

The memory sticks to the skin or the mature dance of the body

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No one has so far determined what a body can, [...] what the body can or cannot do.

Spinoza, Ethics

Introductory note

The present text aims to reflect on the bodies matured in the dance, and to materialize it started in qualitative research under the bias of speech analysis. As a research method, images of these artist's websites were used, their speeches were taken from magazines, newspapers and fragments of articles written for Brazilian periodicals. The images, in the concept of the researcher who is the artist of the scene and teacher of dance help us to understand of what bodies we are dealing with. They do not justify the text, but complement it, they show possibilities of glimpsing the sensitive through dance. Thus, the figures of the Guáira 2 Company of Dance, Nederlands Dans Theater III, Alicia Alonso, Renée Gumeil, Angel Vianna and Ismael Ivo give us to think this body matured in dance that is sensitive and based on the esthesis.

No expiration date: I dance because I exist!

The title of this article points to a reflection about the older body in dance and what dance this body does. It also starts from the questions posed by the philosophers Spinoza (2007) "What the body can do?" And Nietzsche (1997) when he asks "Does the dancer's ears are on their fingers feet?"

Spinoza will say that we do not know what a body can do not because it is a indecipherable mystery or an unreachable transcendent, but because it is capable; And, until he does something, until he does something to another or until another does something to it we do not know what it can!

To ask "what can it do" is to put the theme of power, the power that drives us to do these passages. Thus, we indicate the direction that we always want to give to our route. To walk these modulations of the question, moving from the young body to the mature body in dance is having to inhabit this interval space of between domains, of what is not totally this or that, of what is in this operation of the conjunction "and", where meetings and compositions proliferate, where operates new dances, new doings and new perspectives for this ephemeral art.

Sharing, in its own way, the same spirit of "what can it do", and in view of the immense and unknown virtualities of the body, Spinoza formulated, in his Ethics, the following statement:

No one, indeed, up to the present, has determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not taught anyone up to the present what, considered only as bodily by the laws of Nature, the body can and cannot do, unless it is determined by the soul. Indeed, no one up to the present has so accurately known the structure of the body that could explain all its functions, not to mention of what is often observed in animals and which far surpasses human sagacity, nor of what the somnambulists often do during sleep, and that they would not dare to do in the waking state. (Spinoza, 1974, p.186).

In Spinoza, the body gains an ontological fullness, a mode of being proper since it is finite. The body can do, by the very laws of its nature, many things that cause admiration, as the philosopher said.

What a body can do? Spinoza's question remains, for Nietzsche, unanswered. We will never know fully what it can do because the body is absolutely paradoxical.

I can risk saying that the body can do everything as long as the subject does it. In dance the mature body when excited starts to dance. I can exemplify that for this artistic manifestation the body has no validity of "dance retirement". Renée Gumiel, Angel Vianna, Martha Graham, Kazuo Ohno, Ismael Ivo, Dudude Hermann, Luiz Arrieta, Yara de Cunto, Lenora Lobo, Alexandre Among others are/were people who continue/has continued to produce their dances in their own matured bodies.

Other examples that I can refer to are the so-called companies 2 that integrate in their cast people with experiences of life and dance like the extinct Cia. 2 of the Ballet of the City of São Paulo,¹ the Guáira 2 Company of Dance (figure nº 01) and

the The CABT 2 (Castro Alves Ballet Theater 2), and on the axis outside of Brazil the NDT III (Nederlands Dans Theater III) from the Netherlands, which emerged in 1991 and ended its activities in 2006, as well as the Wuppertal Dance Theater directed by Pina Bausch.



Figure nº 01. Guaíra 2 Company of Dance. Choreography: Blow Elliot Benjamin. Available at www.googleimage.com. Accessed on March, 2016.

About such Brazilian companies, Teixeira (2011) says that they were created in law and are supported by public money. For this designation of company 2, according to the author "[...] the dancers who are about to retire are sent. At that moment, the directors find themselves at an impasse: [...] How to remove a dancer who for many years dedicated himself to this profession and company? (Teixeira, 2011, p. 85).

Contrary to the understanding of a company with mature bodies that one has in Brazil, besides the tropics, Bausch as Vieira (2012) points out, has made us uneasy about presenting dancers of mature bodies, since it is not usual for dance companies in the various parts of the West Side to present such bodies on the scene.

¹The Company 2 of the Ballet of the City of São Paulo was created in 1999 and extinguished in 2009 and CABT 2 originated in 2004 and extinguished in 2007.

These dancers-actors transgressed values considered as true in dance and make us review, rethink the built, allowing us to build new thoughts on the body. Even these matured bodies in dance have enabled the deconstruction of many fragmentary and instrumentalist discourses, opening new horizons of understanding for their complex, plastic and polysemic reality, and making us question how the mature/deconstructed body in dance is configured.

Mention is also made of the choreographer Jiri Kylian who directed the Nederlands Dans Theater III (figure nº 02). The group was created for experienced dancers trained in the classical technique, over the age of 40, with the purpose of proposing appropriate artistic challenges for their bodies in transformation, thus extending their careers.



Figure nº. 02. Nederlands Dans Theater III. Choreography: SH-BOOM! Photo: © Prudence Upton. Available at <http://dancelines.com.au>. Accessed on March, 2016.

In Brazilian companies 2 generally the dancers who compose them hold position of public servant's dancers with mature bodies that when younger were part of the cast of such dance companies. Teixeira (2011, p. 89) criticizes this model when he pontificates that "[...] The lack of conceptual support has made companies 2 become only stocks of good intentions, instead of being constituted as a political-artistic alternative for the so-called longevity, maturity and continuity of its artists."

I corroborate with Teixeira's criticism when I think that these matured bodies for/in dance should not be dismissed or seen as appendages, but that they are capable of creating other dances.

There's no way to disagree with Lima (2009) when she argues about the companies. 2. The author says that such companies are possibilities for young dancers looking at their careers do not fear the end, but broaden their eyes for the future of dance.

In these companies, or in solo works, it has to be thought that these mature bodies, their bodily histories, can be recounted, in other ways, from other looks, from other angles and perspectives; Such stories must be told because they have another quality, another movement and dance dynamics acquired by experience and by the perceptions that time does not cease to insert into the body.

To paraphrase Nietzsche I say that the mature dancing body is an act of power. The German philosopher invites us, just as Spinoza, lead us to admire ourselves with the power of the body, because "[...] the most surprising is before anything the body; We cannot help marveling at the idea that the body has become possible." (Nietzsche apud Deleuze, 1983, p.168)

Giacoa Jr. (2003) comments that in Nietzsche, the body cannot therefore be properly taken into the mere record of the physical-somatic, biological, of what *stricto sensu* is determined as the object of physiology. The body has the intangible concreteness of a force field or a cross-over surface between multiple perspectives. In the body, it speaks the language of the signs, its intimate nature is an infinite semiosis.

What Nietzsche intends, according to Giacoia Jr. (2003), is precisely to awaken attention to the dignity of the body, by renouncing all anticipation of a fundamental meaning, of ultimate meaning, in the terms and records with which tradition has conferred metaphysical dignity to their objects or realities. On this ground, as it is permanently in Nietzsche, it is the art that provides the final trail and what the body means to us is therefore nothing more than the footprints, the trail followed and left by life in its walk.

The mature body when dancing affirms the life of these dancers. To affirm life, in the Nietzschean sense, means not to escape the plane of existence, to maintain itself on a plane in which all forces affirm themselves without assuming a hierarchical world, without creating higher values or another life. In dance the body is what keeps us connected with other bodies, with the world.

We can still think of this mature body dancing its physiology from the philosophical thought of Nietzsche on the subject of health, because when aging this body carries its transformations, its limitations and its adventures in the future. We conceive such physiology of the mature body from the writings of the German philosopher in Book V of *The Gaia Science* when he appoints this prerogative of great health as the right and advantage of being able to transit through various states of body and to realize experimentations with thought. To represent it, he uses the expression "the dangerous prerogative of living for the assay and being able to offer ourselves to adventure". (Nietzsche, 2001, p. 4).

I dare to say that the body of the mature dancer lives this adventure and as assures the philosopher about great health it is necessary for those who want to experience different ways of wanting, feeling and thinking.

It is with dance² that Nietzsche approach the paragraph entitled "Great health" believing to be the greatest vivacity in the dance of impulses which promotes the opening of ranges of perspectives, from the narrowest to the most comprehensive, claims to be this "new health" necessary for all those who want to experience the most diverse points of view.

The Nietzschean philosophy, when presenting another perspective at the body and re-dimensioning the conception of health, makes it possible to think that the mature body in dance, considering its physiology, can weave other dances, other corporeal sensitives for the act of dance without losing its vivacity, its joy, its creativity and it gives us to think about which body that dances when aging, breaking with the "insuspects", with the lack of credit to this mature body that makes, remakes, builds/rebuilds its dance with lyrical beauty full of esthesia and senses.

Through the point of view of the philosopher, if we attribute to the body a relational and dynamic character, if we consider that the function of an organ is the result of a "[...] succession of processes more or less profound, more or less independent of each other, of subjugation" (NIETZSCHE, 1999, II, p.12), there is no longer any way to think of it without linking it to the action of the whole, because "[...] even on the inside of each individual organism it is not the other way" (IDEM). Thus, if we look at the relational char-

²The philosopher's insistence on using the symbolism of dance in his writings is another way of exalting and vindicating the value of the body.

acter of organic processes, the health of the body will be understood as the potential of rearrangement of the whole, of creation of a "new" adjustment between the impulses. Nietzsche's thinking about great health makes us question about this "validity period of the dancing body". What we mean by this is that such bodies, respecting their mature physiology, make their dance with singularities, enabling the (re) discovery of "another dancing body" of itself. Thus, the philosopher shows us that it is possible to re-signify our own life, each time we turn to it and remember the lived. I add: we recompose what was experienced.

To grow old, for the philosopher, seems to mean a change of perspective in relation to life. He believes that some age too soon, others always remain young (Nietzsche, 2001). However, we create strategies to delay aging and we refuse to live with it through the elderly, or try to mask it through aesthetic surgeries.

Due to the changes taking place in the body, the difference in relation to the youth worshiped in our society, to its approach to the moment of death, aging is an objection. We do not understand it as the entrance into another phase of life, as another look/perspective at our own trajectory.

To think of this mature body in dance from physiology and great health as demanded by Nietzschean philosophy is to be able to think of the teachings of the philosopher mentioned when he tells us that we can change our perspectives, want, feel and think otherwise, constantly renewing ourselves. I think it is in this assertion that the mature bodies evidenced in this writing behave. They dance!

It is still possible to think of this physiology of the mature body from its biological nature. There are morphological, psychological, hereditary, cultural, intellectual, racial, among others factors that make the mature body or old age appear as an irreversible, full of transformations phase that may occur sooner or later in people subjected to these aspects. From the physiological point of view, age is very variable and difficult to measure.

Such a body during its aging process undergoes changes such as musculoskeletal and such changes result in a lower range of motion of the joints; Neurological disorders that even in the absence of serious pathologies lead gradually to a small but significant decline in memory, currently called mild cognitive impairment. Still alterations of the reproductive system, of the sensorial organs; Changes in the

cardiovascular system.

Gallahue & Ozmun (2005), De Vitta (2000), and Spirduso (2005) in studies on the aging of the body says that such changes as the cardiovascular ones occur the reduction of resting heart rate, cholesterol increase, as well as vascular resistance, with the consequent increase in blood pressure. They call attention to the fact that physical exercise has a fundamental importance for the reduction of some declines of these physiological changes in this body.

It is still necessary to consider that the body is in the process of constant biological changes in the sense of aging, a constant process that is not always linked to losses or declines and in the process of aging suffers ambivalence (Blessmann, 2004) because it represents life and its infinite possibilities, and, at the same time, proclaim future death and existential finitude. These are the two faces of the body: on the one side the dynamic face, eager for desires; On the other hand, the face of temporality, fragility and weariness.

Physical changes are the first characteristics of the mature body; they are the visible transformations, and therefore cause so much impact (Menezes, Lopes & Azevedo, 2009). However, it is known that it is optional to the human being to accept the modifications of his body with the passage of time, and this is directly related to his health, especially to the psychic health. Emotions, opinions, sensations, thoughts that activate the brain in a positive way have repercussions on the physiology of the organism, minimizing degenerative effects and releasing endocrine-producing substances of well-being (Barak, 2006).

The mature body, even with the possibilities of "expression" diminished, and limited of virtuous movements, like dance, has dynamism and mutability. Moreover, such bodies must participate in this process of corporal change, creating new conditions in relation to their transformations, trying to believe that this body is in constant reconstruction.

Thus, we understand the physiology of this mature body, especially in dance, as something in constant construction being impossible to know it without experiencing it, because the human body movement is unique, it will never be repeated in the same way, always and at every moment it will be wrapped by different emotions and feelings that will motivate it in life.

Mature bodies, much pleasure, I still dance!

The curtains open and the show begins. Dancers invade the stage with their safe gestures and vigorous movements. Often, the arms and legs defined and the haughty presence on the scene look away the marks of expression, the less acrobatic performance, the white hair that insist on appearing at the temples. Every day, dance ceases to be the territory of athletes with a child's breath and perfect elasticity, to give place, under the spotlight, to those who accumulate their trajectory in the body, such as names like Pina Bausch and Mikhail Barishnykov. Today, this universe is becoming more democratic and dancers no longer have to leave the limelight even during creative plenitude, managing to extend their productive phase to maturity. (Correio Brasiliense, 21 Aug. 2011).

The body in dance, regardless of its language also ages. In such bodies is still common the biased question "do you still dance?". This occurs in those bodies that engendered by classical ballet, by modern or contemporary dance. One still has the vision that the career of a classical ballet dancer is short, however, demystifying this vision one can cite successful examples of long-standing career in ballet such as those of the Brazilian Ana Botafogo, the Cuban Alicia Alonso, as shown by figure nº 03, who danced until 75 years of age. Lima (2009) says that Alonso was an example of strength and courage. "[...] besides defying the passage of time, since youth she fights against blindness." (Lima, 2009, p. 73)



Figure nº 03. Alicia Alonso. Available at www.elartedevivirelflamenco.com. Accessed on April, 2016.

Dance is not only a precision of movement for the long-lived bodies of this art, it approaches a wider universe of refinement of that dance which for the dancer and anthropologist Hanna (1999, p. 48) "to say that my dancing days are over refers to feelings of remorse or resignation about changing live or getting old."

The possibility of continuing to dance with the body matured by these dancers is to broaden their experiences of movement and dance textures.

In an interview with the newspaper *Correio Brasiliense* on August 21, 2011, Lenora Lobo said: "When they go on stage, the dancer not only takes they artistic experience, but they memories, they family life, they professional life, the activities they practice. There is no separation. The person and the dancer are the same. The body is changing and the choreographer needs to keep up with that change. I see that difference in me. I can no longer jump for three hours, as I did at age 25, but today I can do syntheses and movements that I did not reach before."

Member of the "Núcleo Alaya Dança" and in the cast of *No princípio* [In the beginning], Alexandre Nas continues dancing and researching dance in his matured body in/for dance. In an interview with *Correio Brasiliense* newspaper on August 21, 2011, he said that after 40, however, the task became more difficult, but he found ways to adapt his body to the new phase. "You lose muscle power, but you take ownership of the body and of yourself, it gives more nuances to the movement. You have more control, you risk more, you can improvise at will. We have more fun", he describes.

Nas explains further in this interview that "[...] it is harder to stay in the universe of the classic, which works against gravity and invests in the virtual image of lightness." The experienced dancer, on the other hand, gains more space between the joints, works better on the body fittings and gains tone in his deep musculature, which supports the trunk, losing the support of the peripheral limbs, such as legs and arms. New health techniques and body therapies, such as Pilates, Rolfing and Alexander Technique, help keep muscles and elasticity in shape. The result translates to longevity. "The dance is no longer only linked to vitality, but also to the experience of the body. Today, it is common for large groups to create companies 2, for the most experienced dancers," he points out (*Correio Brasiliense* 21 Aug. 2011).

For these dancers, the dance at maturity values the personal qualities of each artist, technical virtuosity gives way to the work of the body as a whole and it is reinvented to every poetic movement that is ethical and aesthetic. This age-matured body seeks another form of dancing in which rest and slowness are present. I turn to Deleuze (2002, p. 128) when he talks about "relations of movement and rest, slowness and speed" to think of this body in dance from the Spinozist thought of what the body can do. The philosopher of Amsterdam declared in Ethics that bodies are distinguished by movement and rest, by speed and slowness, and not by substance. We only begin to know what a body is when we focus on the relations of movement that it entertains with other bodies, so it is the body that dances.

I agree with Serres (1999) when he inquires about the body: Who tries? The body. Who invents? The body. In dance this affirmation of the power of the body by Michel Serres reverberates with that of Spinoza in his Ethics, that we do not yet know what a body can do. It is with Espinosa, according to Orlandi (2004, p. 4), that one has "the full philosophical consciousness of the body as an imposing question." By reinventing these matured bodies for dance these dancers propose a new look at such dance. The assertion can be verified in the speeches of Ana Botafogo, Renée Gumiel and Alicia Alonso on the maturation of their bodies in/for dance.

I do not know when I'm going to stop, but I know I will not take my body to the extreme of its capacity. [...] I will not surrender the imposition of others. I want to have absolute control of this. [...] the journalists who interview me often know little about ballet, but what they want to know most is when I will stop dancing. If I'm still dancing well why do I have to stop? I ask him back. (Botafogo, 2006, p. 117).

A life is inscribed on my body and on my face. Dance is an autobiography - one moves according to what one is. If the body changes, the spirit will change as well. The corporal work causes transformations in who practices it. Dance is exploration and experience of space-time. Create a body language capable of speaking to the soul. Our horizon, our energy are unlimited, we must always rediscover them. Without body and without movement There is no world. Body is knowledge: physical and psychic sensibility. (Renée Gumiel, *Suscitas*, 2012).

Dance is the most important thing that happened in my life. To leave the scene is to start living in another reality. But I continue to dance in my choreography and in young dancers to whom I transmit my experiences. Once a dancer, one never stops dancing. If you do not do it physically, you express it in another way: dance up even in thought. (Alicia Alonso, Bravo Magazine, 2006).

We can say that these three women are exemplary in the flapping of the dance when it finds mature bodies and their reinvention to transgress, to transmute, to revolutionize the uneducated look for that other dance.

For Renée Gumiel (figure nº 04) apud Bogéa (s.d.) dance is transformation, reconstruction, inscription, consciousness, concentration, breathing, entanglement with the world. The body, to her, is a unity; But one can say that the look and the hands have special importance in the dance for Renée. "The look allows the structuring of the space, placing us again in the horizon where the movement is constructed. It also measures depth and distance. The look can be the vehicle of an emotional sensitivity; It is through it that we have the perception of rhythmic support." (Gumiel apud Bogéa, s.d.)



Figure nº 04. Renée Gumeil. Available on Facebook.com. Accessed on May 2016.

When asked why she was still dancing, Renee Gumiel replied: Why dance? I dance at my age because dance and theater are the essence of my life.

It is necessary to pontificate that, just as the body undergoes metamorphosis, dance also changes in this body. Angel Vianna (figure nº 05) is another aged body in/for dance that continues in production. She "[...] leads audiences to rethink old values and reveals to us that there is no age to start and let dance" (FREIRE, 2005, p. 138). She, as Lima (2009) says, sculpts flesh, bones and muscles in joint spaces with her students. Together with her husband Klauss Vianna, she created a methodology for teaching dance that is independent of age.



Figure nº. 05. Angel Vianna. Solo Atempo - Body Comment.
Available at <http://idanca.net>. Accessed on April, 2016.

Aging in dance is not synonymous with physical and/or intellectual inactivity. The importance of these mature men and women in dance brings up to another look at these bodies changing "[...] the rules of the game and making cultural un-

derstand that dance has infinite possibilities, among them a mature body." (Lima, 2009, p. 99)

For these dancers, the dance that their body dances can become a question, a questioning and many reflections in search of the understanding that the movement is a continuous process of changes and updates (Lima, 2009, p. 99) and that when they are aware of this body becomes open to new investigations without fearing the unknown.

There is for these artists, like Ismael Ivo (figure nº 06) a change of understanding of the body through the work done by that mature body that dances. When dancing Ivo's body is metamorphosed into idea, text, representation, image; It passes from body-object to body felt and lived, body as poetic of dancing.

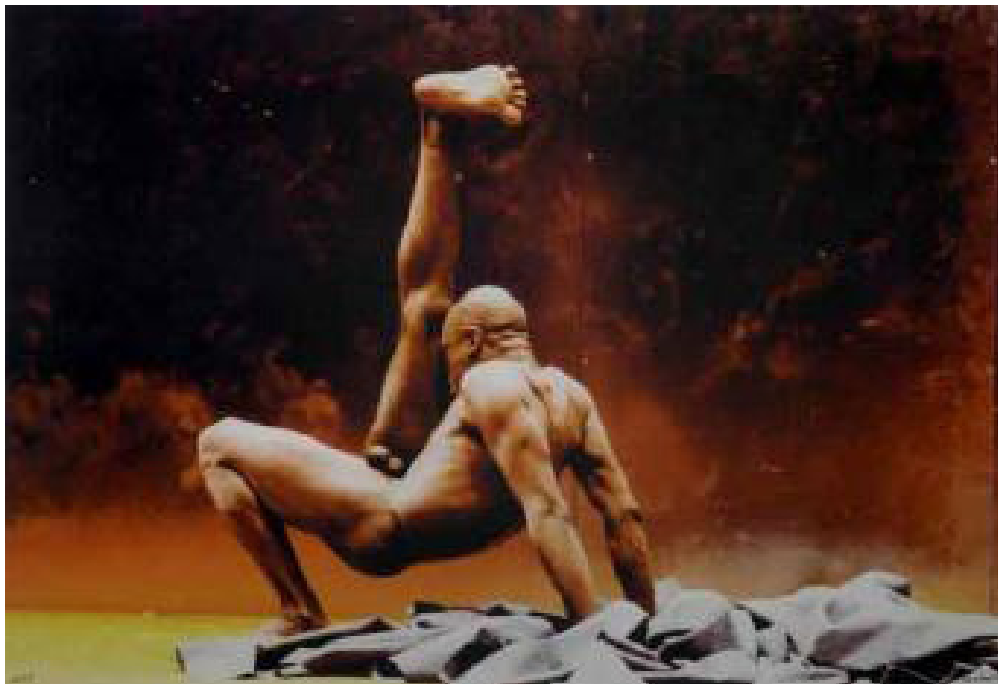


Figure nº 06. Ismael Ivo. Choreography: Francis Bacon Available at www.googleimage.com. Accessed on March, 2016.

In this mature body in the dance spaces are amplified, the technique is not replaced, it is not the ultimate end, but it is allied to the maturity of that experienced body; A body that is related to dance, to the world as a lived body, a creative power, open to the world, to itself and to dance.

No end stop

I retake the part of the title of this article "memory sticks to the skin" paraphrasing a choreography of Renée Gumiel. Memory that is body, inscribed in the body, that is palpable, that sticks to the skin being translated by singularity, maturity, dance. I believe that the objective of this article has been reached, because it made necessary a reflection on the bodies matured in dance and to materialize it was based on the qualitative research under the bias of discourse analysis focusing on speeches, images, dialogues with the authors and the attentive look at this mature dance of the body.

It is necessary to emphasize that these dancers placed with their mature bodies the life spurt dance without borders and limits so that they danced without the concern with the age, the performance or the esthetics of a certain kind of dance. Finally, we can paraphrase Merleau-Ponty (2004) when he wisely wrote that painting is never out of time, because it is always in the flesh, I say from this philosopher that dance, even being an ephemeral art, is never out of time because it is carnal.

Therefore, to dance is not to give orders to the body, but to obey it, and because of this, one has never been so close to the anthropological principles of Espinosa: dance is here the affirmation of a singular corporeal essence, more than, as Valéry (1996) said, the transformation of the ballet dancer into a universal being without a specific body, to represent, in the unity of your body, the body of all bodies. The bodies matured in/through dance undergoes new challenges, breaking with traditional dance structures, thus having a public identification with the body seen in the scene, without the perfectionism of this ephemeral art. "The body becomes a space of resistance to the diversities and denies the supra-human character in which the technique, in general, seeks to format it. Thus body and feeling represent on the stage a unity; Both are an expression of the fragility of human existence" (Cypriano, 2005, p. 29).

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