



History of dance in magazines: circulation of cultural patterns in the periodic press of Physical Education (1930-1950)¹

História da dança em revista: circulação de padrões culturais na imprensa periódica da Educação Física (1930-1950)

Historia de la danza en revistas: circulación de patrones culturales en la prensa periódica de educación física (1930-1950)

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Abstract

This article investigates the circulation of the theme Dance in four Physical Education magazines between 1932 and 1949. It mobilizes the concepts of struggles representations, practices consumption and appropriation, in order to understand the disputes over the uses of this content in schooling. Methodologically, it uses documentary criticism and the evidentiary paradigm to analyze the printed material and the theme. There was an intense consumption of texts and books from North American origin, with speeches that emphasized the dance ability to allow the free expression of feelings, defending regional and folkloric dances as the most appropriate style, since the theme was associated with a primordial essence, considered lost over time, but which could be rescued to foster patriotism.

Keywords: History of dance; Representations; Periodic press.

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Resumo

Este artigo investiga a circulação do tema Dança em quatro revistas da Educação Física entre 1932 e 1949. Mobiliza os conceitos de lutas de representações, de práticas de consumo e apropriação, para compreender as disputas sobre os usos desse conteúdo na escolarização. Metodologicamente, utiliza a crítica documental e o paradigma indiciário para analisar os impressos e a temática. Constata um intenso consumo de textos e livros de origem norte-americana, com discursos que enfatizavam a capacidade da dança de permitir a livre expressão dos sentimentos, defendendo as danças regionais e folclóricas como o estilo mais apropriado, uma vez que ao tema era associada uma essência primordial, considerada perdida ao longo do tempo, mas que poderia ser resgatada para fomentar o patriotismo.

Palavras-chave: História da dança; Representações; Imprensa periódica.

Resumen

Este artículo investiga la circulación del tema Danza en cuatro revistas de Educación Física entre 1932 y 1949. Moviliza los conceptos de luchas de representaciones, prácticas de consumo y apropiación para comprender las disputas por los usos de este contenido en la escolarización. Metodológicamente, utiliza la crítica documental y el paradigma indiciario para analizar el material impreso y la temática. Hubo un intenso consumo de textos y libros de origen norteamericano, con discursos que enfatizaron la capacidad de la danza para permitir la libre expresión de sentimientos, defendiendo las danzas regionales y folclóricas como el estilo más adecuado, ya que el tema estaba asociado a una esencia primordial, considerado perdido en el tiempo, pero que podría rescatarse para fomentar el patriotismo.

Palabras clave: Historia de la danza; Representaciones; Prensa periodica.

Introduction

Historically, dance² is part of the Physical Education teacher's list of knowledge, becoming an object of teaching in the area. However, dance is also considered as teaching content for the Arts and has come to be recognized as an area of knowledge, with signs specific to its language (BRASIL, 1998).

This study analyzes the development of proposals about the teaching of Dance in the 1930s and 1940s, based on the circulation of this knowledge in the Physical Education periodical press. It aims to contribute to the History of Dance as an object of teaching in Physical Education and other areas with which it interacts, since as has already been diagnosed in the area of dance studies and teaching, there is a gap in the own history of this field knowledge configuration (MUGLIA-RODRIGUES; CORREIA, 2013; BRASILEIRO; SOUZA; FRAGOSO, 2015).

In the period studied, social actors with different backgrounds and interests were committed to creating narratives and representations about dance, with the aim of recognizing it as a universal phenomenon, which could be used as a tool for the development of certain virtues that they believed to be necessary for young people in the schooling process.

In this sense, we seek to problematize the representations that were being produced for dance in the Physical Education periodical press in the 1930s and 1940s, considering the theories and ideas that underpinned the proposals for its use, using the concept of *struggles representation* (CHARTIER, 1990) to identify the authors and actors, their actions and disputes about the use of dance at school and its educational value.

In order to show what was being discussed about dance, we used the first Physical Education magazines that were created in Brazil. They are: the *Revista de Educação Física* (of the Army) (REFE) (1932-2022), an institutional magazine; *Educação Física* (EPHy) (1932-1945), a commercial magazine; as well as the *Revista Brasileira de Educação Física* (RBEF) (1944-1952); and also *Arquivos da Escola Nacional de Educação Física e Desportos* (AENEFDs) (1945-1966), which was produced by a non-commercial Physical Education teacher training school. These forms were created by different institutions, but they have the same purpose in common: to inform and train the reader about what was happening in the world of Physical Education, sports, physical culture practices and leisure.

Methodologically, we work with *documentary criticism* (BLOCH, 2001; CHARTIER, 1990), understanding history as “[...] a science of men in time” (BLOCH, 2001, p. 67). Therefore, we agree with the author when he states that “[...] the past is, by definition, a given that nothing will change. But knowledge of the past is something in progress, which incessantly transforms and improves” (BLOCH, 2001, p. 75).

In the analysis of the sources, we mobilized the methodological possibilities of the *evidentiary paradigm* (GINZBURG, 1999), seeking to find *evidence* that would enable us to interpret what may possibly have happened during the implementation of mandatory Physical Education in schools by the Secondary Education Reform of 1931; understand discussions about teaching content; and identify ways in which they could be part of a national policy project.

² In the study, the use of the expression “dance” with a lowercase letter means that it is a common usage, which is related to the phenomenon of dance as culture. The same expression with the initial capital letter indicates that we are referring to Dance as the content of a school subject, in the case of Physical Education. In direct quotations, the expression was kept in its original spelling.

We take as a basis the concepts of *consumption practices and appropriation*, tactics and strategy (CERTEAU, 1994) to think about the different operations, forms of consumption and uses made by authors and editors in their daily lives. When operating with these sources, we are warned by Chartier (1991) that there is no neutrality in editorial practices. Print is not only a vehicle for disseminating educational discourses and organizing knowledge; opinion former. Thus, we pay attention to the textual and typographic devices that produce meaning to think about the different operations, forms of consumption and uses made by authors and editors in their daily lives.

Thinking about everyday life involves analyzing the relations, sometimes conflicting, that are constructed by social actors in everyday life. With this, *senses* and *meanings* are produced to think about theories and pedagogical propositions about the teaching of Dance in Brazil. Tolfo and Piccinini (2007) guide us about the existence of differences between *senses* and *meanings*. According to the authors, while the latter arises from a collective construction, the result of a specific historical, economic and social context, the meanings are characterized by being a personal production due to the individual apprehension of collective meanings in everyday experiences. These transformations that senses and meanings undergo are constructed through a dialectical relation with reality.

Therefore, interrogating historical sources is an opportunity to understand the role of printed materials in the production of content for school subjects and discourses that sought to attribute meanings to projected practices. In this case, dance and its theoretical and practical conformation in the space of schooling pass through the world of printed matter, in particular, of authors who placed themselves in the position of mediators of a knowledge that could compose the hall of knowledge of teachers and contribute to the formation of youth in the 1930s and 1940s as a result of a political project proposed by the State.

To develop this operation, it is necessary to locate the clues and “[...] reassemble a complex reality that cannot be experienced directly” (GINZBURG, 1999, p. 152) to identify the senses and meanings proposed by the authors and editors of the Physical Education periodical press about the Dance theme. Thus, through the periodical press, we sought to understand the representations that these subjects had regarding this practice, which they sought to disseminate to society at that time.

In this sense, in the analysis of printed materials, as objects that allow us to get closer to a certain reality, we seek to attend to what Barros (2012, p. 418) calls the “place of production” of historical sources, realizing, in this way, that these Documents already constituted, at a given historical moment, a “[...] monument through which those who wrote or produced them sought to impress, manipulate, convince, move, move other men of their time”.

Physical Education magazines as devices for producing a history for dance

Initially, we tried to locate the recurrence of the Dance theme in the printed matter in the search for evidence of what was being debated in the country. In this way, we carried out a survey of the topic in articles published in magazines that are part of our *documentary corpus*, in which we found a total of 37 works. After reading and analyzing the texts, we identified that, of this number, 12 works had in common the attempt to narrate a history for dance that could justify its presence in teaching.

In Chart 1, below, it is possible to view some information about the texts that addressed the history of dance, such as the title of each article, name and the authors' biography, magazine and year of publication of each article.

Chart 1 – Published works related to the history of dance during the 1930s and 1940s

Title	Author	Biography	Journal	Year
A dança e a Educação Física	João Ribeiro Pinheiro	Brazilian Army soldier, assigned to the 3rd Infantry Group in Rio de Janeiro and advisor to the <i>Associação Brasileira de Educação</i> (ABE)	REFE	1933
A dança - através dos tempos	Mario de Queiroz Rodrigues	Teacher and Army soldier, graduated from the Centro Militar de Educação Física (CMEF)	REFE	1933
A physolophia da dança	Barbara Page	Assistant Professor of Physical Education at Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU)	EPHy	1937
Historia da Educação Physica: a dança e seu significado religioso	Horacio B. Canziani	Professor, graduated from the Technical Institute of Physical Education of Associações Cristãs de Moços (ACMs) South American, Montevideo	EPHy	1938
A dança e a Educação Física	Ruth Murray	Physical Education teacher and pioneer in the field of dance education. She was on faculty at Wayne State University for 46 years	EPHy	1939
A dança embeleza o corpo e levanta o espírito	Pedro Horacio Magnin	Doctor, graduated from the Colegio Nacional Buenos Aires in 1943	EPHy	1939
O poder da expressão da dança	Julieta D. Zamora	Unable to find information about the author	EPHy	1939
A dança através dos tempos	Autoria desconhecida	-	REFE	1942
Conceito da dança como arte	Maria Helena Pabst de Sá Earp	Physical Education teacher and artistic director in the area of dance	RBEF	1945
Uma análise cultural da dança: a dança primitiva	Margaret Newell H'Doubler	Dance Instructor and biologist, Creator of the first Dance Course at the University of Wisconsin (UW)	AENEF Ds	1946
A dança como fator educacional	Maria Helena Pabst de Sá Earp	-	RBEF	1947
Uma análise cultural da dança: a dança primitiva	Margaret Newell H'Doubler	-	RBEF	1948

Source: Made by the authors.

When observing Chart 1, we realize that, over the two decades of the specialized periodical press production, many texts published about the Dance theme sought to produce a historical discussion, problematizing this content to give meaning to its teaching, with the intention of alerting readers about its development, or even what they considered as a degeneration of its primordial essence. These publications were more common in commercial magazines.

A constant in the articles is that they do not include references or documentary sources that could give credibility to the work. Without determining a periodization in time and space about the topic discussed, the professor and soldier Mario de Queiroz Rodrigues (1933, p. 30), for example, stated that dance, as it is considered by several scholars to be as old as the world and because he had a very particular relation with music, it led him to think “[...] that it was by singing and clapping that the first men danced and that it was later to the sound of the flute that they regularized their movements”.

We can see that the history of civilization appears as a fundamental argument for the inclusion of dance in teaching. However, no references are presented that could prove such statements, which highlights the authority exercised by the voice of the military and Physical Education teachers in that period, as if rhetoric alone was enough to guarantee the truth of the statement.

When observing the text by doctor and professor Pedro Horácio Magnin, published in 1939 in EPHy, it is also possible to note that the history of dance in the world makes up a large part of its structure and appears as one of the main arguments for the inclusion of this practice in Physical Education, a fact that is repeated in a large part of the texts published during the 1930s and 1940s. Let's see:

This great antiquity and this spontaneous character of the dance, its persistence, which shows it to be associated with the origins and developments of societies, suggest that it corresponds to a profoundly human interest and undoubtedly exerts a useful function in life (MAGNIN, 1939, p. 18).

Thus, there is a need to historicize dance, showing that it has existed since time immemorial and that it has continually developed and evolved. However, the authors do not cite documentary sources or materials to talk about the history of dance and give veracity to the narrative presented.

In another example, without citing any type of reference on which it may have been based, Canziani (1938) said that, in relation to dance in the Middle Ages, during the first three centuries, the practice was not permitted by the Church. However, he explained that, progressively, as occurred in other religions, Christianity began to appropriate dance, starting to use it in ceremonies and religious events.

In this sense, we realized that the symbolic capital attributed to military personnel, doctors, teachers, in print, enabled them to be recognized as authorities. The fact that they publish or are published in print is considered enough to justify and legitimize dance as knowledge that should be valued as part of national culture, without questioning the veracity of the information presented. Therefore, it was unnecessary to present empirical data, the result of studies collected through historical, anthropological or archaeological investigations.

Based on the evidence found in the texts, it was possible to see that there was beginning to be the development of a discourse about dance that refers it to a representation associated with an ancestral origin, which stated that it was essentially good and developed over time, but concomitantly, also presenting aspects of its degeneration. The authors point out the need to rethink dance, rescuing its superior spiritual quality, as this practice could help human beings

to be better, more developed, suited to the controlled and disciplined modern society that was seeking to be produced at that time in Brazil.

The military man João Ribeiro Pinheiro (1933), for example, in his work published in 1933 in REFE, stated that dance should be understood as a pure practice, holding a unique and natural essence of the human being:

If we are to view dance as a purely educational aspect, it will become too technical, perhaps severe. However, it must be conceived as a muscular, original and spontaneous expression of internal states, arising, not from the obligation to execute it, but from its own pleasure, from the spontaneous poetry of the movement.

In Figure 1, below, taken from the article by Julieta Zamora, published in 1939 in EPHy, we can notice how the author and/or the editors of EPHy sought, in an astute way, to emphasize the discourse that dance was a pure practice and spontaneous, capable of providing the fullest joy, useful for this purpose, using images of children who seem more like they are playing than performing a dance.

Figure 1 – Students from a North American school performing regional dances.



Source: Physical Education Magazine (1939).

Which image, for the author or editors, would best represent beauty, expressiveness, spontaneity and purity, if not that of the child? We know that children are conventionally understood as beings with a pure, naive, beautiful, delicate, loving, enlightened, creative and sincere soul, a being who loves and always seeks fun. Children are, at least in the eyes of most of us, naturally good and lead life with the lightness of someone who sees everything as a fun and pleasurable game.³

³ The development of the most diverse feelings attributed to children and childhood can be seen in historical records since the Middle Ages. It was from the 16th century onwards that a “feeling of childhood” began to emerge in society, driven mainly by the reduction in infant mortality, which enabled an attachment to the child and awakened an interest that did not yet exist in this phase due to the high infant mortality rates in the Middle Ages (ARIÈS, 1981). In the 19th century, romantic literary production, especially the works of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, strengthened this image of the child as an innocent and pure being, however this vision, on several occasions, was limited to the aristocracy and the upper social classes. According to Ariès (1981), this restriction that existed at the time contradicted the widespread romantic conception of children, causing, at that time, a concern to rescue children who were inserted in the world of work and exploitation. From the end of the

We understand that the children's images are used strategically in Zamora's article (1939) to reinforce the discourse that dance, which she considered legitimate, it had an essence. The defense, therefore, would be for regional or folk dance, which would privilege naturalness, fun, beauty, expanding and elevating the spirit. The real dance would be much more similar to a game among children than to the form of seduction and manifestation of impure sexual desires that occurred in the practice of "very modern" dances.

In this representation that is circulated in print, just like the child, dancing would be good by nature. Dancing would mean cultivating innocence, filling the time of curiosity about erotic themes, which would make her less naive and malicious about her sexuality. But not just any children were portrayed, but rather female children. The images of male children would undergo another representation, being linked to preparation for the world of work and war, with dances that simulated fights or work and productive activities. Girls were associated with innocence and a reproductive world, with daily actions to take care of the family and home (GOELLNER, 2003; BRUSCHI, 2015).

Corroborating the Zamora's (1939) thoughts, in a text published in 1941, without informed authorship, the representation of the child is also used to explain that dancing is a natural practice of human beings, which has accompanied them since birth.

Dance is not an artifice. It constitutes, in its origins, a natural exercise. Proof of this is that the infant, before walking, jumps and lies down, moving his little body and arms, which can be considered as a dance performance. Later, the child, using his toys with the same spontaneity, runs, jumps, spins, does pirouettes, has gestures and attitudes that are, together, the elements of a more or less diluted dance. The difference with true dance is that all these expressions lack unity, harmony and special meaning. Satisfy these requirements, and you will have the dance. You will then have gained in grace, beauty, saving time and energy, at the same time as in health (SAUDE..., 1941, p. 31).

The author seeks to explain that dance should not be seen just as a teaching instrument, but as a properly human practice. It is interesting to note that the basic characteristics he points out for the constitution of a "true" dance are, basically, the principles of femininity, that is, grace and beauty. Thus, dance, in its essence, for the authors, had a strict relation with the child's first movements, that is, with natural, light, expressive movements, endowed with innocence and purity.

Bruschi (2019), when carrying out a survey of the production of works related to the topic of Early Childhood Physical Education and Secondary Physical Education, between the years 1932 and 1948, in REF and EPHy, found a total of 102 texts dedicated to the subject, which showed, according to the author, "[...] a concern in providing didactic-pedagogical conditions, aimed mainly at teachers" (p. 234). In this way, we realize that, in this period of initial development of Physical Education, the physical training of children is understood as a primordial issue, largely because the aim was to form a new man, starting in childhood. These were attributed opportunities for a future change in the conditions of Brazil and its population, making children and youth the possibility of saving the nation.

19th century, the conception of the child as an essential element in the construction of public policies was already present in society. According to Kuhlmann Júnior (2010, p. 22), "[...] the feeling of childhood would not be non-existent in ancient times or in the Middle Ages [...]". In this sense, it is necessary to seek to understand the ways in which childhood manifests itself in different times and spaces, bearing in mind that these ways of perceiving the child mix, interact with each other throughout history and serve to understand the child in current times.

In analyzing the articles, we identified that a romantic thought is present in the representations of most authors. For them, dance would be a universal practice that would allow human beings to express their emotions, due to the fact that their movements are driven by rhythm, which would identify it as one of the preliminary impulses of the animal universe.

Page (1937, p. 74), for example, stated that, despite the evolution of the human being, it was still possible to notice the strong relation between love and courtship, because, as the author said in her interpretation of Rousseau, “[...] dancing is an admirable preliminary to court, and the best way in which youth reveals, to each other, in grace and decorum, their qualities and defects [...]”.

Likewise, for Zamora (1939), dance, in its real essence, would be the artistic form of movement, signs, and bodily expression, which would transcend its spiritual condition through clear and beautiful acts. Havelock Ellis, the author cited by Page (1937), in his book entitled *A dança da vida*, in which he discusses dance as the art of life, promotes a philosophy of development of the self through the art of dancing. In his words, “Dance is not only closely associated with religion, it has an equally intimate association with love. Here, in fact, the relation is even more primitive, as it is much older than man” (ELLIS, 2021, position 44).⁴

When reflecting on the relationship between dance and sexual stimulation, Page (1937) discussed that it would be related to the natural desire of human beings to be worthy of the applause and praise of others and, in this sense, dance would be an excellent form of encouraging love, offering exposure to physical skills and abilities. It is possible to notice that the author does not seem to feel comfortable dealing with the topic of Dance and the seduction actions that involve attracting partners to perform the sexual act. Her interpretation of sexual stimulation brings another, more puritan perspective on dance, as with other authors, associating it with romantic love and distancing itself from carnal passions, considered low and inelegant for the morals and customs of the period.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, author cited by Page (1937), believed in the existence of the natural goodness of human beings, however he highlighted the way in which man could be negatively affected by social life, citing, on several occasions, dancing and singing as examples. In one of these examples, the author philosophizes:

singing and dancing, true children of love and leisure, became the entertainment, or rather, the occupation of idle and grouped men and women [...]. He who sang or danced best, the most beautiful, the strongest, the most skillful or the most eloquent became the most considered, and that was the first step towards inequality and vice at the same time; from these first preferences were born, on the one hand, vanity and contempt, on the other, shame and envy (ROUSSEAU, 2003, p. 32).

⁴ E-books have a different way of organization, and some use the “position” unit to mark the location of the book. In this case, there is no reference to the electronic address, as the books are documents stored in the support's memory. The final reference is to a book or article, like printed publications, with the indication that it is an e-book edition of the work. The 2018 NBR 6023 of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards, despite having been updated recently, still does not directly inform the use of e-books. The excerpts that refer to the correct way to indicate pages are, on many occasions, generic and do not explain how to proceed in unforeseen situations, such as when there is no traditional pagination model. Therefore, based on the few recommendations that can be found in the standards and considering that the presentation of an e-book can occur by indicating the "position" instead of the "page", we decided to indicate this unit in the reference when there was none in the reference book to conventional pagination.

We can notice, based on the use made of Rousseau's ideas, that there is agreement with the thoughts expressed by the philosopher regarding dance. Rousseau, in his work, proposed a natural and spontaneous education, in which teaching should not establish contact with the social environment, which, in his view, would be extremely dirty and corrupt. His romanticism, in relation to man and society, is transposed to the understanding they are developing about the role of dance in the educational field and social practices.

Although Rousseau points out important issues, and to a certain extent “advanced”, as there are no ideas outside of his own time and conditions of production, we understand that he was unable to overcome historical conditions and understand that man is not just a being natural, but it is also, inevitably, a social being. In this sense, dancing is not a good or bad practice, but rather what human beings make of it, according to current social rules.

As Rousseau's quote and the use of his ideas to talk about the meaning of dance demonstrate, authors at that time sought to legitimize dance as a teaching content for Physical Education through social values considered virtuous and decorous, free from evil influences and corruptions of the adult world, which makes perfect sense, when we think with Rousseau's pedagogical philosophy as a reference.

The desire to use dance as a way of educating about morals is evident in the speech of the authors of the period. An example of this is Magnin (1939) who stated that, when subconscious desires are too contained and controlled, their inappropriate and cruel explosion occurs in the subject's mind. In this sense, according to the author, “Art gives repressed sexual inclinations the opportunity to free themselves in a game of impalpable images. This way, emotional overpressure and the explosion of neurosis or delirium are avoided” (MAGNIN, 1939, p. 19). We noticed that there is a concern with controlling the sexual impulses of human beings, especially women, who were not viewed favorably by current society and, therefore, were heavily censored and dance was perceived as an effective instrument for this purpose.

In an excerpt from Margaret H'Doubler's work, translated and published in AENEFDs in 1946, and republished by RBEF in 1948, it is possible to once again perceive the existence of the idea that dance would be capable of releasing repressed feelings and desires, constituting- as a type of human refuge, thus making it possible to contribute to the maintenance of mental and sentimental balance:

Primitive man did not know he was making art. He translated only into movement and sound his feelings, desires, and needs, expressing his life and his belief in the gods. He had no other outlet for his repressed feelings other than through the movements of his own body. Then he danced (H'DOUBLER, 1946, p. 57).

In the author's speech, dance is seen as an instrument for releasing feelings, a type of medicine or salvation used by human beings. We realized, in this way, that dance was understood as a means of expressing human emotions and impulses, and the main objective of most of the authors of the texts was to provide guidance for this practice so that only sensations and feelings considered “good” were expressed by her. Therefore, dancing should not only be allowed, but it was necessary, as it would be a way of controlling the sexual impulses inherent to human beings, since, as Havelock Ellis (2021) had already demonstrated through his studies, sexuality was present at every moment of human life, including childhood.

There is a lot of historical information presented by the authors, however, little of it has a reliable and theoretical basis. The sources from which the arguments are extracted are commonly not cited, which demonstrates once again the authority exercised by certain individuals with regard to the production and circulation of discourses about the various topics related to a physical culture in formation, in this case, the military, doctors, teachers, some national and others international, mainly North Americans.

The authors who sought to relate a history to dance, just as Rousseau does, when they sought to attribute a beginning to dancing activities at popular festivals, used, as a backdrop, a Philosophy of History, detached from documentary sources and evidence, just clues rhetoric that suited a "rational explanation" based on the principle of the possibility of having happened at some point in history.

We noticed the presence of an evolutionary discourse associated with the development of dance in the texts. There is, in the speeches produced, a representation that makes a value judgment about the stage at which each movement or manifestation of dance was found in each civilization, history or culture. For the authors, there would have been, at some point in the history of humanity, the birth of an essential dance that, primarily, it was good but that it was degenerated, losing its grace, its beauty and its original values, leaving only a caricature of what it could be as a necessary element for educability and, consequently, for the evolution of society.

Army instructor Mario de Queiroz Rodrigues, for example, in his article published in 1933 in REFE, explains that, in ancient Rome, dance was close to being corrupted and was not valued, losing its essence and reaching the point where Romans to mix and even confuse it with pantomime (RODRIGUES, 1933).

Likewise, Stanley Hall is named by Ellis (2021) as one of the most studied and elucidated educators of the current period who would also have immensely regretted the decline of dance. Hall was a very successful British psychologist and dancer, teacher and instructor of several dancers in Austin, Texas, in the United States. According to the author, Hall believed that "[...] the revival of dance [...] is imperatively necessary to give balance to the nerves, schooling to the emotions, strength to the will, and to harmonize the feelings and intellect with the body that supports them" (ELLIS, 2021, position 58).

Page (1937, p. 71), when discussing the style of theater dance, which, according to the author, appeared at the end of the 19th century, stated: "The main purpose was commercial exploitation, but little by little it became it was related to the practices [sic] of poorly frequented places". Here again we have a value judgment, as we know that dance, like any other cultural manifestation, is not good or bad, but rather it is what men and women make of it, and can serve the most diverse purposes.

For the author, it was enough to look at the studies carried out on ancient civilizations to realize that it was very common to use dance as the first step towards sexual promiscuity. Still according to Page (1937, p. 74), "Havelock Ellis demonstrates the role that dance has played, in this regard, among the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans".

With regard to Havelock Ellis, Russo and Carrara (2002), they identified, in their study on Psychoanalysis and Sexology in Rio de Janeiro between the wars, that, between the years 1933 and 1936, the publishers *Civilização Brasileira and Companhia Editora Nacional* would have published, in a partnership effort, at least five works authored by the doctor. At the time, Ellis would already be seen as a reference in studies of male sexuality, however he would only have been exposed to society as a member of the New York City Forensic Medicine Society.

For the authors, this form of retraction used "[...] exemplifies very well what appears to have been one of the publishers' strategies to publish this type of literature without running the risk of being accused of being licentious [...]" (RUSSO and CARRARA, 2002,

p. 282). However, these publications also reveal the strength that, in an astute way, such discourses about human sexuality were acquiring in society during this period, as well as highlighting the importance and relevance of the doctor as an authorized voice to speak about the most diverse subjects considered as social problems.

Canziani (1938) argued that the new ways of organizing society in the 19th century offered dance new characteristics of theater. The Church, upon observing these new forms of dance and the not so well-regarded places in which they took place, began to consider it a reprehensible practice. In this sense, Canziani (1938, p. 15) explained that “[...] this opposition is not essentially against dance, but the use of it [...]”, as religious dance degenerated, losing its history and legacy, being condemned and expelled from the Church and Western religion. Here again we see an idea of social degeneration, which was also reflected in dance, as if in history there had been a moment of essential purity. In this way, we see religion dictating the possible uses of the body and its expression through dance.

Apparently, there was a very strong moral discourse about dance, which praised many of its various aspects, but which, on the other hand, also condemned it. Sexualized dance was not socially well-regarded, with the Church playing a very strong role in this repression. In this sense, a value judgment was made, in which dance seemed to have, for the authors, the obligation to exercise superior functions of spirituality and to reject sexual desires.

In Zamora's (1939, p. 22-23) statement, it is possible to perceive the censorship that was sought to be done against certain types of dance, considered corrupt, immoral and indecent practices, harmful to the health of the spirit:

The dance that takes place in closed halls, in murky environments, unhealthy for the body and spirit, to the rattling of infernal jazz, will not be able in any way to fulfill the purpose for which it was intended in its primordial essence.

The author seemed to be very concerned about the way dance was being seen and practiced by society at that time, considering that it was losing its “true essence” several times and turning into a shallow and meaningless practice. According to the author (1939, p. 23), “They made something grotesque and disgustingly sad out of something delicate, subtle, enchanting, emotional [sic] and emotional”, transforming art into a tremendous “clown”.

In the analysis of the sources, it became evident that there was a strong discourse about a dance that had great educational potential, but that had lost its essence and needed to be rescued so that it could help society achieve its main objectives, which would be the racial and national unity and progress of Western civilization.

At EPHY, specifically, the evidence found reveals a great influence of what is considered Greek aesthetics, with images and monuments portrayed as an ideal representation of the culture of the period. Therefore, we believe that, in relation to dance, this meaning was also being considered, since through dance it was sought to achieve an ideal model of bodily and spiritual perfection, established as the ideology of Greek culture.

Some clues allow us to trace this relation. The first is the article published by Earp (1945). The author, when dealing with dance as art in her article published in RBEF, discussed that in Greece it was possible to find the most prudent aesthetic stimuli, mainly because of the philosophy that existed there, which valued an “integral education”, which used all the most varied artistic forms and, consequently, directed dance to the sphere of teaching, as a way of providing beautification of the human body and spirit.

Likewise, when dealing with the essence of dance, Canziani (1938) discussed that, in the past, depending on their beliefs about life and death, the Greek population would have sought to make life something very beautiful and pleasant. In this sense, the essential

elements of Greek religiosity were bodily fullness and the aptitude for dancing, which meant this practice was present in both teaching and religion. According to the author, “All the data reveal to us, in the Greek mentality, a deep belief that dance was observed and considered to the highest degree by the deities” (CANZIANI, 1938, p. 14).

In a text published in 1942 in REFE, without authorship, when addressing the uses made of dance throughout the history of civilization, the author explains that it was cultivated in different places and historical moments. However, in his view, in ancient Greece, “[...] it is most evident and in the radiance of its splendor, it even becomes a basic and indispensable element in national education” (A DANSA..., 1942).

In relation to this strong influence of Greek aesthetics in the discourses in the area of Physical Education of the period, Schneider and Ferreira Neto (2006), when analyzing the images published and put into circulation in the EPHY magazine, identified a large part of them were related to the representations that solidified with regard to the body model designed in Greece. In this sense, “Many of the images that are printed on the covers of the magazine are dedicated to the pantheon of Greek gods, mainly Apollo and Venus” (p. 82).

The model presented in the magazine, which was supposedly adopted in Greece, seemed to represent, for the authors, the point of dance's rise, that is, the moment in which it was used in its essence and should then be rescued. So, possibly, the presence of dance in teaching would be justified, in part, by its ability to work on bodily and spiritual aesthetics, that is, by its educational potential, evidenced mainly by its use in Greek education. Therefore, in that period of the 1930s and 1940s, it was sought to provide “[...] the creation of stronger men, representatives of the 'ideal beauty of a more complete and nobler race’” (SUGUIHURA, 2007, p. 203), which was an attempt to rescue a model idealized by the Greeks, a classical period in which philosophical and aesthetic thinking about the body was developed.

Regarding this search for the formation of a new Brazilian man, Borges (1993) explains that, upon arriving in Brazil, scientific thinking would have focused on regeneration as the basis for the formation of a new national identity, paving the way for a hopeful future, instead of looking at the country's past as something glorious to be rescued, as Europeans did, Brazilian intellectuals saw it as the origin of degeneration.

According to Caires (2019, p. 72), Brazilian scientism initially assumed a progressive nature, which was also manifested in artistic criticism, enabling the emergence of a trend that he calls “positive aesthetics”, an expression that, according to the author, would have been used by a writer for *Revista Musical e de Bellas Artes*, in 1879. However, according to the author, it was from the turn of the century that scientific discourse would be taken to another level in the country, as:

The turn of the century, bringing the formal boldness of the avant-garde and, especially, the modernist generations that would become active from the end of the 1910s onwards would reactivate the scientific discourse and take it to a new level of reactionary way. At that moment, the remnants of *positive aesthetics* would reinforce the opposition to ‘news’. They would realign their discourse, trying to attack the proposals introduced by the modernists with the weapons of scientific rhetoric, categorizing them as manifestations of a process of degeneration. At that moment, the discourse of art critics linked to positive aesthetics would cling strongly to the traditions of the past (CAIRES, 2019, p. 73, emphasis added).

Modernism, as an artistic expression, mainly through painting and sculpture, came to be seen as the principle that highlighted the degeneration of that contemporary world. The past was understood as a glorious time to be rescued, which would also have been

reflected in art. It is worth remembering that, in 1937, the *Degenerate Art Exhibition*⁵ took place in Munich, Germany, which would have strong repercussions in Brazil.

In this sense, possibly, the discourses that began to circulate about dance during this period brought with them this more conservative scientific vision that was being disseminated in the country, strongly attached to the old and traditional manifestations, which would represent the moment of its apex, refusing any new artistic style, because the new, at that time, could represent the possibility of something that would deviate from what was considered normal, causing an alleged physical, moral and intellectual degeneration.

Regional dances seemed to be the most recommended to be included in school, as they brought with them, in the view of most authors, a unique essence of joy, purity and nationalism, originating from the development of their history and origin. The predilection for regional and folkloric dances also meets the political and cultural context of the period, becoming people from Brazil the Brazilian, exalting their culture, their traditions that have long been underestimated and inferior (OLIVEN, 2001).

Zamora (1939), for example, in several moments of his text, sought to show how dances were always present in the lives of ancient people, including even animals, seeking to reveal their true essence and importance for humanity, highlighting the relevance, mainly regional dances. To try to convince readers about the true meaning of dance, the author explains:

It is quite possible that the mere idea of the spectacle of dancing animals, or even of primitive men and yet in a state of savagery, could provoke an ironic, pious, tolerant smile from educated and 'civilized' people. It seems like a mistake to me [...]. We have forgotten the secret of the pure and beautiful dances of past centuries; We do not know how to understand the charm or the poetry of the regional dances of villagers and fishing people, which are much more similar to primitive dances than to our rhythmic and widespread 'fox-trots' and other modern steps that fashion has popularized [...] (ZAMORA, 1939, p. 22).

The author seemed to be sure of one thing: it was the regional dances, which would have been abandoned, and not the new dance forms she called “modern”, which should gain social prominence. According to Zamora (1939), dance should never become an element of excitement, a function it would be performing at that moment due to such modernity.

Pinheiro (1933) also sought to defend the importance of popular dances for maintaining health. To this end, he argued that the North American, "Dr. Gullich [...] carried out an investigation in the United States on the following reasons: 1st — whether popular dance made children happy; 2nd — whether popular dances were healthy. And the answers were affirmative” (PINHEIRO, 1933).

Earp (1945, p. 28), when dealing with dance as art, quotes Aldous Huxley, a famous British writer, as a way of explaining what was sought to be avoided in relation to the stage of humanity in that period:

All those, thinkers and philosophers, who have been concerned with this problem, agree that art must be the ideal form of nature. These are feelings without impurities; it is the chemically pure life of Aldous Huxley.

⁵ On July 19, 1937, the German government, under the leadership of Nazi Adolf Hitler, inaugurated a large exhibition of modern art with approximately 650 works seized from the main public museums in Germany, called *Degenerate Art*, which spread an extremely negative and biased view of modern art (CAIRES, 2019).

Earp (1945) was mainly concerned with the way dance was taught. For the author, her movements should express naturality and humanity and therefore could not be rigid, nor seek to comply with pre-established rules and norms, but rather seek to allow the expression of individual feelings and emotions. However, we emphasize that dance, during this period, should only work on good feelings, moving away, therefore, from those considered bad and inappropriate, arising from uncontrolled sexuality, aiming to achieve an ideal of an enlightened human spirit.

Despite condemning certain types of dance manifestations, Page (1937) defended the importance of a professional intervention that would enable the restoration of a common essence to this practice, eliminating all its characteristics understood as inappropriate for the new youth that sought to be trained. This evidence may explain the authors/editors' choice of the regional and folkloric dances theme, even though they are practices that were born from popular festivals and traditions (CÔRTEZ, 2000). They are considered on several occasions as impure activities and harmful to human morals because they are pleasurable and generate behavioral liberation, they also carried elements linked to the local, regional or national culture of a people, constituting a rich folkloric element, related to religious, historical and social issues.

In view of this, we believe that a large part of the dances used in teaching underwent changes in their meaning, as they were intended for the academic, physical and moral training of Brazilian children and also for the appreciation of the country's culture, a culture with very well defined values and objectives, based mainly on conservative thinking.

Some divergent points

When looking at the works that were being produced and published about dance in the 1930s and 1940s, we could see a great similarity in the authors' speeches, which seemed to seek to highlight it as an important element in the history of humanity, holding a essence that would have been lost over time, quite useful for the development of human beings and especially for their education. However, we found a translated work, authored by sociologist John Henry Mueller, published in 1941 in EPHY, which presented a vision of dance that was very different from that which seemed to be widespread at the time.

Mueller (1941), when carrying out a sociological analysis of dance, raised important questions regarding the discourses and representations that were circulating about this practice at that time. The first observation that the author made concerns the way in which dance was often approached by aesthetic critics. The author made harsh criticisms of these speeches which, according to him, made a value judgment about this bodily manifestation and its various forms of expression in the history of humanity. According to Mueller (1941, p. 10):

In aesthetic criticism, terms such as 'artificial' and 'decadent' are almost always enriched with a more objective meaning than they actually have. These concepts are, as it is often not understood, entirely subjective terms, rather than concrete descriptions; they are relative to our own interests and standards, and there is no need to impose them on anyone who holds other standards.

As can be seen, Mueller's text (1941) provides us with evidence of a possible positioning of the author against the discourses that were being disseminated at the time, which classified certain artistic manifestations as “degenerate”. When attributing the arts' dispute for supremacy to ethnocentrism, Mueller (1941, p. 11) explained that, in this case, “[...] the excellence of art depends solely on the intensity of the conviction with which it is sustained”. In this sense, the discourses that were commonly attributed to dance in that period, for the author, were based on a judgment that was nothing more than personal, that is, based on an ethnocentric vision.

Another issue pointed out by Mueller (1941) was the way in which the essentiality of dance was justified several times through the statement that even animals danced. Again, a claim devoid of empirical proof. When critically examining such statements, the author highlighted:

This Darwinian inquiry into the absolute origins of art has also been applied to music and has been severely criticized. First, it is debatable whether birdsong is music in the true sense, or even an embryonic form of music, and, second, given that it was so, this would do little to clarify the problems (MUELLER, 1941, p. 10).

As we can see, the author seemed to be taking a position against the Darwinist ideas that were commonly used in the period to explain, classify and justify the importance of dance and the most diverse types of art. For Mueller (1941), the explanations that were given about the need for dance were nothing more than “easy generalizations” that could be used very well to justify several other components. Thus, dancing would not represent a real human need, “[...] because there are many normal people, well on their way to civilization, who feel no need to express themselves through dance [...]” (p. 10).

When observing the text, paying attention to its details, as Ginzburg (1999) guides us, we realize that, despite the author offering a critical and in-depth analysis of dance, which went against the discourses presented in other articles published by the magazines, The images linked to the text reinforced the idea that dance was a natural necessity, which would have been degenerate, exalting Greek bodies, and meeting the proposals of the period regarding the role of Physical Education in the process of racial regeneration and the search for “Greek corporal perfection, possibly the result of an editorial intervention.

In Figure 2, below, it is possible to see an example of the images that were linked to Mueller's article (1941) and which not only did not establish any relation with the text, but also contradicted the criticisms and reflections proposed by the author.

Figure 2 – God Antinoüs, classic model of integral perfection



Source: *Revista Educação Physica* (1941).

As it is a translated work, we believe that, possibly, the editors of EPHy did not understand the criticisms and reflections made by Mueller (1941), but published his text because they considered the American sociologist a recognized and authorized voice to speak and contribute for discussions on the topic of Dance as a global phenomenon.

The evidence allows us to understand the strategies adopted by the editors of EPHy to give strength to the ideas that, at that time, they sought to propagate in Brazilian society. By inserting images of Greek bodies in the magazines, the editors probably aimed not only to illustrate the theme, but also to guarantee the continuity of the discourses that were being disseminated in the period about the role of dance in teaching and in human life, because, as Suguihura highlights (2007), in their study about the presence of Greek statuary in EPHy, it was especially as a form of illustration of the texts that the figures of the statues were used in the magazine and, on several occasions, they had “[...] no relation directly or explicitly with the content of the text, serving as an instrument to bring to mind the supposed Greek ideals of body and behavior” (SUGUIHURA, 2007, p. 203).

Final considerations

In this article, we seek to understand the discourses as representation practices that were circulating in the specialized Physical Education and variety periodical press about dance as a social phenomenon, in the 1930s and 1940s.

The authors rarely cited references and, when they did, they commonly used American ideas and conceptions as a basis for their reflections. We therefore noticed a strong consumption of articles and books of North American origin, evidenced in the references presented by Brazilian authors and also in the translation and publication of texts carried out by EPHy, which constitutes a practice of circulating materials, specifically selected by the editors.

The evidence found in the texts shows us that, initially, there was the development of a discourse about dance through a representation related to an ancestral origin. The texts seemed to agree that there was, in the history of dance, a key point, a period or place in which it was essentially good, but, at a certain moment, it would have degenerated, losing its greatest qualities, which would be purity, joy, expressiveness and spontaneity.

The clues indicate that, at least initially, regional dances were the most defended and valued practices, as in the authors' and/or editors' view, they represented the essence of dance, as they were endowed with joy, beauty, purity, tradition and nationalism, characteristics originating from its history and origin. In this sense, the forms of modern manifestation that emerged were seen as dangerous, because they could result in degeneration.

Based on the clues located, we believe that, probably, for the authors and/or editors of the printed matter, the dance would have reached its highest level in Ancient Greece, as we noticed that many speeches praised the use made of this practice by the Greeks, in addition to we observe a strong tendency of EPHy, the publication that published the most articles related to the theme of Dance, to convey images of bodies and Greek statues in its texts, possibly seeking to present the ideal model of bodily and spiritual perfection to be achieved through Physical Education, in that period, in accordance with the ideas of Greek culture.

The authors, when narrating a history of dance, sought to emphasize its ability to express human emotions and sensations, as this was one of the roles assigned to this practice. However, not all feelings could be expressed. Sexual desires and impulses, considered profane and sinful, were prohibited in dance, which was seen as necessary because it could influence the control of sexual impulses in youth. In its essence, dance would work on the virtues of the spirit, awaken good feelings and perfect the soul, characteristics considered indispensable for the development of a new man, designed for the stage in which Brazil found itself at that time.

As arguments to justify the importance of dance for humanity, the authors brought claims that dance was present in the lives of all ancient people and even animals, despite not presenting reliable sources that could validate such claims. A romantic thought about dance is revealed in the representations of most of the authors who, to report a history of dance, used, as a basis of support, a Philosophy of History disinterested in documentary sources and empirical evidence, which reveals to us the authority exercised by the voice of the military, doctors and Physical Education instructors in that period, as only their rhetoric was enough to guarantee the truth of the allegation.

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