



Poetic Immersions as a Formation Process of the Artist-Teacher

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Where do the ideas that revolve in minds go?
Where do the certainties that sharpen the teeth go?
The reason does not walk straight.
(Tiago Rinaldi)

Prologue

In seeking to express the concept of research in research in Art, theme of the colloquium, I chose to revisit some reports of completed projects and reread my first publications. I believe that academic and/or poetic texts, performances and shows are legitimate forms of dissemination of the knowledge produced in the field of art. Thus, in this exercise, I made an analysis of my intellectual and artistic production. I was surprised when I saw the title of one of the first articles: The search for the other that is ourselves or *À la recherche de nous-mêmes ailleurs (Revista do LUME)*. I compared the title given to this scholarly publication with the one chosen for the latest research project: *Diving into the essence: the poetic-academic immersion as formation process of the docent artist*.

The titles eventually reflected the trajectory of my research in these fifteen years, walking from outside to inside, identifying, at first, what was specific

in dance, in comparison with what simply was "not dance" and, secondly, seeking to study the essence of the artist and dance teacher, essence that is in their own body moving, inscribed in themselves, indicating "what we are made of" (Strazzacappa, 2011). The gerund form of the verb to dive emphasizes the movement necessary to the research in dance, as important as the immersion (being immersed, engaged, full) as a condition for doing research of/in art.

This text, with an essayistic character, presents some fruits harvested from researches conducted in recent years, identifying the paths and detours followed, the methodological options, the digressions and the adjustments incurred when doing research of/in art. More than listing results and answers, I highlight the questions being raised, and criticize the way art has been understood in academic spaces.

Treading paths and detours

In my history as a researcher in the field of art, I recognize that themes I investigated were chosen by political or poetical needs. My first project *Profession: Dance Teacher* sought to delineate the role of the dance teacher in a delicate moment in which another professional association interfered on the work of dance professionals. It also aimed to analyze the training and performance conditions of the dance teachers in the state of São Paulo after LDB9394/96 (Law of Directives and Bases of National Education). This law dictates the Teaching of Art as mandatory content in Elementary Schools, confirmed by the National Curriculum Parameters of the art area that suggest the presence of dance alongside other art forms such as theater, music and visual arts. This same legislation specified that the schoolteachers should have a bachelor's degree, leading us to believe that only the Dance undergraduate would be qualified to teach dance in the Elementary Schools. However, it was known that, historically, the teaching of art in school was primarily centered in visual arts. Dance rarely appeared as an option and when it occurred, it focused only on civic celebrations. The State of São Paulo had (and has) numerous free dance schools and studios or, in some cases, dance conservatories, mostly private. In these non-formal educational spaces, dance was (and still is) taught by different

professionals, whose training was also given freely, in a genealogy that follows and perpetuates styles and schools.

The research was documentary and used data collected by the Institute of Dance of São Paulo, that developed a first significant survey of the different areas of expertise and training of dance professionals in the state, using a Canadian methodology (DACUM), the same used at the Brazilian Classification of Occupations CBO 2002 (Ministry of Employment and Labor).

The research found that most dancers are trained in the free dance schools and that the third sector is the major employer of dance teachers and artists in the country, without requiring any specific training (academic and/or technical). Another finding was the proliferation of dance programs in the country, especially undergraduate degrees, created as a result of the Support Program for the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Brazilian Universities (REUNI). The research also identified an absence of any specific training requirement for dance teachers in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs, third sector), making it possible for any individual to venture in being a dance teacher.

With the tensions eased after several battles between the newly established National Dance Forum and the Federal Council of Physical Education - CONFEF, (a story yet to be told), I have identified what is peculiar of dancers and that no other professional of the field of health or sciences have: the Art. Therefore, the following project, entitled *Dancer: formation and professional performance*, aimed to study the relationship between the dance training in Brazil and dance professional activities. For that, I studied at first, the trade schools and universities. Secondly, I studied the Dance Act introduced in France in 1980. This law defines the minimum content and duration of the dance teacher and the dance instructor education, sets their job descriptions and defines centers of excellence - dance schools authorized to offer training courses for teachers. I asked if this law could be a starting point for a Dance Law in Brazil: What could we learn from the French example? Could a study of this legislation contribute to drafting similar nationwide laws and regulate dance education in Brazil?

The results suggest that dance trade schools are still limited in the country compared to its continental dimensions and the ever-increasing demand for vacancy. There are differences between dance trade schools of different regions of the country, what one should expect in terms of valuing the regional, but not in relation to the physical and human infrastructure maintenance. Trade schools that are associated to dance companies are usually better evaluated. These schools are more traditional, in the sense of following a specific technique and style. The undergraduate dance courses, in turn, had their number tripled in the last decade (from 14 to 41 courses), most open within the aforementioned REUNI program, (created by Decree 6096/2007, as an action part of the plan for education development, for the economic and social development). The dance undergraduate programs present a curriculum that meets the minimum required by the National Guidelines (Brazil, 2002) and a limited faculty (restricted number of teachers and their qualification). They are more concerned with their own academic qualification than with the artistic practice. This attitude demonstrates, sometimes, a reversal of values and a misunderstanding of the production of knowledge in art and its possible forms of research, my current focus of concern. Nevertheless, what drew the most attention in this regard was the realization that many dancers, after becoming teachers and sometimes assuming administrative positions (or even before, when engaged in processes of graduation to enroll in the university career) leave the stage, in some cases, rather early (Strazzacappa & Morandi, 2012a).

Would it be possible to envision a teacher of medical school, a profession also permeated by practice, who has not exercised the medical practice? (I am not referring here to the disciplines of foundations, offered by professionals from other fields of knowledge as biologists, chemists, among others). Another present question is: how can we accept a teaching artist who has no experience of/in stage?

Having this issue as a theme, I started the current survey: *Diving in the essence: the poetic-academic immersion as formation process of the artist teacher*. The research takes as its premise the belief that art produces knowledge (Duarte Jr, 2004; Gambini, 2010; Strazzacappa, Schoroeder &

Schoroeder, 2007). It assumes that the artist becomes a professional in the exercise of his or her creative practice (Albano, 2011; Sales, 2006). The research also identifies that, presently, the practice of these professionals demands a plural and multidisciplinary training in order to achieve what is called hybrid artist (Louppe, 1997, 2004).

The main objective of the research is to promote (or it may be said, to provoke) situations of reflection about the construction of knowledge in art, in the training of the dance undergraduate through poetic- academic interventions involving teachers and students of some dance undergraduate programs. This is not a comparative study or a case study, because our goal is not to compare results obtained in each higher education institution or to elaborate further analysis on a single program. This is a qualitative reflexive research of/in art that allows the researcher and subjects to draw conclusions, to make reflexions. The research seeks to consolidate knowledge from poetic-academic interventions. The proposal is similar to an Action Research (Thiollent, 1994), as the researcher is placed in the condition of the proponent of interventions with the group composed of undergraduate students and teachers of undergraduate dance programs in the participating higher educational institutions. The analysis of the poetic-academic immersions will involve their participants through group discussions and individual interviews recorded on video.

Researches, scenic creation, formation of artist teachers are often confused. The path is made by walking, in the words of Vianna (2005), it takes us to the very movement of the research methodology of/in art. A methodology that is done, by doing: Agents, subjects, and objects in constant dialogue - all participants of the same investigation of a "body in life" (Burnier, 1999).

In the *Laboratory of Studies in Art, Body and Education* (Laborarte), research group attached to the Graduate Program of the School of Education at UNICAMP, argues that one of the roles of graduate programs is to form the university professor. So, besides the researcher, we form the teacher and, for being a laboratory for studies of Art, we value in equal proportion the artistic doing, blending, thus, research, art and teaching.

The *Laborarte* is a research group formed not by a simple grouping of people, but by the sharing of issues between teachers, researchers, artists and students (undergraduate and graduate). We have monthly meetings, we hold thematic discussions with guests, organize individual and collective meetings, and, once a semester, we conduct a small event open to the public, such as the research conference.

I highlight at this point the group's actions to show how the existence of this search space has been a differential in the constitution of the work and training of artists, teachers and researchers. This was (and has been) the fertile ground that allowed the consolidation of a way of thinking and doing research that does not rank knowledge, but integrates it. It was in this space in constant dialogue with colleagues that I proposed, after some experiences in the graduation classes and in the Scheduled Activities Research (APPs), the Poetic Immersions Project.

"Poetic Immersions Project" is a concentrated work, lasting 10 hours a day, over a week, in which different practical and theoretical activities are performed with specialists in different fields of knowledge for the creation of a choreography study to be presented at the end of the immersion, which may (or may not) become a show.

This proposal is not unprecedented. It was inspired by previous experience in the International Theatre Festivals of Campinas (FITS). The official program had the participation of guest artists who performed workshops, bringing together internationally renowned artists with students from different backgrounds in theater, dance and music, for adapting or creating a show of their own. The leading roles were performed by guest artists. Chorus and production were in charge of the students after the workshop. Some Visual Arts students also participated in production of scenery, costumes and props. There were 10-15 days of very inspiring intensive work. I personally have had the opportunity to work with Butoh dance, Natsu Nakajima in the reassembly of *Sleep and reincarnation of the empty land*; with the dancer Ismael Ivo and the director Marcio Aurelio Almeida in the adaptation of *The Minotaur*, the Cuban film director José Garcia, in the presentation of *Pedro Páramo*. Another inspiration for Poetic Immersion

Program comes from the Resident Artist Program promoted by Unicamp which aims to:

I - allow the teachers and students from Unicamp, who develop activities in the arts field, an interaction with artists of recognized merit;

II - provide the university community with the opportunity to mingle with artists from different areas (...) with national or international renown, through his temporary residence at the University;

III - provide to the artists of these areas institutional and material support capable of strengthening the conditions of their production, (...);

IV - strengthen the rendering of services relations between the university and the community. (...). (Resolution CEPE A 02-2006) (http://www.gr.unicamp.br/artistaresidente/artista_residente.php)

The Poetic Immersions Project's specific goal is the dissemination of the results of researches that have been already concluded ("Occupation: dance teacher" CNPq/2007 and "Dancer: training and professional performance" CNPq/2010); the discussion with teachers and dance graduate students on the un-dissociation of the art making it as an integral part of the teacher training in dance; the dissemination and reaffirmation that the construction of knowledge in dance necessarily passes through "dancing"; the discussion about the curriculum and about the guidelines of dance undergraduate program, trying to understand the place of the dance training within the university.

Dance occupying spaces

It should not be forgotten that the dance was one of the last artistic languages to find its space within Brazilian universities. The first college dance was opened at the Federal University of Bahia in 1956, and remained the only one for almost three decades. Reuni was responsible for the opening of new dance programs in Brazil in the last five years. Reuni was a initiative that aim to create **new** undergraduate programs in areas not yet present in the educational institution. That is why dance programs flourished.

Sir Ken Robinson, in one of the most viewed talks of the 2006 TED conference in Monterey, California/USA, said that in all the educational

systems in the world there is a hierarchy of the school subjects: First, more importantly, math and the native language and, finally, the teaching of art. Inside the art, music and visual arts come before theater and dance. Sir Ken Robinson complements his reflexion, questioning: why dance comes last? Do not we have bodies?¹ This is not accidental. Music and visual arts are presented with emphasis on the teaching of art, not for its intrinsic qualities, but because research in other areas of knowledge indicate the close relationship between the study of music and its contributions to mathematics learning; others discuss the activities relevance of visual arts in writing enhancement, in the development of reading codes and language construction.

This condition presents itself at elementary schools as well as in the university, respecting the proper proportions. It can be identified in the various Brazilians campuses, also a hierarchy which emphasizes the music and the visual arts, which, historically, exist for longer in the higher education, so, enjoy a tradition in research, with the largest number of publications, in addition, music and visual arts show results/products palpable and somehow easily measurable (recordings, scores, paintings, prints, sculptures), more than dance, that occurs in the spectacular act event and demands a differential space/time for its existence.

On this issue, I could not help recalling the early days of LUME (then Unicamp Laboratory of Movement and Expression), at the time, connected to the Art Institute of Unicamp, in which the late Luis Octavio Burnier, founder and creator of the group, directed himself to the President of the University to contest the denial of an application for financial aid. Standing before the pro-rector, he started moving performing some figures of Decroux's mime. As he moved, he explained that his research was in his body. So he did not ask for sophisticated equipment or the latest computer. He needed available bodies, actors-dancers and a work room, that is, an empty space.

Most often, it seems to be easier to admit researches in the field of art when combined with other knowledge areas or when the research results are tangible products. A typical example is well known in dance: the

¹ Youtube: Do schools kill creativity? Last access on November 15th, 2012.

American dancer Loie Fuller. In 1891, to represent the hallucination of a person at the time she is hypnotized on the play *Quack, MD.*, the dancer, who had a specific role in the show, had the idea of using overlapping and flowing skirts, reflected by colorful lights, achieving an effect of prolonged movements, dream and illusion. There were two minutes that earned widespread acclaim for the special effect that she got. Fuller devoted much of her life researching in a lab on electricity. Having artistic goals, she turned into the development of technologies for the stage: from the costumes to the expanded use of color lighting on stage. The artistic research combined with the scientific research. It did so with the help of scientists like Flammarion and the couple Pierre and Marie Currie (the couple with whom Moshe Feldenkrais, at the time a theoretical physicist, worked). The concern Fuller had, was of artistic order, not scientific. Her interest was to create illusion, beauty and dream. The development of technology was a result of this desire. She was not connected to a university but she was greeted by a research laboratory. If that happened today, I ask, how many labs would open their doors for artists imagination? Or, how much space is given to the research of/in art? How does the university sees a research "that is in the body of the researcher" (echoing the words of Burnier)?

Inspired by another research project I coordinate, entitled *Once up on a time there was a story told again: education, memory, imagination and creation* (CAPES 2049/2009), and driven by the question above, I propose the reader a little poetic immersion, through a tale recreated by me from the original by Pinkola Estès in the book *Women who run with the wolves* (1984). It is entitled The Tailor.

A man goes to the *szabó*, tailor, to get the suit he ordered. He tries on the pants and the jacket, and in front of a mirror, he observes if it is well adjusted. He realizes that the lapel on the left side is raised. He repeatedly tries to put it in place. He asks the tailor. The tailor holds the tip of the lapel with his fingers and asks the man to quip it in place with his chin.

- See, my dear sir, if you stay with your chin holding the lapel, it will stay perfectly in place.

And so he does.

With his chin holding the lapel, the man looks at his feet and realizes that the hem of the left leg of the pants is higher than the right leg's one.

The tailor says:

- In fact, there is a difference between both legs... but this is not a problem. If you bend the knee of your right leg, the two hems will be in the same height.

And so he does.

Finally, the buyer noticed that the right pocket of his jacket was also not aligned to the left one. The tailor says without hesitation:

- But look. If you lift your right shoulder and hold the pocket with your fist, the problem is solved.

And so did the man, supporting the fist in his jacket pocket.

He leaves the store wearing his new suit, holding the lapel with his chin, walking with legs apart, while maintaining a raised shoulder and supporting the pocket with the fist of his right hand. When walking down the street all-gangly, everyone looked at him. He thought: Wow, my suit is a success. Everybody is looking at me!!!

In the square, two old men who played chess, watched the scene. The first says:

- Wow! Did you see how that man is crooked?!

- Yes, he is crooked, the poor. Too bad, he went so quickly. I would love to know the name of his tailor, because his suit is impeccable!

I have highlighted this tale in different academic spaces of which I have participated, as a form of provocation to faculty artists researchers, to think what we have done with the art production when we try to fit it to a system that was not, *a priori*, designed for it. What is not aligned, is it the body (researcher-artist)? Is it the suit (system)? Or is it the tailor (managers)? Will we have to dance literally in front of the managers in administrative positions every time we ask for financial aid?

I do not intend to discuss limits and approaches between art and science. I like the objective definition of Roberto Gambini, from the International Society of Analytical Psychology, when he says: "The science says what something is. The art says what that thing could be" (Gambini, 2010, p. 158). The whole point was to believe that it was possible to use the same parameters for different ways to produce

knowledge. Gambini was a teacher, but turned away from the university, becoming an independent intellectual, believing he had more freedom to produce knowledge. But should not the university be the privileged *locus* for thought? For the formation of intellectuals? Of researchers? Should not the university be a space of dissent?

In one of the attempts to thematize the question of research in art, Silvio Zamboni (engineer by training and a photographer by profession, by the way) defended a doctoral thesis at USP entitled *Research in Art: a parallel between art and science*, published in book form (Zamboni 2001). In this work the author has analyzed the research in art only the creation in visual arts, excluding other art forms (dance, theater and music) and the researches related to theoretical studies (art criticism, art history and art education). The theme of his research question was: would every artist be a researcher?

To justify the difficulty of his enterprise, he said:

Art has no logical parameters of mathematical precision, it is not measurable, being greatly produced and assimilated by intuitive impulses: the art is felt and received, but it is difficult to translate into fully verbalized forms (Zamboni, 2001, p. 28).

[Further, he identified that] the scientific community comes together in a more organized way to discuss new issues and the acceptance of new paradigms, while the artistic community does not have such formal and organized forums for discussion (Zamboni, 2001, p. 36).

The thesis dates back to 1991 and the publication, 1998. Since then, the Brazilian scenario of research and of graduate studies in art (thankfully) changed. Today we have several associations such as the Brazilian Association of Performing Arts (ABRACE), the National Association of Researchers in Visual Arts (ANPAP), the Brazilian Association for Music Education (ABEM), the Federation Arts/Educators from Brazil (FAEB), among others. Conferences, scientific meetings, seminars are organized and have presented researches results in the different languages of art. The number of graduate programs in the field of art has also increased and, specifically about dance, the opening of new undergraduate programs has reaffirmed the presence of dance in different graduate programs and other research spaces.

To identify myself as a researcher who holds a healthy **in-betweenness** (Strazzacappa & Albano, 2010), perhaps as a result of the surveyed objects themselves: dance training (and art education) and somatic (education, art and health); I walk around different research spaces and observe that the issues of research of/in art was transformed from an individual and isolated work to the establishment of professional associations inspired by already established class models. From the quest for recognition in the academic field, the area opened a dialogue with the hard sciences and later with the humanities. Then, finding its own voice, it closed itself in a dialogue circumscribed only among specialized pairs, excluding those who did not speak the same language. Currently, after the contours were defined, the art is again back to stand in front of the other, do be heard, seen, watched and enjoyed, because of the knowledge built into art is part of the list of things to be accessed, received, seen and felt.

I recently presented a communication on the National Association for Research and Postgraduate Education ANPEd (well-known association that brings together researchers, managers and national leaders in the field of education, a privileged place in which they discuss the future of education in the country), in which I narrated the work developed in a discipline of the training course of the teachers of Unicamp. In the discipline *syllabus*, I have listed as bibliography only literary works and films. The academic and scientific texts were part of a supplementary bibliography. The question that permeated such action was: What can we learn from art?

The text presented at the meeting reproached the consecrated space of the academy, being filled by tales and poetry. It started with the following paragraph:

This essay is a provocation. It is meant to talk about art through art. (...) What prompted this attitude was the tiredness to see art being treated as a knowledge without its own voice, to witness, in different conferences and meetings, discussions in which much is said about art, but without the presence of art; in which art is defended as an autonomous field, but through concepts from other areas of knowledge, as philosophy, history, psychology, education science, among others (Strazzacappa, 2012).

It was not only in ANPEd, but everywhere I attended and in the administrative positions that I occupy, I must stress that I am from the art. I do this as a

deliberate political act, disseminating the research in this field and helping to strengthen the respect for the artistic work at the university.

If, at the beginning of this text, I claimed that my researches were being delineated either by political issues, or for aesthetic reasons, and the *Poetics Immersions Project* could aggregated these two aspects. Although the expected result is an artistic production (creation of hybrids performances) the political bias is present in a forceful way, as a form of provocation to dance undergraduate teachers to continue to tread the middle path, seeking balance between the production of academic papers and the artistic production. To publish texts and to step on stage, to reflect with words and with body. To create and to continue producing what only humans can do: Art.

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