

THE BODY WITHIN DANCE: A REFLECTION FROM CULTURAL INDUSTRY VIEWPOINT

Marília Nepomuceno

Secretaria Estadual de Educação, Goiânia, Goiás, Brasil

Abstract

In this study, we aimed at understanding how the Cultural Industry affects the dance of frequenters (persons who usually go a place to dance) in informal spaces at Goiânia city (State of Goiás, Brazil). Such informal spaces are the place where some persons met to dance and for leisure. A qualitative study was performed including semi-structured questionnaires and observations recorded by using notes and focusing on answering the question: How does the cultural industry affect the body of subjects who dance in informal spaces at Goiânia city? By using our results, we observed that the cultural industry has been quite effective regarding dishabituating subjects of expressing their subjectivity.

Keywords: Body - Dance - Cultural Industry

Introduction

In this study, we aimed at understanding how the cultural industry affects the dance of frequenters (persons who usually go a place to dance) in informal spaces at Goiânia city (State of Goiás, Brazil). Such informal spaces are the place where some persons met to dance and for leisure.

Observing such spaces, you can realise how some persons' dances are alike, and even alike in what we always see by means of the mainstream media. It is highly interesting that for a significant quantity of persons, such dances seems to be the unique *raison d'être*, without any possibility to search for what is different.

In this wise, we question: How does the cultural industry affect the body of subjects who dance in informal spaces at Goiânia city?

Dances broadcast by the mainstream media, e.g. television, have been involving themselves in a context in which Benjamim (1992)

stresses the technical reproducibility. It is easy to observe that such dances have been quite used in a free way by sundry subjects.

The opportunity to think on creating is not offered to the public who practises such dances, and she wants to describe it only focusing on entertainment. We can realise, thus, a huge gap regarding the creativity of persons when we think on dancing and practising it.

In this wise, to achieve our aim and answer the problem of this study, we researched within five informal spaces for dances. Such spaces were spread in sundry areas of Goiânia. Entering such places, we tried to observe and interview highlighted persons regarding the group as a whole during the dance, as well as persons who wanted to dialog and answer the questionnaire.

The study was qualitative, including semi-structured questionnaires and recorded observation as aid by using notes and with 32 subjects in houses of dance of Goiânia city. According to Triviños (1987, p. 146), the qualitative, semi-structured study ‘values an investigator presence and offers all potential perspectives so that the informer achieve her necessary freedom and spontaneity, enriching her investigation’. By contrast, the observation for this same author is important since it meets what the study requires, considering that it focuses on the subject. It means that if you observe the subject you can understand better the meaning of her consideration.

Both interview and observation regardless of this study were chiefly assessed and grouped. For a better data understanding and analysis, the semi-structured interviews were submitted to statistical analysis by using the software MS Excel. Such software aid to establish the percentages. According to Triviños (1987, p. 118), ‘[...] all study can be simultaneously quantitative and qualitative’; nevertheless, the difference is that the second does not keep solely in statistic data advanced for its investigation. This is our next focus.

Body art influenced by the cultural industry

Perhaps the human body, which is a vast territory and full of social, cultural and biological characteristics, is a place in which life express itself in a better way. It is also depicted by peculiarities, eg, the capacity to perform a work, think and reveal thoughts by using language, gesture and emotion; thus, affecting how to behave within the society.

Sant’Anna (2001, p. 7) states that ‘[...] the body of a subject can

show several traits of her subjectivity and hide it simultaneously'. By contrast, Baptista (2007, p. 40) understand it as 'material and spiritual expression of a human being'. Considering that, we can state that we are within our body, ie we are our body. To understand better the sundry senses you have to see differently, from several knowledge areas, and it has been occurring since ancient times.

Nowadays, it is clear the destruction present inside our bodies, since due to interests in the current production method, persons deal with it as one more goods to be consumed, as Baptista (2007) demonstrated.

Searching for excessive consumption, in such sense, which is the true interest in capitalist production method, ends up making persons to search ideologically for a personal satisfaction. Such frequent search for personal satisfaction is showed by using the body aesthetic standard, which is spread by the cultural industry.

The cultural industry is a term used by Adorno & Horkheimer (1985), philosophers from the Frankfurt School¹. They aimed at differing cultures which arose spontaneously from the masses continuously used by the communication vehicle to control classes.

The main interest of such industry is to produce cultural objects just to create money; and in order to do so, she uses strong strategies to persuade the people.

The strategies used by the culture industry are so convincing that most people do not understand the pressure on each subject she makes. Moreover, most subjects do not identify that most part of her ideas very similar to the ones presented by the mainstream media (BAPTISTA 2007).

The body adopted as standard by such vehicles are easily accepted by most people with scarcely any critical reflection. To ensure her aim, the cultural industry exposes '[...] remarkable people in the consumption society (TV star) are people who keep the philosophy of entertainment. They are famous; they are human-body models' (CARVALHO, 1999, p. 244).

By using several accessible means of mass communication content, people are convinced that the best is to look like what is showed by the media. Such similarity rule will influence several means of the

1-Here, the Frankfurt School is the panel of authors who dealt with the 'critical theory' in the Institute for Social Research (in Germany).

society and in particular the dance body.

Currently, considering the continuous information exposed by the cultural industry, the dance art have been changing. It is treated today as one more product. The mainstream media constantly produce and transmit a model of dance which banalises the bodies with stereotyped movements and strong sexual appeal. Regarding lack of imagination, one lost spontaneity and expression and gain with high audience for issuing companies transmitting dances to society narcotically. Thus,

[...] We can say the dances diffused by the means of mass communication (magazine, cinema, music videos, etc.), in particular by television using groups of Axé, Pagode, Funk, Laceria (type of dance) and choreography of TV programmes, eg, some programmes exhibited on Monday afternoon in some Brazilian issuing companies. It is easy to detect that such dances appeal predominantly to the erotic and sex. It is also riveting if you note that population join it by accepting such standard as behaviour. We can realise, hence, that people dance listening to a sound of a chaotic music, repetitive and without any message at all and which make us more and more 'vile'. (SANTOS, 2008, p. 39).

The cultural industry prefers entertainment and this ways she controls the mass, even if for that she has to diffuse chaotic images and without any educational worth. The public end up accepting all this without reflecting critically; therefore, she does not think that 'entertainment does not mean foolishness, as well as serious art does not mean bore' (FISCHER, 2002, p. 239).

According to Adorno & Horkheimer (1985), we all are scrupulously forced to pass through the filter of cultural industry, and her products are consumed even by the most distracted people. Critical awareness and ability to unmask the ideologies caused by such awareness regarding the facts round you, however, distinguish scrupulously influenced people from those who are forced to pass through the filter of culture industry.

Another interesting feature realised by Frankfurt School philosophers, under the influences of goods produced by the culture industry, regards to the schematism that she proposes, ie for consumers there is nothing to label since the production schematism anticipated

everything (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985).

All the schematism based on such authors does not allow people to reflect critically. Thus, the more exposed the dancers' bodies, the more erotic movements, the more people look like their idols, the more fun it will be (Bergere, 2006).

Regarding the dances exposed by means of mass communication, reproduced by several people, you can observe that is nearly impossible find people who insert their personality and identity in the dances. They just use it and do not take part in the creation process. Accepting easily what was already done produce spontaneity and expressiveness in sundry subjects (GONÇALVES, 2004).

The model of dance frequently exposed by the cultural industry occupy dangerously the body (and movements) of several subjects. Considering choreography already made, culture industry show a model of dance considered as the best. People, therefore, convince themselves that such movements are the only ones to be performed. Persons who flee from such rules, as a result, feel ridiculous since the ordinary for such public is to be similar. Thus,

Some dance styles, in particular the ones accepted for parties, nightclubs and disco, are marked by the pseudo-individualisation, since it offers for dancing subjects somewhat of freedom regarding movement, a natural desire to dance. Such degree of freedom, however, is established by rules, which means that the movements are already a rule. Therefore, you can realise it in all dancers, even whether they dance together or not. Dancers going out of such movement rules are strictly limited to any sort of spontaneous movement — not established by the music rhythm, environment or even the subjects involved. The dancing subject submits herself to such rules to feel, firstly, safety; that she is not making a fool of herself. (MARTINS CARNEIRO, 2004 apud BERGERO, 2006, p. 63).

Nowadays, all such rules regarding the bodies of subjects who extremely copy such dances is produced by the cultural industry. We know there are channels for television, and currently, internet videos showing music videos frequently. However, such videos diffuse for society a model of dance easily acceptable.

The subjects who copy such dances want to perform it identically,

remaining thus few or scarcely any space for creativity during the dance. One of the youngsters interviewed in a houses of dance said ‘I do not create anything [...] I cannot create anything [...] copy is much easier’.

All such rules extremely encouraged by the cultural industry atrophy the reflective ability of a subject. As everything is given to her, in addition, she does not need to think, ie no one need to be responsible regarding the thoughts (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985). Thus, one should think that with such huge amount of copy of what was already created, where will be the subjectivity of the persons who use such process?

One fact is right, the means of mass communication, eg, television, can contribute negatively to build awareness of persons. It occurs since many subjects cannot deal critically with some contents exposed there.

According to Theodor W. Adorno (1995), television performs a deformity into society. She spreads a misconception of ideology for people’s awareness. In his conception, television tries to hide the reality and insert in subjects a false awareness.

In this wise and trying to understand how cultural industry affects the dancing bodies of frequenters in informal dance spaces at Goiânia city, we performed a study involving sundry places of the city. In such places, persons meet to dance and develop several activities for leisure. Observe the results:

Discussing the study performed in the informal dance spaces

We interviewed 32 subjects in 5 informal dance spaces spread by sundry areas of Goiânia city. When we entered such places, we observed, by using notes and interview, remarkable subjects regarding the group as a whole during the dance. Interest and availability of persons for the interview were also considered.

As a result of the interviews, we verified that 28% subjects = 15–20 y.o.; 38% = 21–25 y.o.; 19% = 26–30 y.o.; 3% = 31–35 y.o.; 9% = 36–40 y.o. and 3% = 56–60 y.o. The public who more attend such spaces is the youngsters.

Regarding the gender of persons who attend to such places, the feminine was predominant with 62% interviews. The masculine was a bit lower, with 38%. Women standing out more while dancing perhaps

is the reason of such difference.

Considering our principal aim here is to understand how cultural industry affects the body of subjects who dance in informal spaces at Goiânia city, we present now how some frequenters of such spaces think on body. The graph below presents the data:



Graph 1: Conception subjects' body interviewed in the informal dance spaces at Goiânia city

Legend of graph: What is body for you? (O que é corpo para você?)|atomic element (elemento anatômico)|Sensuality (sensualidade)|Everything (tudo)|Do not know (não sabe definir)|Reference for balance (referência de equilíbrio)|Health (saúde)|Opportunities (oportunidades)|Others (outros)

Based on such answers, we can see how important is to know the history to understand better the society. You can also observe that most interviewees approach a Cartesian viewpoint of body. It means that such persons seem to understand the body as merely biological.

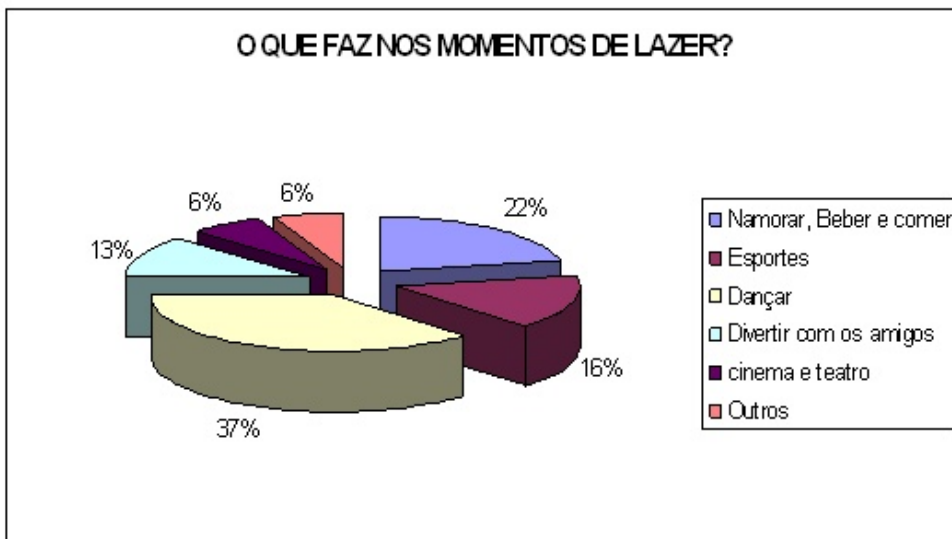
For most people who think doubtless on body as expression of sensuality, perhaps is due to the power to convince that media uses for such subjects. In addition, media has been developing function efficiently. Thus, we consider:

The means used by advertisement in general make use, subliminally or not, of images of a free youth, wealth and health, blended with sensuality, to sell several products (SILVA, 2001, p. 60)

Such variety of advertisement offer enter easily in people's house

and help to influence capturing and absorbing subjects, considering many people make use of it superficially.

Subjects were also questioned on what they usually do during their leisure moments. The graph below presents the data:



Graph 2 – Moments of leisure regarding subjects interviewed in the informal dance spaces at Goiânia city

Legend og graph: What do you do at your leisure time? (O que faz nos momentos de lazer?)|Going out with somebody (namorar, beber e comer)|Sports (esportes)|Dancing (dançar)|Having fun with friends (divertir com os amigos)|Cinema & theatre (cinema e teatro)|Others (outros)

Observing such graph and that a significant quantity of people interviewed take interest unconditionally in going out with someone, eating and drinking, it is interesting to mention the reflection of Marx (2003):

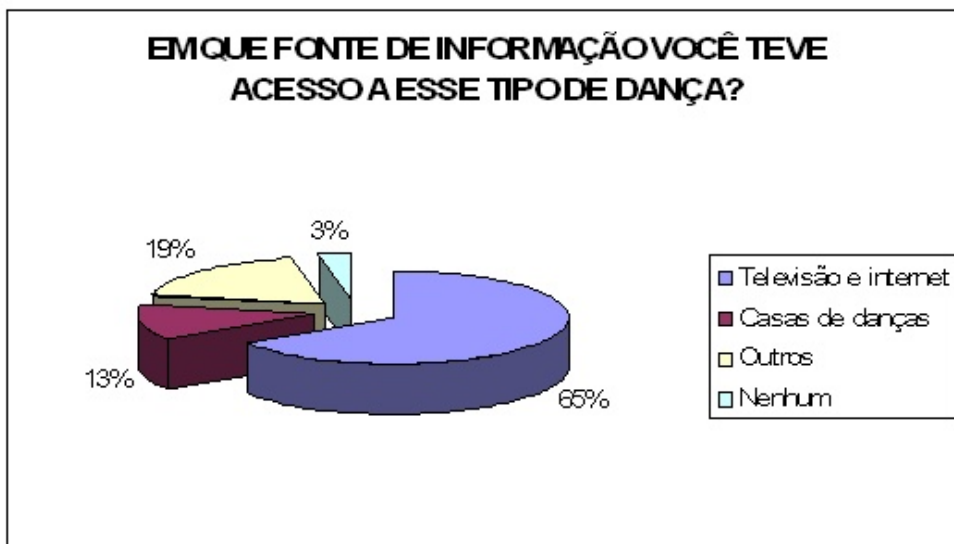
...the human being (the labourer) does not feel himself to be free except in his animal functions: eating, drinking, and reproducing, at his best in his dwelling or in his clothing, etc., and in his human functions he is no more than an animal. The animal becomes human and the human becomes animal (MARX, 2003, p. 114).

It means that in a society focusing on competitiveness and individual interests, in which sundry persons are excluded, without opportunities to choose and do what they like, they are captured by current

production method. In this wise, we have to agree with Marx (2003) when he stated that the human being will feel himself to be free only in his animal functions.

Regarding dance, we can see that 37% from the interviewees stated they like to dance in moments of leisure. Although most interviewees stated they like to dance in moments of leisure, most of them worry slightly on understanding what they are dancing. It agrees with what Adorno & Horkheimer (1985) said: at the sense of cultural industry, the intellectual effort is interesting and avoided. It is easier, thus, spread to society what should be consumed and generate profit.

Aiming at understanding better whether means of mass communication affects the way people dance or not, we questioned the interviewees in informal dance spaces which is the information source they had access regarding the dances practised there. Observe the data:

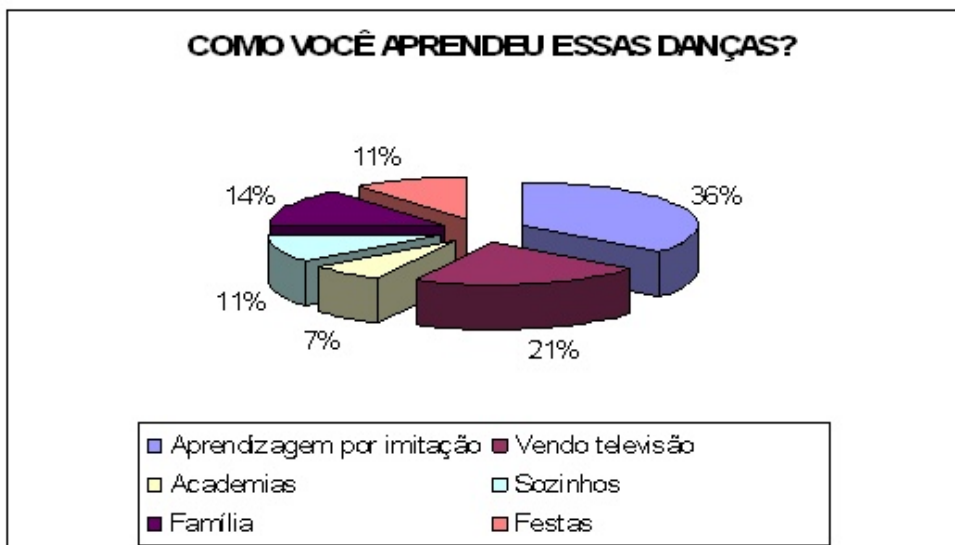


Graph 3 – Information source in which the interviewees had access to the dance there practised

Legend of graph: From what information source did you have access to such type of dance? (Em que fonte de informação você teve acesso a esse tipo de dança?)|TV & internet (televisão e internet)|Houses of dance (casas de dança)|Others (outros)|None (nenhum)

Based on that, we can see how television and internet are important and effective information means at the present time. By means of such answers, in addition, it is easier to understand why such persons dance fundamentally similar to models exposed by such media.

Trying to understand how the cultural industry affects the bodies of frequenters in informal dance spaces at Goiânia, we questioned the subjects on how they learnt to dance. You can observe that data:



Graph 4 – Way of how the interviewees learnt to dance

Legend of graph: How did you learn such dances? (Como você aprendeu essas danças?) |Learning by imitating (aprendizagem por imitação)|Academies (academias)|Family (família)|Watching TV (vendo televisão)|Alone (sozinhos)|Parties (festas)

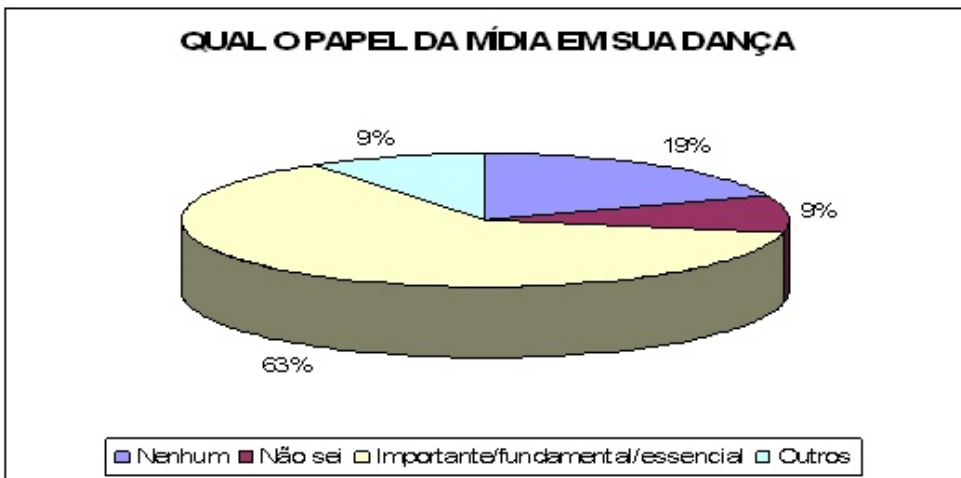
Based on the results obtained, we can observe that a significant quantity from the persons who attend to such spaces, 21% learnt to dance watching television. One more time is obvious how that the cultural industry is efficient regarding society. The consumer public copy such dances and reproduce it in sundry places without considering the subjectivity.

Other interesting fact mentioned by Bergero (2006) is that the media not only does business by using such dances (and why not say it directly: does business by using human body movement), but also change the dance structures when spread by using music videos. For the author:

[...] one potentially would interpret the dance structure and way spread by using music videos. In such videos everyone dances facing one another simultaneously and practically without displacement. It can be explained by the need to enter view-finder camera, stating that the dance structure is created to be on tele-

vision. (BERGERO, 2006, p. 64).

Television, thus, establishes even the way persons move themselves. In fact, the cultural industry has worked negatively for society. We can observe that a large portion of subjects lost their tastes and ability to choose. Today, the media ideas is highlighted within society and causing a tragic rules. In this wise, we asked another question to the interviewees regarding media role for her dances. Observe the graph 5:



Graph 5 – Media influence upon dances of interviewees

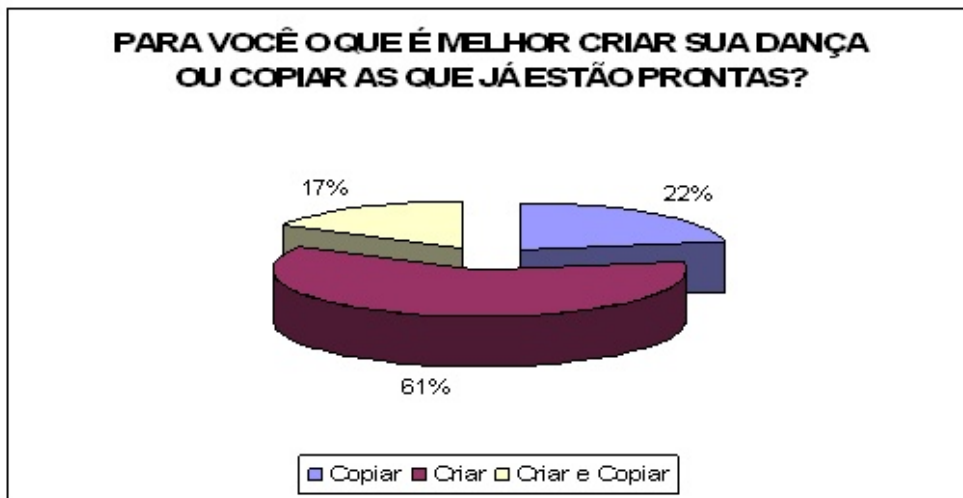
Legend of graph: What is the media role in your dance? (Qual é o papel da mídia em sua dança?)|None (nenhum)|I do not know (não sei)|Important/fundamental/essential (importante/fundamental/essencial)|Others (outros)

It is clear how media exert control over such people. In the accounts, people stated that media is essential to their dance. A young person interviewed called M5, told ‘media is everything, they show us the way’; another person, M6, told ‘I copy the steps so that I do not make mistakes’. According to Adorno & Horkheimer (1985), one of the functions from cultural industry is to take reproduction as something complete.

Many people’s life is superficial and the reasoning is to be based on everything proposed by cultural industry. It is true when Adorno & Horkheimer (1985) mention that we are living within a period full of chaos in our culture, since culture industry provides everything similarity among things.

Focusing on understand better how creativity matter have been

thought currently, we asked to interviewees what is better for them, create their dances or copy the existing ones. See the results below.



Graph 6 – Ways how the interviewees prefer to perform their dances

Legend of graph: Which is the best for you: creating your own dance or copying the dances already done? (Para você o que é melhor: criar sua dança ou copiar as que já estão prontas?)|Copying (copiar)|Creating (criar)|Creating & Copying (criar e copiar)

As we can observe, most people stated that prefer to create their dances; however, when observing such people dancing during their leisure moments, we did not perceived original movements and we did perceived a mixture of everything we always can see in the means of mass communication. Aranha (1996) stresses that

Within society marked by the imperialism of labour and instrumental rationality have been difficult for labourer occupy the time creatively, since such labourer is in a cramped, one-dimensional room—without invention, imagination and fantasy. The spare-time, frequently, is used to combat fatigue, copy fashion trends and relieve boredom. (ARANHA, 1996, p. 239).

Observing such people, we could also realise they were not interested in being creative when dancing. For them, at such place is moment for entertainment; and entertainment and creation cannot be together since creation demands intellectual effort. According to Aranha (1996), hence, their moments for leisure are to relieve the bore-

dom they acquire from the labour moments.

Thus, see the speech of a subject interviewed we showed in an informal dance space when questioned on whether she creates or copies her dances. See her answer: ‘Copy is better; I like to do what other people are doing. Creating demands responsibility’ (H8).

We can observe, based on such speech, that such subject does not interest in creating. All this lead us to perceive why the rules within our society settle easily. The different is discriminated within the present days, hence copying is easier.

Today, the creative act is essential for humanity because within so many rules is only looking for something unprecedented that the subject will become unique. We can say that is during the creation moments when one can see what is truly human within people (TAFFAREL, 1995).

The last question of the research stresses how have been taught dance in school. To the participants, was asked if the school contributed to their knowledge on dance. See the answers:



Graph 7 – School taking part in the knowledge on dance teaching

Legend of graph: Had the school any participation in your knowledge on dance? (A escola teve alguma participação em seu conhecimento sobre dança?) |No (não)|Yes (sim)|Others (outros)

It is observed that the school did not take part in the knowledge on dance regarding a significant quantity of subjects interviewed. For the people who answered yes, their knowledge was only on imitating choreography or watching some competitions and other people’s performances. It can be observed in the interviewees’ speech:

"Once I was taught for a performance." (H7)

"I have already taken part in competitions for forró and axé in the school." (M11)

Dance teaching in school for such interviewees was almost nonexistent. It occurred because it is few important as content for school PE or Art Education. Brasileiro (2003) emphasise that dance in school appears as a form of performance for festive days and rarely as content to be learnt. Moreover, when you use the dance as content, it is reduced unanimously to technical education with conventional exercises.

If in the school people do not have chance to build a dance identity by using different answers which allows subjects express themselves creatively, it becomes easier to them to accept and identify with the proposals presented by means of mass communication.

Regarding an interesting work on dance for children and adolescents in school, Marques (2001) accentuates proposal for creative dances, dance-education or educative dance and body expression. Such end has close purposes. For the author, the studies developed by using such purposes rarely receives the importance of dance, in particular for the world of institutionalised dance, in which are seen as a sheer experiment. But what does educative dance or dance-education mean?

Rudolf Laban, dancer and choreographer, used such term to contrast the strict techniques of classical ballet, marking the investigation for creativity. His dance method denies the technical and repertoire lessons which are taught traditionally by using copy and movement automation. Also, such lessons do not allow that subjects discover their own movement (MARQUES, 2001).

The dance model proposed by Laban can be considered an important method to be taught in school. It encourages the students' creativity, points out spontaneous movement and allows students' personalities being developed.

There are dance lessons which allow students expressing sundry options for movements. Such lessons, also, hold theoretical contents to students start to think on and dialogue dance in a more critic and contextualised way.

Final considerations

The cultural industry, we can say, affects the bodies of subjects who attend to informal dance spaces at Goiânia by usually imitating the body models and dancing movements showed mainly by television and internet. Such models are easily identified by such subjects who use and imitate it superficially; they also keep such models as a unique *raison d'être*.

The easy identification and the use of such type of dance occur because such people do not know, are not encouraged to and do not try to look for something different. When such people do not look for different options, they depend on persuasive means proposed by cultural industry. The cultural industry, what is worse, have showed itself quite efficient in one of its more essential functions, do not allowing many subjects to express their subjectivities.

We do believe that to perform productive transformations within society is necessary an education being committed to the reality we live. We put faith in an education which results in a strong awareness and makes people observing the world importantly, with full awareness of their role to change such reality.

Regarding dance, the idea people have about it can be transformed. In order to do so, the different proposal for dances must go beyond the walls of universities and elite public; also, being presented to children and adolescents in school by using comprehensive education, in which students can likewise observe and perform their dances, perceiving themselves as creative subjects.

Finally, we did not focus on this study to deprive people of dancing the diffused dances by the means of mass communication, but, naturally, that people when going to use such dances know what is behind of all such market and have full critical awareness of what they are using.

Bibliographic references:

ADORNO, T. W. **Educação e emancipação**. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1995.

ADORNO, T. W.; HORKHEIMER, M. **Dialética do esclarecimento: fragmentos filosóficos**. Rio de Janeiro, Ed. Jorge Zahar, 1985.

ARANHA, M. L. A. de. **História da educação**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Moderna, 1996.

BAPTISTA, T. J. R. **Educação do corpo: produção e reprodução**. 2007. 152f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) UFG, Goiânia, 2007.

BRASILEIRO, L. T. O conteúdo dança em aulas de Educação Física: temos o que ensinar? **Pensar a Prática**. v. 6, p. 45-48, jul/jun. 2002-2003.

BENJAMIM, W. A obra de arte na era de sua reprodutibilidade técnica. In: _____. **Magia e técnica, arte e política**. Lisboa: Relógios d'água, editores, 1992. p. 75-114.

BERGERO, V. A. **Indústria cultural e dança**. Superando cisões e reinventando humanidades na Educação Física. 2006. 110f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação Física) UFSC, Florianópolis, 2006.

CARVARLHO, Y. M. Cultura de consumo e corpo. In: CONGRESSO REGIONAL SUDOESTE DO CBCE, 1., 1999, Campinas. **Anais...** Campinas: Oficinas Gráficas da Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1999. p. 244-6.

FISCHER, E. **A necessidade da arte**. 9. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara Koogan, 2002.

GONÇALVES, M. A. **Sentir, pensar, agir: corporeidade e educação**. Campinas, Papyrus, 1994.

MARQUES, I. **Ensino da dança hoje: textos e contextos**. São Paulo: Cortez, 2001.

MARX, K. **Manuscrito econômico filosófico**. São Paulo: Editora Martin Claret, 2003.

SANT'ANNA, B. D. de (org.) É possível realizar uma história do corpo? In: CARMEM, S. **Corpo e História**. Campinas: Autores associados, 2001. p. 3-23.

SANTOS, C. G. dos. **Dança arte e educação: os discursos teóricos produzidos para a escola**. 2008. 130f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação) Universidade Católica de Goiás, Goiânia, 2008.

SILVA, A. M. **Corpo ciência e mercado: reflexão acerca da gestação de um novo arquétipo da felicidade**. Campinas/Florianópolis: Autores associados. Editora da UFSC, 2001.

TAFFAREL, C. N. Z. **Criatividade nas aulas de Educação Física.**
Rio de Janeiro, 1985.

TRIVINOS, A. N. S. **Introdução à pesquisa em Ciências Sociais: a
pesquisa qualitativa em educação.** São Paulo: Atlas, 1987.

Recebido em: 28/09/2009

Revisado em: 09/01/2010

Aprovado em: 30/03/2010

Endereço para correspondência

marilianepomuceno@hotmail.com

Marília Nepomuceno

Colegio Estadual Polivalente Goiany

Rua C-68, quadra 115, nº 336 - Setor Sudoeste

CEP: 74305-470 Goiânia - GO Brasil