma fragilidade acerca dos tópicos sobre gênero, sexualidade e suas ramificações no cenário escolar, acentuando a necessidade de se fomentar essas discussões no contexto da efetivação pedagógica.

1 Introduction

The discussion raised by this work leads us to the understanding that the process of meaning of dance in the school curriculum is a field that still needs a lot of debate, especially in what concerns the understanding about the contribution of dance in the context of subjects' formation in their personal, material, socio-affective and cultural spheres. It is necessary to understand dance, above all, as a resource for social acceptance and for breaking away from some strong socially constructed prejudices, starting from the principle that social exclusion is not a condition, but a historical process (CASTELLS, 2000). Besides, the practice of dance presents several benefits to the body, such as the improvement of body consciousness, motor coordination, strength, balance, among other benefits (FARO, 1986; SILVA, 2007).

Considering the transformations that dance has gone through over the years, where the participation of the male and female genders are marked by distinct eras (ANDREOLI, 2010), delicacy and lightness in dance started to have a reference much more linked to the female figure, In this line of thought there is a strong problematic aspect about gender relations in dance, connected to social interpretations about body and culture and how these issues are problematized in the scope of basic schooling.

In such a scenario the question arises: How is dance perceived by the school? How are gender relations constructed with regard to the practice of dance at school? What space does dance occupy in the teaching plans? When is the school promoting discussions about prejudices and stigmas related to the corporal practices developed at school? Approaching answers to these topics implies in the understanding of a mutual relationship between school, students, families, teachers and other actors that act in the educational process.

Thus, in light of these concerns, the objective of this study is to map academic research that intends to problematize questions related to the masculine gender in school
dance and its reflections for teaching based on relations with the body, gender and culture.

2 Methodology

This research, which is "developed based on already prepared material", and therefore, considered as a type of bibliographic research (GIL, 2002, p. 44), was conducted with primary data obtained through the theses and dissertations registered in the electronic portal of the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), prepared by the Brazilian Institute of Information on Science and Technology (IBICT), whose first publications occurred in late 2002, and represent great importance for the highlight of Brazilian academic research worldwide.

As a research strategy, we used the State of Knowledge, which is the practice of "mapping and discussing a certain academic production in different fields of knowledge" (FERREIRA, 2002, p. 258), in order to "contribute to the constitution of the theoretical field of an area of knowledge, as they seek to identify the significant contributions to the construction of pedagogical theory and practice" (ROMANOWSKI; ENS, 2006, p. 39). In short, the research called State of Knowledge, must be substantially understood as a starting point for a larger study, so that, from it, the distance between the desired and the already accomplished on a certain research object is reduced, "enabling the circulation and exchange between the built production and the one to be built" (FERREIRA, 2002, p. 261).

Considering the relevance and complexity of the theme, this essay is directed towards studies on the gender issue in school dance, which are presented in the works defended and published in the BDTD between 2009 and 2019, as mentioned above, whose time cut is explained by the availability of the online texts of interest from the year 2009.

For this purpose, an exploratory research was carried out (GIL, 2007) in order to determine the number of dissertations and/or thesis whose research objects correspond
to themes related to the discussions about gender in school dance, proposing an update/familiarization of the academic production on the theme with current issues. The search in the BDTD portal was guided by descriptors that made it easier to find works related to the theme. The main descriptors defined were: gender; masculine gender; dance at school; masculine body; physical education; art.

Thus, the first step of the research was the selection, identification and collection of data contained in the works available in the BDTD platform, considering the descriptors (categories) and keywords related to the theme, as well as the inclusion and exclusion criteria defined for the separation of the works. For this step, it was necessary to resort to the general objective of this work, and then, in the second step, define the search descriptors, cited above, and establish the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Still in the constitution of the search field, we focused on: a) the year the thesis/dissertation was defended: free search; b) the language of the papers: we chose papers written in Portuguese; c) type of document: theses and dissertations. Considering this information, a total of 93 texts was reached, and after exploring the abstracts and introductions of the corpora, only 4 texts were selected, which, in the depth of the research, dealt directly with the theme intended in the objective of this study.

In the next step, we defined the information to be extracted from the selected works based on some previously established analysis categories, especially regarding the concepts of interest posed by the theoretical referential of the works and the methodologies approached. The subsequent steps concern the analytical process of the work.

Next, the organization of the research analysis is presented, which is structured in two sections. In the first, a general panorama of the texts is revealed, approaching aspects such as: the nature of the analyzed works; the authors; the programs and institutions. The next section deals with the notes resulting from the analysis of the data obtained through the texts, such as the problems, the theoretical and methodological references adopted in each research, and, finally, the main results pointed out by the works, and that bring direct relevance to the achievement of the objectives of this study.
3 Research overview

In this topic, we seek to highlight some essential characteristics of the four papers analyzed for this research, such as the gender and the titles of the authors, the graduate programs, as well as the institutions where the work was carried out and the methodological procedures adopted by the researchers.

Regarding the nature of the analyzed works, 3 are master's dissertations and 1 is a doctoral thesis. In reference to the gender of the researchers, 3 are male and only 1 is female, which demonstrates that such inquietudes have stimulated the researches that comprehend this problematic, especially on the part of male researchers who have experience with dance. In relation to the Postgraduate Programs where the studies were developed, we present: a master's thesis defended in 2009 by the Postgraduate Studies Program in Education: Curriculum, of PUC/SP; a master's dissertation defended in the year 2010 through the School of Physical Education and Sport of USP/SP; a doctoral thesis defended in the year 2018 through the Graduate Program in Brazilian Education of UFC/CE; and, a master's dissertation defended in the year 2019 by the Graduate Program in Education and Teaching of UFMG/MG.

Thus, in regional predominance, it can be seen that there is a greater amount of work developed through institutions located in the Southeast Region of Brazil, given the greater number of graduate programs in the state of São Paulo, as we can identify in the search refinement by institution in the BDTD in which the University of São Paulo (USP), the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), and the Paulista State University (UNESP), appear in the top three positions in the ranking of largest research production nationwide.

The three dissertation researches analyzed (2009, 2010, and 2019) elected the elementary school scene as research locus. The doctoral thesis analyzed (2018), developed its research in a dance school, a fact that does not distance the study from the educational sphere.
Regarding the methodological procedures adopted by the researchers of the four studies, it can be seen that all studies present a qualitative approach, whose methodological references presented in the texts indicate that this type of research is currently perceived as a transdisciplinary field that encompasses the human and social sciences (CHIZZOTTI, 2006), acting in the depth of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be performed within the quantitative approach (MINAYO, 2002), where the researcher appears at the center of the investigative field (LUDKE; ANDRE, 1986).

Two of the analyzed researches are defined as qualitative with ethnographic approaches, whose purpose is to interpret "the flow of social discourse" (GEERTZ, 2011, p. 10) and promote the "constitution of relationships, the creation of ties, empathies, and, why not say, affinities and/or identifications" (JOCA, 2016, p. 300), aspects that the author considers important for the reception, trust and availability of the participating subjects, in order to build a relationship that better privileges the understanding of their behaviors within the research.

4 The state of knowledge about the male gender in school dance: main notes

According to Romanowski & Ens. (2006, p. 39-40), when this type of investigation "addresses only one sector of the publications on the subject studied, it has been called 'state of knowledge'", thus, the purpose of analyzing the work of only one vehicle of academic production at the level of dissertations and theses, and considering the link of BDTD with 127 national research institutions, this study fits into the perspective of the state of knowledge.

In the corpora of the analyzed works, it was necessary to emphasize the problems that drove the referred research, of which we highlight the following How to mean the classes of soccer in the school curriculum for students of the initial years of elementary education of a public school in relation to the gender issue? (PEREIRA, 2009); how are gender relations conceived by children, in the classes of School Physical
Education with the content dance in the initial years of elementary education? (SOTERO, 2010); what are the expressions of gender and sexuality in ballet practice, and consequently in dance outside the formal educational system, and what are the prejudices experienced by dancers in this context? (CAMPOS, 2018); and, what are the senses and meanings given by students to gender and sexuality relations in dance practices, as well as the ways in which these relations are constituted? (FERREIRA, 2019).

It is essential to understand that research seeks, precisely, to respond to problems that are posed by a given reality (GIL, 2008), and that such problems arise exactly because of the insufficiency of knowledge about the explanation of a given phenomenon (GERHARDT & SOUZA, 2009). Thus, it is possible to understand from the problematic exposed in the papers, the need for discussions of gender in the effectiveness of the school curriculum, especially in the early stages of elementary education.

The theoretical references present in the papers show relevant conceptions about the main concepts of interest of the researches, among which we can highlight gender inequalities, which present themselves both at school and in the wider social sphere, as well as their relation with school dance in the context of body practices. Thus, based on the theoretical perspectives present in the analyzed works, we understand, according to Louro (1992), carvalho (1999) and Vianna (2003), that the emergence of the constitutive process of the concept of gender was based on public contestations about the social role played by women in the 40s and 60s. Later on, some studies indicate that the concept of gender results from social constructions influenced by the cultural-historical environment itself, which sometimes, based on demarcations of what it is to be a man and/or a woman, makes room for discrimination and exclusion between the sexes in the social context.

Louro (1997), Saffioti (2003), and Scott (1995) also point out that the conception of gender is not represented in the set of sexual characteristics, but in their social representations. It is directly associated with the relationship between historical subjects
inserted in a dominant social pattern. This relationship, which includes other social axes, establishes and builds meaning to power relations, therefore, being gender constituted by social interaction, it appears in the primary field of articulation of power relations.

The conceptions of gender that establish body practices in the cultural-historical context are constantly modified, since the cultural marks stamped on the bodies of the subjects only make sense socially. Thus, even social institutions tend to express social gender relations (SCOTT, 1990; LOURO, 1995, 2001; GOELLNER, 2010).

The references also address that due to the social definition of gender identity, social roles are hierarchically unequal between male and female subjects. Due to this hierarchy, the naturalization of male domination is perceived in the symbolic society, now familiar with the formative process of what it is to be a woman and a man (FARIA; NOBRE, 2003; BOURDIEU, 1995).

According to the conceptions of Seffner (2006), Goellner (2010), Nolasco (1995) and Almeida Campos (2007) about gender inequality in society, both argue that culture creates men and women, in the same way that it establishes rules for the effectiveness of masculinity and femininity in society in which the body starts to be educated to a conformity with the forms of behavior. Such rules, constructed and demanded by society, represent a vicious cycle of macho oppression that affects even men, oppressing and attacking those who decide to go against this panorama.

As for gender inequality in the educational scenario, authors such as Louro (1995), Faria; Nobre, (2003), Morgade (2000), and Auad (2004), state that since its creation, the school has promoted distinctive, separating, and classifying practices, substantiating and reproducing gender inequality based on stereotypes that give the female figure a submissive condition.

Boys and girls are unequally stimulated by elementary school education, since the school follows as an instrument that normatizes and disciplines gender relations, potentiating the domination and supremacy of boys through the involvement in some corporal practices that favor such desires (MOTTA & FAVACHO, 2018; FREITAS, 2018; CAMPOS, 2018; MEIRELES, 2018; BOURDIEU, 2017).
Although dance as a form of education in Brazil is characterized by plurality, its creative and cultural processes are associated with the manipulation of bodies whose body-dance relationship delineates traits of a normalized femininity. (MARQUES, 2007; KAEPPLER, 2013; ANDREOLI, 2010; HANNA, 1999).

According to Mauss (1974), Scarpato (2001) and Brazilian (2002), the sociocultural context is a learning field for the reading and execution of movements; however, dance at school causes conflict in the learning context for some children, especially boys, although as a content of physical education, dance enables a direct discussion with the history of humanity based on the reading of the world.

As far as the context of body practices is concerned, Nóbrega (2005) and Connell (2000) argue that the body is not configured as an instrument of the educational practice, since the actions developed in the school environment are productions of the subject, represented by his or her body, and this body is influenced by human experiences. The school, in turn, is the ideal space where the body refuses to reproduce what is normatively established by society. However, the insertion of the body in education shows the great complexity of perceiving ourselves as bodily beings.

Regarding the results and/or conclusive aspects presented in the analyzed works, we realize that even in the face of social advances, the current society is extremely discriminatory when it comes to the strong discrimination between the roles expected for men and women, according to Pereira (2009). In what refers to the educational field, according to the same author, we realize that there is a system of sexist thoughts and attitudes fed by the school institution that has contributed to the production and reproduction of gender discrimination at school, often through very subtle everyday mechanisms, such as language itself.

According to the author's understanding, the school is greatly influenced by society, and in it social discriminations are reproduced, and sometimes produced. In his considerations, the researcher believes that we should avoid confrontational activities between boys and girls at school, in order not to reinforce the competitiveness between
genders. Thus, activities that mix boys and girls without a pedagogical reflection may potentiate gender inequalities at school.

Corroborating such notes, the work of Sotero (2010) exposes that there is a sexist reading in dance by the subjects, indicating that in their perception there are dances appropriate for each sex. According to the interpretations of the questionnaire applied to the subjects who collaborated in the research, they give significant importance to the opinion of other colleagues about the body activities that boys and girls perform. As a result, boys refuse to participate in activities that have characteristics that are socially considered feminizing.

Considering the perception of Sotero (2010), in the formation of school dance groups, dance skills are taken into consideration, a fact that the author considers as a form of exclusion, since such attitude motivates boys to exclude themselves from dancing at school, many times not because of gender issues, but for considering themselves corporally incapable. The researcher also reinforces that in order to combat this type of conception, it is necessary that the teaching practice contemplates daily activities that enable equal results for all genders.

As for the social stigmas associated with young people who choose ballet as a training possibility, Campos (2018) points out that in the city where the research took place, there is still discomfort about the fact that boys want to be dancers, but he believes that in the same way that stigmatization is the result of a collective process, destigmatization can also be the result of another process. The research brought a view that the construction of stigmas related to dance has a connection with the definition of the dancers’ sexuality, and that in reinforcement to this fact, the heterosexual marriage of the dancers helped to deconstruct stigmas that indicated doubts about the sexual preferences of boys who chose different paths from the ones that were instituted as correct for the city dwellers. "In this research, I could perceive destigmatization happening at two points: the one that linked dance to defining the dancers’ sexuality and the one that did not credit dance with the possibility of survival and profession" (CAMPOS, 2018, p. 189).
Ferreira (2019) argues in his research that there is a moral panic created around the "Gender Ideology" that keeps children and adolescents away from these debates, a fact that further reinforces the need to legitimize the presence of these discussions in school in order to create possible space for dialogue, welcoming, and the elaboration of meaning for the experiences. The researcher shows that there is an orchestrated surveillance over children regarding the corporal practices they develop, and that this gender surveillance has a greater influence on boys, especially in the context of dance in their corporal experiences.

5 Final considerations

From the points made in this study, it can be seen both in theoretical and epistemological discourses, described in the problems indicated by the research, that there is a weakness in the school context regarding the little approach on gender, sexuality and all the ramifications that present themselves in the school scene that come from these issues, and that often manifest themselves in a discriminatory context, sometimes being censored.

In the theoretical diffusion, it is also noted that there is an unequal hierarchy between the male and female genders, and because of this, male domination in society is so notorious, contributing to the maintenance of a vicious cycle of male chauvinist oppression. This fact also presents itself in the constitution of school practices that produce and reproduce gender inequality through the accentuation of social stereotypes.

The studies also revealed the importance of not enhancing the competitiveness between genders, since such attitude tends to reinforce even more the discrimination and inequality between genders at school, having seen the great distinction about the social roles expected for men and women, and that to combat the discriminatory action in the school context, it is necessary that the pedagogical practice drives the discussion about gender equality in the context of its practical implementation.
References


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