

The Deepening of the Inventory in the Body in the creative process of the “Semba” performance

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This study depicts the deepening of the inventory in the body of the Dancer-Researcher-Performer (DRP) Method throughout the process of creation of the “Semba” performance, performed by Laísa Forquim and directed by Ana Carolina Melchert

The “Semba” performance was conducted under the perspective of the DRP method, a unique dancing creation and research method, which legitimates the development of the dancer and his body identity.

The dancer got in touch with the DRP Method throughout the following activities: 1) dance courses offered at Unicamp, 2) participation in the doctoral project “Incidências e modos de ocorrência da manifestação da cultura no corpo através do desenvolvimento do eixo Inventário no Corpo do Método BPI” (Incidences and cultural manifestation occurrences in the body caused by the development of the Inventory in the Body Method DPR axis) (Endorsed by the CEP 679/2008), developed by Ana Carolina Melchert, and guided by Dr. Graziela Rodrigues, 3) participation in “BPI e Dança do Brasil” (DRP and Brazilian Dance) research group led by Dr. Graziela Rodrigues, 4) activities developed by Unicamp’s didactic support group, and 5) development of scientific initiation projects entitled “Porta-Bandeira: Pesquisa de Campo, Vivências e Confluências” (Flag Bearer: Field Research, Experiences and Confluences) (08/2008 to 07/2009) and “Criação Artística: Porta-Bandeira e suas Confluências em meu Corpo” (Artistic Creation: Flag Bearer and its Confluences on my body) (08/2009 to 02/2010). Items 4 and 5 had the guidance of Ana Carolina Melchert.

Scientific initiation field research was conducted with, the Co-Inhabiting axis with the Source of the DRP Method and with the Porta-Bandeiras (Flag Bearer) at the Grêmio Recreativo Cultural e Social Escola de Samba Vai-Vai

(Recreational, Cultural, and Social club, and Samba school Vai-Vai), in the city of Sao Paulo. The research was conducted at the Vai-Vai's pavilion, at the Anhenbi Sambodromo, and observing the daily lives of flag bearer women.

Co-Inhabiting with the Source has established an exchange relationship between the subjects being researched and the dancer-researcher-performer where, a contact with no expectation of direct response to the research and prioritizing a sensitive relationship provided the dancer with the opportunity to immerse herself and her body into the field of study. Rodrigues clarifies these relationships:

Co-Inhabiting with the Source is a field of study which goes beyond the limits of the world – researcher and researched – and gets in touch with real life by establishing a subtle relationship with one another. (RODRIGUES, 2003. p. 109).

We have adopted the following DRP Method procedures to study body impressions and impregnations resulting from field research: 1) field journals, 2) Physical Structure and Symbolic Anatomy, 3) body laboratories.

Field journals are written accounts of experiences lived in the field, they register the data collected, and the observations and impressions of the researcher. The Physical Structure and the Symbolic Anatomy of the DRP Method are an organizational technique and structuring of the body. The laboratories are spaces where the body oozes corporal structuring. These are the places of decantation, processing, and elaboration of the body.

Continuing this study, we go into the development of the Character Structure axis of the DRP Method. In the year of 2009 we have come to perform daily body laboratories with the intent of oozing the body images of the dancer, whom started to take part of field experiences, the deepening of the personal inventory, and the character.

There is an integration of images originated from field study and laboratory sources. The dancer's body has come into contact with its cultural and social origins co-inhabited with other bodies and at

this stage are integrating discovered and experienced contents.
(MELCHERT, 2007, p. 8)

This practice was permeated by registers: audiovisual and written, the journals. Nagai (2008) explains that “the task of dancing and writing about dancing and the body is another instance and learning of the DRP method” (p.94)

The fruit of this process was the creation and the artistic production of the “Semba” performance, which premiered December 2009. The character D. Clô, lived by the dancer-researcher-performer, takes us to the universe of the flag bearers, whom daily lives reflect the lives of washers, healers, and women who fight to survive and who reinvent their lives through the transforming character of the festivities.

The effectiveness of this creation, through the Character Structuring axis, gave the dancer knowledge of the history of her body, deepening her Inventory in the Body. The process of the DRP Method enables a connection between questions related to the body, leading the dancer to perform with genuine and expressive movements.

The initiative to conduct this research was given by the dancers’ personal inventory, whose family was already linked to carnival. Since her childhood the dancer participated in activities related to the Grêmio Recreativo Escola de Samba Acadêmicos do Sereno (Recreational Samba School Acadêmicos do Sereno), in the city of Indaiatuba, SP, and is currently the school’s first flag bearer.

Besides the known history, registries were found during the development of these projects and in the deepening of the Inventory showing that her ancestors participated in carnival celebrations. It has been revealed therefore, that her paternal grandmother sewed clothing for a Samba school in Curitiba, that her father used to parade for a carnival school in this same city, and that her maternal great-grandparents lead a carnival block in the city of Elias Fausto, SP.

We note here that, data prominent from the dancer background began to be revealed by the inventory work. Rodrigues (2003) explains that the background here observed, often, is connected to humble origins, which are not socially validated.

The opening of a deepening of the Inventory in the Body was necessary so that bodily contents that were being expressed in the creation laboratories could be clearly observed. Rodrigues (2003) elucidates: "The recognition of the identities represented in body opens the possibility for the dancer to assume and live his own identity within his artistic work" (p.99).

To follow, we will present a few bodily images recurrent in the creative laboratories and the data collected from the Inventory in the Body research. We highlight the nature of the corporal research, reaffirming that the contents were unveiled by the body and not by mere rationalization.

The forest landscape with large trees and red clay prevailed, along with the image of the characters' body painted with a mix of clay, red seeds, and leaves. There was always a strong connection between the character and the land since the land represents her origin.

Other insistent traits of the character consisted in blessing the location she was in, sewing and weaving straws and roots, sowing and cultivating fruits, and cooking and preparing food from the earth.

In the field study, we met an old flag bearer who was working as an informal cook, in her tent, when the samba school Vai-Vai had practice. Such field data appeared in several laboratories. However, the dancer-researcher-performer did not comprehend the other gestures and actions that insisted to appear in her laboratories.

These gestures that insisted to appear caused the director to request to the dancer to collect data about the her own personal history, so that the meaning of these gestures, reaffirmed every working day, could be unveiled.

In the DPR, the facts, sensations, and emotions connected to the performers' personal history emerging during motion laboratories

are accommodated, tailored as an inherent part of the Process.
(TURTELLI, 2009, p. 72).

The dancers' history was verified and it was discovered that her maternal great-great-grandmother was Indian and her great-grandmother was Bulgarian, both from the suburbs of Paran . Such discovery was alarming to the dancer because, besides not aware of those facts, she did not have any contact with her paternal side of the family. The dancer only knew of the existence of her grandmother and her financial struggle to raise her son. Another important registry unveiled when working on the inventory was that the dancers' father used to be a healer when he was a child.

It was also verified, throughout the deepening of the dancers' Inventory in the Body the presence of professional activities performed by her grandmothers and great-grandmothers, who used to cook and wash for others.

These jobs, sewing, cooking, and washing, were perceived and experienced as vital gestures to the dancer, and gave her vitality and opened the creative process.

Such discoveries make it clear to the dancer why she has a strong connection with the forest landscape, with the earth, with her blessing movements, sewing, the preparing of food and fruit coming from the earth, and her connection with samba and the flag.

We have found that these bodily registries and that the reality of the gestures found, in the laboratories, were connected to the field study research, to the researching of the Inventory, and to the character played by the dancer. We stress that what brought this experience and the development of the body was an institution within the DRP Method, which works with bodily identity questions and provides artistic and personal development.

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